



# The Lutheran Herald

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## The Feast of the Resurrection

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**W**e confess in the words of the Nicene Creed: “And the third day He rose again according to the Scriptures...” What joy this precious news of the Resurrection gives to all Christians! We know that it is so, for God’s Holy Word, given by inspiration of the Holy Spirit through the prophets and apostles, proclaims it. We believe in Jesus’ resurrection from the dead “according to the Scriptures.” The Christ appeared to His disciples, showed them His hands, His feet, His side, ate in their presence, and He taught them, and bestowed His Holy Spirit upon them, sending them to be His apostles.

Anyone who would attack the inerrancy and inspiration of Holy Scripture attacks the hope which is ours through the Word of God—it really is as simple as that. God’s Word is unfaillingly true, and it proclaims the Truth to us, so that by the comfort which the Holy Spirit bestows through the Word, we have hope.

The Third Article of the Nicene Creed also acknowledges that the Holy Ghost is the One “Who spake by the Prophets.” Thus we have two crucial affirmations in one short creed: it is God Himself who spake by the Prophets, and we believe in the Resurrection because God’s Holy Word proclaims it. After St. Thomas beheld the Lord and made his confession—“My Lord and my God!”—Jesus said to him: “Thomas, because you have seen Me, you have believed. Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed.” (John 20:28–29) St. John

teaches that it is for the creation and preservation of faith that the Gospel has been written: “...these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing you may have life in His name.” (John 20:31) That which we need for faith, the Lord has given to us.

It should not surprise us that those who ‘waffle’ on Christ being the only Way of salvation will begin to ‘waffle’ on the inspiration of Holy Scripture, and those who vacillate on the inerrancy of Holy Scripture, will begin to carve away at the doctrine taught in God’s Word. As men have less and less confidence in the Word, they have less faith that there is any truth at all. Pilate is not the only one who asks, “What is truth?”

Stand fast on the Word of the Lord! Christ, our Shepherd and Teacher, is risen from the grave, and He will come again in glory to gather His Church to eternal life—God’s Word assures us that this is most certainly true.

*Bishop James D. Heiser*

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# Episcopal Polity in Historic Lutheranism

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**Presented at the 2008  
Winter Confessional Lutheran  
Free Conference  
31 January 2008  
In Burnsville, Minnesota**

My intention with this paper is to make a reasonable defense of Episcopal polity in the Lutheran Church from a doctrinal and historical standpoint. I do not intend to convince everyone of the value and merit of Episcopal polity. Some people will disagree no matter what I say and that is, of course, their prerogative. I wish them God's blessings as they try to be faithful to their calling in Christ. My modest goal is to show that Episcopal polity is highly defensible from our doctrinal sources and from our history. And while I believe it is the preferred polity for the Lutheran Church (and I will argue from that perspective), it is by no means necessary to the existence of the church. I believe Episcopal polity is a very important issue but it is, ultimately, an *adiaphoron*. And I make this point because I realize that in a Synodical Conference culture that most of us have come from, episcopal polity is a little bit of a foreign idea. I know that many may never be comfortable enough with such a polity to join one, but that may not be necessary. The ministerium of the Evangelical Lutheran Diocese of North America are united in their understanding that polity is not divisive of fellowship. Church bodies may be separate organizations and yet have full fellowship with each other. The ELDoNA can easily see itself in fellowship with church bodies that are not episcopally ordered. So, we are here with all of you, at this conference, to explore what fellowship possibilities exist. Let us all hope and pray for unity among those of a confessional mind so that our great Confession may continue in this land.

## ***Polity in the Lutheran Confessions***

I'll not touch all that much upon the issue of a

divinely established office of the ministry; it is likely to lead us too far astray. I assume that all here agree that an office of the ministry is established in the scriptures, and that our confession of that is first found in articles five and fourteen of the *Augustana*. (If I am wrong in that assumption I'm sure you'll let me know soon).

Perhaps fewer here would agree with us in the ELDoNA that "Ordination is not an *adiaphoron*. It is part of a right understanding of a proper call."<sup>1</sup> We would cite *The Treatise*, paragraph 65, where it says; "it is manifest that ordination administered by a pastor in his own church is valid by divine right."<sup>2</sup> But even though we might disagree about some things, I'm sure we can agree in principle to a commitment to the Lutheran Confessions.

So, let's focus more specifically on polity in the Confessions, and see what the Confessions say about episcopacy. In the *Apology of the Augsburg Confession*, Philip Melanchthon (with Luther's approval) expressed a very definite opinion with regard to episcopacy. He said, "On this matter [church order] we have given frequent testimony in the assembly to our deep desire to maintain the church polity and various ranks of the ecclesiastical hierarchy, although they were created by human authority.... Thus the cruelty of the bishops is the reason for the abolition of canonical government in some places, despite our earnest desire to keep it.... Furthermore, we want at this point to declare our willingness to keep the ecclesiastical and canonical polity, provided that the bishops stop raging against our churches. This willingness will be our defense, both before God and among all nations, present and future, against the charge that we have undermined the authority of the bishops."<sup>3</sup> When Melanchthon says that the Lutherans desire to keep the polity and hierarchy of the church, he is referring to the only polity and hierarchy which existed at that time: the Catholic polity and hierarchy. Melanchthon was, of course, trying to find as much ground for agreement as possible. These were not thoughtless comments on Melanchthon's part. Melanchthon spent a good deal of time considering his

response to the Roman theologians of the *Confutation*. It should be remembered that the Roman theologians of the *Confutation of the Augsburg Confession* agreed with article fourteen. They found nothing in the words of the article to disagree with. They simply inserted their concern for canonical polity, and said they agreed with article fourteen so long as canonical polity was upheld. It should also be remembered that the Lutherans, when considering their reply to the *Confutation*, were denied a copy of it in order to frame their *Apology*. However, Melanchthon remembered very well the objections of the *Confutation* because “for three months he represented the Lutherans on a large committee appointed by the emperor to consider the possibility of a doctrinal agreement between the two sides.”<sup>4</sup> Melanchthon was trying to eliminate any unnecessary divisions between the Lutherans and Rome. In the *Apology* he makes it clear that he has no problem with canonical polity itself (in fact, he wants to maintain it), but complains that the Roman authorities are making it impossible. Melanchthon held out an olive branch to the Roman theologians, in essence saying, polity need not divide us unless you make it divisive. This is Melanchthon’s response to Roman hierarchy, and it wasn’t something that Melanchthon slipped past his colleagues, or the princes, or Luther; they would not have approved had Melanchthon given up some essential doctrine in the *Apology*. So, it might come as a shock to Lutherans today that it was Luther’s and Melanchthon’s “deep desire,” and “earnest desire” (to quote the *Apology*) to keep the hierarchy and polity of episcopacy, but it is quite clearly what they confessed. And this desire of the Lutheran confessors was not something that was limited or conditioned to the sixteenth century. Melanchthon says that this “deep desire,” this “willingness” would be their defense against charges of an anti-episcopal attitude for both the “present and future.”

Now, it seems to me that this article in the *Apology* is overwhelming evidence that polity is an *adiaphoron* for Lutherans. Luther and Melanchthon have no problem maintaining Roman canonical polity for the sake of the Gospel. And if this article is not clear enough on that subject, let us remember how Philip subscribed to the *Smalcald Articles*, “...concerning the pope I hold that, if he would allow the Gospel, we, too, may concede to him that superiority over the bishops which he possesses by human right, making this concession for the sake of

peace and general unity among Christians who are now under him and may be in the future.”<sup>5</sup> Lutherans certainly did not make an issue out of polity.

But beyond the fact that polity is an *adiaphoron*, article fourteen of the *Apology* gives us a good argument for preferring episcopal polity to other polities. Once again, to be clear, article fourteen makes no law requiring episcopal polity— but does not the “deep desire,” and the “earnest desire” of the writer of the *Apology* have significant weight when determining our desires on the subject? Not only is this the private desire of Melanchthon or Luther (and it is), but it is also the “deep desire” expressed as part of our church’s confessions. These phrases could have been removed before subscription if they caused discomfort to the Lutheran fathers. They were not removed. Of course, as events progressed in the German lands, a continuation of the then current episcopacy proved impossible. The vast majority of the existing German bishops remained in communion with the pope.<sup>6</sup> But the necessary changes in practice among the German Lutherans did not negate the principle expressed in article fourteen of the *Apology*, that it was still their “deep desire to maintain the church polity and various ranks of the ecclesiastical hierarchy.”

Not only do the Lutheran Confessors see episcopal polity as an *adiaphoron*, and as their preferred polity, they also simply assume it to be the norm for the church. In article 28 of the *Augsburg Confession* the term “bishops”<sup>7</sup> is used in addition to parish pastors. The main issue in article 28 was the problem of the confusion of the spiritual and secular realms; that is, the power appropriate to the church and the power appropriate to the state. Medieval Christendom had practically no distinctions between the two realms. Bishops and archbishops were at the same time the rulers of various territories. The Lutherans are clearly complaining about that abuse. Also, they complain generally of bishops making human traditions binding on men’s consciences. But the Lutheran Confessors do not simply denounce bishops for being bishops. They only complain about the abuses. In fact, the Lutheran Confessors give guidelines for what a true evangelical bishop should be. “According to divine right, therefore, it is the office of the bishop [*episcopis*] to preach the Gospel, forgive sins, judge doctrine and condemn doctrine that is contrary to the Gospel, and exclude from the Christian community the ungodly whose

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wicked conduct is manifest. All this is to be done not by human power but by God's Word alone. On this account parish ministers [*Pfarrleute*] and churches [*Kirchen*] are bound to be obedient to the bishops [*Bischöfen*] according to the saying of Christ in Luke 10:16, 'He who hears you hears me.'<sup>8</sup> Note that what is talked about in the quotation above specifically applies to bishops in distinction from "parish ministers and churches." Granted, what applies here to bishops, applies to all in the office of the ministry, since there is only one divinely instituted office. Nevertheless, Melancthon uses the term "bishop" here in distinction from a parish pastor. Article 28 lists other points of authority a bishop has. "What are we to say, then, about Sunday and other similar church ordinances and ceremonies? To this our teachers reply that bishops [*Bischöfe*] or pastors [*Pfarrherren*] may make regulations so that everything in the churches is done in good order, ... It is proper for the Christian assembly to keep such ordinances for the sake of love and peace, to be obedient to bishops [*Bischöfe*] and parish ministers [*Pfarrherren*] in such matters".<sup>9</sup>

Once again, the three-fold distinction of the one office of the ministry is assumed as normal to the Lutheran reformers. Luther himself makes the distinction in the Table of Duties of the Small Catechism. He titles the first duty, "Den Bischöfen, Pfarrherren und Predigern."<sup>10</sup> "For Bishops, Pastors, and Preachers."<sup>10</sup> Yes, what is taught in this first duty applies to everyone in the office of the ministry, but Luther has in mind the historical three-fold division of the one office.

Luther also concedes that there can be such a thing as a "true bishop" in the Lutheran Church. In the *Smalcald Articles* Luther severely criticizes the then current bishops in Germany. He says, "If bishops [*Bischöfe / episcopi*] were true bishops and were concerned about the church and the Gospel, they might be permitted (for the sake of love and unity, but not of necessity) to ordain and confirm us and our preachers, provided this could be done without pretense, humbug, and unchristian ostentation. However, they neither are nor wish to be true bishops."<sup>11</sup> With all of Luther's very valid criticism, he acknowledges the theoretical possibility of "true bishops" in the Lutheran Church. He doesn't want to eliminate bishops; he simply wants them to be evangelical bishops.

Even passages that have been used by some against episcopal polity are not at all against episcopal pol-

ity, but against papal claims of supremacy over the other bishops, or they were against the Roman bishops and Pope cutting off their possibilities for pastors in the future. Rome would try to deprive the Lutherans of bishops. In such a case, the essential truth that the keys belong to the church was defended. The confessions do not argue against bishops as such, they argue against the corruption of the bishops.

### ***Lutheran Episcopacy in History Sweden***

At the outset of the Reformation the Lutheran Confessors were eager to maintain the historic episcopacy. There was nothing in Lutheran doctrine that militated against episcopacy. The loss of Episcopal polity in some places was forced upon the Lutherans because of the hostility of the Roman Church. Sweden is the country most often talked about when speaking of Lutheran episcopacy because they, in fact, maintained much of the pre-Reformation polity they had received. In the early 1520's when King Gustavus Vasa ascended to power, he was inclined to settle scores with the bishops who sided with his enemy, Denmark. He often replaced Romanist sympathizing bishops with Evangelical bishops when vacancies occurred (sometimes vacancies occurred because the former bishops fled the country). This was the case with Laurentius Petri Nericius, who was named the new archbishop of Uppsala in 1531. "When Gustavus Vasa assumed the Swedish throne in 1523, five sees stood vacant. He sought to fill these in approved canonical fashion and succeeded in the case of Petrus Magni, who was consecrated with papal approval in Rome in 1524. In 1528 Petrus Magni consecrated three bishops, and in 1531 Laurentius Petri was consecrated archbishop (possibly by Petrus Magni)."<sup>12</sup> Dr. Eric Yelverton says more confidently; "The Consecration took place on 22<sup>nd</sup> September 1531 at Stockholm, being performed by Petrus Magni, Bishop of Västerås, who had himself been confirmed and consecrated by the authority of Pope Clement VII in 1524."<sup>13</sup>

Laurentius Petri was a young priest and schoolmaster who had received his theological education at Wittenberg in Luther's early reforming years. In his liturgical reforms in Sweden from the 1540s onward he was to show himself one of the most conservative of Lutherans, but on other matters he was thoroughly Lutheran, believing (as he was to state in his

preface to the Church Order of 1571) that while bishops fulfilled a necessary function in the Church of oversight and discipline, and would therefore no doubt remain until the end of the world, there was nevertheless only one ordained office in the church, the “Predikoambetet”, or preaching office, or priesthood, and that bishops were simply priests to whom certain necessary supervisory functions had been assigned.<sup>14</sup>

It seems that for roughly the first fifteen years of the Reformation in Sweden, King Gustavus Vasa was interested in maintaining the old hierarchical order. However, “Beginning in 1540 King Gustav seems to have decided to abolish the episcopate, and as bishops died... men termed Ordinarii (or later Superintendents) were appointed in their places.”<sup>15</sup> It looked as if Sweden was going to follow the lead of Germany and Denmark in abolishing the historic episcopate in their countries. So, it seemed that there were two opposite realities in Sweden after 1540, the remnants of an historic episcopal polity, and strong anti-episcopal pressure from the crown, at least until the reign of King Johan III. “During this transitional period it seems that the consecrations of Michael Agricola and Paulus Juusten for sees in Finland by Botvid Sunesson of Strängnäs were regarded as valid episcopal consecrations. Some continuity was restored in Sweden with the appointment of Laurentius Petri Gotha as archbishop in 1575. Among the participants in the consecration was Juusten. Scholarly opinion is divided over whether an episcopal *successio personalis* survived in the Swedish church during this period. But it is certain that the prevailing Lutheran pattern eventually established itself in Sweden. For the most part the term “bishop” was discarded, superintendents were charged with duties of oversight, and pastors as well as bishops conducted ordinations. That these things are not reflected in the present episcopal regime in the Church of Sweden is the result of developments in the nineteenth century. Throughout Scandinavia the episcopal office was dramatically reformed. The office of oversight was regarded as an ecclesiastical convention rather than a divine invention. In the generations following the reform, the Scandinavians generally called their ordinaries “superintendent” (superintendent or superattendent) rather than “bishop.” They did not return to the older usage for generations. Although forms of cooperation with the civil

authorities differed in the various states, duties of oversight in the Scandinavian churches were prescribed much as in Germany.”<sup>16</sup> We should not romanticize the Lutheran episcopacy in Sweden. While the historic episcopacy was intentionally preserved in the early years of the Reformation, and then by the crown towards the end of the sixteenth century, it wasn’t such an important part of the life of the church in Sweden. In the nineteenth century (probably contemporaneously with England’s Oxford Movement) some in Sweden began to reemphasize historic nomenclature and the so-called “apostolic succession.” Now, there is nothing wrong with reclaiming traditions and historic practices (in fact, I would argue strongly for doing just that). But for a very long time, the Swedish Reformation strongly reflected the Reformation in Germany, except for the technical retention of the episcopacy. There was no real difference in how they viewed the office of oversight in the church. Martin Chemnitz and Laurentius Petri Nericius were the same thing in essence, but had different forms of consecration and different titles, but they were both functionally Evangelical bishops.

Laurentius Petri Nericius died in 1573. The consecration of the next archbishop of Uppsala, Laurentius Petri Gothus, took place, July 14<sup>th</sup>, 1575. This consecration was performed by four “bishops,” however it is clear that three of the four had never been consecrated themselves, including the principal consecrator. The one of the four who had been was Bishop Paul Juusten of Abo, in Finland. It appears that after the consecration of Laurentius Petri Gothus, consecrations continued in a regular way for the archbishops of Uppsala thereafter.

## **Latvia**

The Baltic peoples, like the Latvians, were some of the last people in Europe to be converted to Christianity; Christian missionaries did not arrive in the area until around A.D. 1180. Nevertheless, Latvia was in the forefront of embracing the Reformation— this should forever be to their great credit. (Luther even wrote a letter to them in A.D. 1523.) However, the transition from Roman Catholicism to Lutheranism was not a “grass-roots” movement. The Lutheran Reformation took hold first among the German upper classes. The head of the military-religious order of knights promoted Lutheran

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# “Who is this ‘god’ of whom you speak?”

Rev. C. D. Hudson  
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“I believe in god.” “God is important in my life.” “I try to pray to god before I make decisions in my life.” “God has always been an important part of my life.” My religion helps me get through those tough times.” We are hearing these expressions, and many more like them, through the public media with great frequency as people of different political persuasions are running for election to high public office. As most of us are well aware, the topic of “religion in the public square” has become a much discussed topic over the last several years. Because of a number of court decisions over these past few years and public controversies about “religion” (which always means “Christianity”), the question of what place “religion” is to hold in American public life has become a very controversial and often emotionally charged topic of discussion. And yet, as never before in our lives, we are seeing the candidates frequently seeking to reassure us in a very public way that they believe in ‘god,’ that they are — people of faith!

However, there is a critically important aspect of such presentations that is not being debated and (as far as this writer has noted) has not yet even been broached. It is an aspect which none of the candidates are willing to address, regardless of party affiliation, because to do so would mean not only the possibility but also the certainty of losing votes, and possibly an election. That aspect is the question: “Who is this ‘god’ of whom you speak?” The god whom virtually all the political candidates have professed a faith in has yet to be clearly identified! And so when a holder of high public office or one seeking a high public office solemnly intones “god bless America” he is speaking in intentionally vague language so that he can appeal to the electorate at large, and all the different gods to whom they hold. And yet, these very same candidates and seekers of public office have, and will without a doubt continue to declare with a look of great sincerity on their faces and in their voices, that they are people of the Christian faith.

It is of necessity then that the question be asked, “Does the way they speak of god (setting aside how they have explained how their faith informs the decisions of

their lives) properly reflect the only true and saving faith, the ancient, Catholic and apostolic faith revealed in the pages of an un-changed Holy Scripture?”

Let’s pause for a moment and briefly consider what they have been saying. First, I assert that it is of great significance that none of them have spoken of, or used the phrase, “the Holy Trinity.” No one that I am aware of has used the words “the Triune God” when speaking of the god whom they believe is at work in their lives, the one to whom they pray and whose guidance they seek. It is most legitimate to ask, “How can this be?” in light of the fact that Christianity is, by the will of the Holy Trinity Himself, a truly exclusive religion. As there is but one true and eternal God, so there is but one true and saving religion, and that God and that biblically based Christianity mandates that “You shall have no other gods before Me”! And so we come to a very important question, “Is the god of which the candidates profess a ‘faith in’ the same God whom you *believe, teach and confess?*”

To answer this most important of questions we need to reflect prayerfully and with great seriousness upon how, as “historic” Lutherans (and thus true Catholics) we have promised God we will *believe, teach and confess* “who” He is and “what” He is. To properly answer these two questions is thus, by its very nature, not to be an exercise in creative thinking, speaking or writing, but to be circumscribed by what has been divinely revealed by the one true and eternal God Himself, the Holy Trinity. Here also is where that confession which we have freely subscribed to as being in full and complete agreement with the teaching of the only “religious” book given among sinful men here in time and space, the Bible, is of such importance for we have confessed it is a “true and clear exhibition” of Holy Scripture and that is the *Book of Concord*. This book does not replace Holy Scripture but it does faithfully reflect the doctrine revealed in Holy Scripture and thus upholds the teaching of Holy Scripture. What then does this book, hereafter referred to by its historic title, the “Lutheran Symbols,” say of this God that we as historic Lutherans are to *believe, teach and confess?* It is of great importance in this era of ever-increas-

ing spiritual compromise to realize that our Lutheran forefathers clearly recognized the absolute necessity of clearly answering the question: “Who and what is God?” This is why they addressed it as the first question in the first of the eight documents contained in the *Book of Concord*. Simply put, of necessity, for the sake of our salvation, we must have a clear and faith in the one true God, the Holy Trinity, is for this is He whom we believe is at work in this world and in our own individual lives. Who, then, is this God of whom we speak? Is He different from the one we are hearing so many others speak when they speak of a ‘god’ at work in their lives? With prayer filling our hearts, let’s read and reflect most seriously upon the words of the confession as to “who” and “what” the one true and eternal God is.

### ARTICLE I. – OF GOD.

First.—With unanimity it is held and taught, agreeably to the decree of the council of Nice, that there is but one divine essence only, which is called, and truly is, God, but that there are three persons in this one divine essence, equally powerful, equally eternal, God the Father, God the Son, God the Holy Ghost, who are of one divine essence, eternal, incorporeal, indivisible, infinite in power, wisdom, and goodness, the Creator and preserver of all things visible and invisible. And by the word *person*, is not understood a part or quality of another, but that which subsists of itself, precisely as the Fathers have employed this term on this subject.

All heresies are, therefore, condemned which are in opposition to this Article: as those of the Manichaeans who have adopted two god’s the one good the other evil. Likewise those of the Valentinians, Arians, Eunomians, Mahomedans, and the like; also those of the ancient and modern Samosatensians, who adopted but one person, and sophistically explain these two, the Word and the Holy Spirit, and assert, that they must not be distinct persons, but that the Word signifies the oral word or voice, and that the Holy Ghost is the motion created in the creatures. (*The Augsburg Confession*, Article I, of God, the Henke translation, 1<sup>st</sup> Edition, 1851).

First of all, it is of the greatest importance to keep in mind that the doctrine confessed in this article as to

Persons and Nature of God is was not something newly created by the Lutheran confessors, but was taken from the theological teachings of the three ancient and Catholic Creeds—that of the Apostles, Nicene and Athanasian. This is of the greatest importance for a number of reasons. First, this clearly affirms that the Lutheran confessors did not set out to devise a new doctrine of their own. They were most desirous to simply re-assert what the true, ancient, apostolic and Catholic Church had always taught in relation to “who and what” God is. Although the decree of Nicaea alone is referenced, there are clear points of contact with the two other ecumenical creeds, as well. It is in the Athanasian Creed in particular that the word “Person” holds a prominent place because it was composed as the result of the very intense theological debates of the fourth and fifth century concerning how to properly understand and confess the reality of the two natures in the Christ and Personhood within God the Holy Trinity.

Secondly, reading this very first article of the first confessional document of the *Book of Concord* immediately confronts us with what is at the least, a very serious theological challenge, for this is clearly not how God is being spoken of today, not only by politicians but also by many others, all of whom contend they are Christians. Sadly, it has now become normative to speak of God primarily in the abstract. As a consequence, we now see and hear multitudes of people in the “public square” speaking a three letter word pronounced as “god” with no other defining limitations or elaborations. It matters not how the speaker personally and privately defines this term, nor how his hearer defines it. What matters is that the word “god” is spoken, and in such a way that it can be subjectively defined in as many different ways as there are people listening.

Article I of the Augsburg Confession quoted above (hereafter referred to as the “*Augustana*”) makes a number of firm assertions—especially for our time of spiritual indifference and compromise. It plainly declares that there is “one divine essence”—that is to say, there is but one God! This assertion, which is clearly based on what is divinely revealed in the pages of Holy Scripture, is nonetheless highly unacceptable to many people and that includes, tragically, rapidly increasing numbers who contend they are Christian in this increasingly darkening spiritual age. However, this Article confesses exactly

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## ***Pastor Installed at Redeemer Lutheran Church***

Despite the cold outside, there was cause for warm celebration at Redeemer Lutheran Church on January 18 as Rev. Mark Mueller was installed as the new mission congregation's first pastor. Pastor Mueller— a 2003 graduate of Concordia Theological Seminary in Fort Wayne— had served previously at St. Stephen Lutheran Church in Braham, Minnesota. He was released from his call to St. Stephen in June 2007 and he and his fam-



***Deacon Ahonen, Pastor Mueller, and Bishop Heiser***

Ahonen assisting. As January 18 is also the Festival of the Confession of St. Peter, the theme for the festival day was well-suited for the installation of a confessional Lutheran pastor.

The congregation has rented a location which allows them regular, 'full time' use of the building. Visitors to the installation were amazed by the progress which had already been made in furnishing the sanctuary with altar, pulpit, and pews.

For more information on the Redeemer Lutheran Church, please contact Rev. Mueller at (763) 689-2290.



***The Sanctuary of Redeemer-Cambridge before the Installation***

ily moved to Cambridge shortly thereafter.

The founding families of Redeemer Lutheran Church elected to leave St. Stephen following Pastor Mueller's release from service there, and they went about organizing a new mission in the nearby town of Cambridge. The first Divine Service of Redeemer-Cambridge was on January 13, 2008.

Approximately twenty were in attendance for the January 18 installation service. The installation was conducted by Bishop James Heiser, with Deacon Jeffrey



**Sermon for the Installation of  
Rev. Mark Mueller  
Redeemer Lutheran Church  
(Cambridge, MN)  
Festival of the  
Confession of St. Peter  
January 18, 2008**

Grace, mercy and peace to you from God our Father, and from Jesus Christ, His Son, our Savior. Amen.

*“When Jesus came into the region of Caesarea Philippi, He asked His disciples, saying, ‘Who do men say that I, the Son of Man, am?’ So they said, ‘Some say John the Baptist, some Elijah, and others Jeremiah or one of the prophets.’”* Men imagined a great many things about Jesus, and they imagine them still. Liberation theologians want Him to be a Marxist, feminists want to make Mary Magdalene the heart of the story, historical critics want to reduce Him to a myth, and prosperity theologians want Him to be the key to material prosperity, rather than the suffering Servant, who called men to pick up their cross and follow Him.

Men were prepared to say ‘nice’ things about Jesus: *“Some say John the Baptist, some Elijah, and others Jeremiah or one of the prophets.”* The world is still prepared to concede that Jesus was a ‘great spiritual teacher,’ even a ‘prophet’ (in some ‘safe’ sense of the term), and our pluralistic, democratic culture believes that every man should be permitted his ‘personal beliefs’ — *unless* he believes that what a person believes *matters*.

Jesus was not born, did not suffer and die, teaching such an innocuous message. He declared to His disciples: *“Therefore whoever confesses Me before men, him I will also confess before My Father who is in heaven. But whoever denies Me before men, him I will also deny before My Father who is in heaven. Do not think that I came to bring peace on earth. I did not come to bring peace but a sword. For I have come to ‘set a man against his father, a daughter against her mother, and a daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law’; and ‘a man’s enemies will be those of his own household.’”* (Mat. 10:32–36)

One’s confession, therefore, is far from an indifferent thing— Jesus declares that homes will be torn apart over what people believe about Him.

The notions of the world, and of false teachers, concerning the Christ fail utterly. Jesus said to His disciples: *“But who do you say that I am?”* Since English doesn’t do a very good job anymore of distinguishing the singular versus the plural of the second person (that is, we don’t usually say “thee” and “thou” anymore) it is important that we understand that Jesus’ question is in the plural; He is not asking, *“But who do you [that is, Peter] say that I am?”* Rather, it is, *“But who do you [that is, you disciples] say that I am?”* St. Peter spoke as a representative of them all— the confession which Peter made is the faith of all the disciples, and it is the faith which they, in turn, taught to others.

We read in John 1 that after St. Andrew, Peter’s brother, first met Jesus, he *“found his own brother Simon, and said to him, ‘We have found the Messiah’ (which is translated, the Christ). And he brought him to Jesus. Now when Jesus looked to him, He said, ‘You are Simon the son of Jonah. You shall be called Cephas’ (which is translated A Stone).”* (v. 41–42) From this first meeting, St. Andrew already knew that Jesus is the Messiah, and he shared this good news with Simon, his brother. But in today’s Gospel lection, Andrew’s brother makes the good confession: *“You are the Christ, the Son of the living God.”* *“Jesus answered and said to him, ‘Blessed are you, Simon Bar-Jonah, for flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but My Father who is in heaven.”*

St. Peter declared in his Second Epistle that *“no prophecy of Scripture is of any private interpretation, for prophecy never came by the will of man, but holy men of God spoke as they were moved by the Holy Spirit.”* (2 Pet. 1:20–21) That which St. Peter spoke on behalf of the Twelve was not his ‘best guess,’ or a ‘logical deduction’ or any such thing. St. Peter spoke by inspiration of the Holy Spirit, as the prophets had of old. The Lord of the Church declares that this confession is not of Peter, but from the Father Himself, and it is in this brief creed that we find the heart of all the confessions.

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We read in Acts 8 of St. Philip's encounter with the Ethiopian eunuch, as that man was returning to Ethiopia from Jerusalem, having traveled there to worship. The Ethiopian was reading from Isaiah, but when Philip asked him, "*Do you understand what you are reading?*;" the man replied, "*How can I, unless someone guides me?*" (v. 30, 31) Beginning from the passage from Isaiah 53 which the Ethiopian was considering, we are told, "*Then Philip opened his mouth, and beginning at this Scripture, preached Jesus to him. Now as they went down the road, they came to some water. And the eunuch said, 'See, here is water. What hinders me from being baptized?' Then Philip said, 'If you believe with all your heart, you may.' And he answered and said, 'I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God.' So he commanded the chariot to stand still. And both Philip and the eunuch went down into the water, and he baptized him.*" (v. 35–38)

It is no accident that the confession of that Ethiopian is an echo of the confession of St. Peter. In this confession is the seed of the whole of the creeds. The creeds and confessions of the Church are simply an amplification of the confession of Peter, given in answer to the long line of false teachers who have sought to supplant the Gospel with false teachings of their own devising. The creeds are summations of the teaching of Holy Scripture, centered on the confession of the Christ as the Son of God. Before his baptism, the Ethiopian confessed his faith through the words of the Creed of St. Peter. To this day, the rite of Holy Baptism includes the confession of the Apostles Creed, a confession of the faith into which the recipient of the holy Sacrament is being baptized. When a child or adult is confirmed, they make their oath to suffer all things— even death— rather than fall away from the faith which they have been taught from God's Word and the Small Catechism. And today, as your pastor is installed into his office here at Redeemer Lutheran Church, he will be asked the question: "Wilt thou preach and teach the pure Word of God in accordance with the Confessions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church, and adorn the doctrine of our Savior

with a godly and holy life?," and he shall respond, "Yes, with the help of God," for with these words he gives testimony and pledge concerning his intent to serve in this place as a faithful minister of the pure confession of Christ Jesus, a successor in this holy calling which began in the call of Peter and the other apostles.

St. Paul wrote in Ephesians 2: "*Now, therefore, you are no longer strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God, having been built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief cornerstone, in whom the whole building, being fitted together, grows into a holy temple in the Lord, in whom you also are being built together for a dwelling place of God in the Spirit.*" (v. 19–22) Pastor Mueller is called to labor among you, not preaching a doctrine of his own devising, but building upon that foundation which has already been laid down: that of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief cornerstone. Thus the Lord builds His Church through the Word which is proclaimed, drawing men to Himself. The Church is not a 501(c)3 corporation or a 'denomination'— it is "saints, believers and lambs who hear the voice of their Shepherd." (Smalcald Articles III:XII.2)

Jesus said to Peter: "*Blessed are you, Simon Bar-Jonah, for flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but My Father who is in heaven. And I also say to you that you are Peter, and on this rock I will build My Church, and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it.*" As Christ Jesus builds His Church, so no one may prevail against that which He builds. In 1 Peter 1, we are consoled through the work of the promise which is our in Christ, for there we read that we have been begotten again "*to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled and that does not fade away, reserved in heaven for you, who are kept by the power of God through faith for salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.*" Christ Jesus has overcome the devil's might, conquered death, and atoned for all sin through His suffering and death for us. We have been baptized into

His death, and thus made partakers of eternal life through Him— this is the hope which lives in us through the Word. Our risen and ever-living Savior is the One who has delivered us from death and condemnation. Peter reminds us, *“In this you rejoice, though now for a little while, if need be, you have been grieved by various trials, that the genuineness of your faith, being much more precious than gold that perishes, though it is tested by fire, may be found to praise, honor and glory at the revelation of Jesus Christ, whom having not seen you love.”* (1 Pet. 1) Every Christian knows their own allotted measure of such trials, but through them all we are sustained by Christ’s victory, and the Holy Spirit strengthens faith to endure such crosses and trials through the consolations which are ours through the Word. The *“end of your faith— the salvation of your souls”*— this has been established by Christ Jesus, who said unto St. Peter: *“And I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven, and whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven.”* Thus the Lord of the Church sends His servant to you: to bind the sins of the impenitent, and loose the sins of those who repent, to proclaim the Word of God to you in its truth and purity, and to administer the Sacraments in the stead and by the command of Christ Jesus, who has called him to serve in this place.

Our consolation does not come from our labors, but from that which the Lord freely gives. By the gracious working of the Holy Spirit through the Word, we believe and confess the apostolic faith. The Lord of the Church has made us His own when He placed His name upon us in the Sacrament of Holy Baptism. We can relate to that Ethiopian baptized by the side of the road— no glorious temple built by human hands, but the hand of the Lord placed him upon that foundation of the prophets and apostles, and, dear brothers and sisters in Christ, that is where He has placed us, as well. Christ Jesus is our Savior, and He builds His Church, which endures forever— the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it. Amen.

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what the one true God has asserted, that there is no other God beside Himself. He is not a God “of the abstract”, nor “in the abstract,” that is to say, to be subjectively defined. No one, not even one who professes Christianity, has the divine sanction to conjure up in his heart and mind and thus teach their own opinion about “what or who” the God of all creation is! God has, out of His grace, revealed the reality of Himself as to “who and what” He is: three Persons, yet one true and eternal God. This is the God that the *Augustana* confesses: “. . . that there are three persons in this one divine essence, equally powerful, equally eternal, God the Father, God the Son, God the Holy Ghost, who are of one divine essence, eternal, incorporeal, indivisible, infinite in power, wisdom, and goodness, the Creator and preserver of all things visible and invisible” (*Augustana*, Article I).

This fundamental doctrine (that the one and only true God consists of three distinct yet equally divine Persons) is what all faithful Christian are to be knowledgeable of, so that they: (1) *believe* unto salvation; (2) *teach* at every opportunity presented to them by the working of the divine grace of this one God in their life for the salvation of others and; (3) *confess* correctly, for the sake of the Christ and the glory of God the Holy Trinity. He has revealed both “who and what” He is, and His divine revelation is truth!

Perhaps one of the most important blessings of holding faithfully historic Lutheran teaching is that its foundation was laid not upon some new doctrine devised by those who were given the pejorative label “Lutheran” by the followers of the Bishop of Rome in the 16<sup>th</sup> century, but by what is revealed in Holy Scripture. As I have pointed out in sermons, newsletter articles, and essays over the passing of the years, this fact was simply a ‘given’ among the Lutheran reformers and as such, when they were compelled by a conviction of faith to put down in plain and clear words the doctrine they *believed, taught and confessed* they had to express that faith in a God in Trinitarian form for there is no other ‘god’. I urge you to get your copy of the Lutheran Symbols and open the front and you will find first, a “Preface to the Christian Book of Concord.” What then follows is in fact rather surprising for it is something that was not written by a Lutheran: The second “document” we find in the Lutheran Symbols is in fact the presentation of the Three

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# Redeemer Lutheran: A New Start to Serving An Unchanging Mission

Rev. Mark Mueller  
Pastor, Redeemer Lutheran Church  
Cambridge, Minnesota

The following is a brief summary of the formation and early history of a new mission congregation: Redeemer Lutheran in Cambridge, Minnesota. As her pastor, it's a privilege to relate how God continues to bless and further the work of His Church— often in ways quite unforeseen.

In the year 2007, after seeing and experiencing increasing strife and inconsistent doctrinal practice within the LCMS, it became apparent to me, as a pastor, that I could no longer stay in that denomination. After several families of my then-current parish approached me about “starting clean”, discussion and planning took place to start a new and independent congregation. The emphasis always was and is to have Christ at the center, being faithful to the Scriptures which reveal Him and the Lutheran Confessions that exhibit Him.

To that end, a congregation was formally organized and named *Redeemer Lutheran*, with the Cambridge/Isanti area as her central mission field. This is an area of little Confessional Lutheran presence, while still close enough for the founding members to attend. On January 1, 2008, I resigned from the LCMS, and accepted the call to be the pastor of Redeemer Lutheran. On January 18, after joining *The Evangelical Lutheran Diocese of North America (ELDoNA)*, I was installed by the Rt. Rev. James Heiser, the bishop of that diocese (area of administration). Starting with just eight members, our attendance, by God's grace, has doubled in number over the first few months. What a joy it is to proclaim the clear truth of God's Word — and be encouraged to do so!

As for our place of worship, we're currently renting an unfinished building in order to save money. Although aesthetically stark, it's also acoustically fantastic. There's nothing like a concrete floor, masonry walls, and a metal deck ceiling to carry the sound! We purchased a portable organ that has recorded pipe organ sounds, and by using auxiliary speakers, the quality and volume is very impressive.

We've also made additions in liturgical furnishings. Several carpenters have made an altar, pulpit, communion rails, credence table, processional cross, a Pas-

chal candlestick, and a marker board holder for Bible Class. Soon we'll have flower pedestals and a lectern, with a baptismal font to follow. Some of the ladies have sewn altar and communion linens, and we had communion vessels donated by Salem Lutheran in Malone, Texas. Perhaps our most surprising addition has been church pews. When the old courthouse in Pine City closed, they auctioned most of their furniture. From that sale, we not only acquired good and inexpensive chairs for Bible Class, we bought all 15 of their nine-foot courtroom pews! (To see it for yourself, you can go to the website: <http://web.mac.com/hunnius/ELDoNA/MuellerInstallation.html>)

Financially, the members (and visitors) are doing all they can, and *The Augustana Ministerium* has been very generous with their support. My wife, a homemaker for 22 years, has found it difficult finding employment outside the home. I was a structural engineer for 20 years, and am hoping to use that experience as I look for part-time work.

In an era when churches of all stripes have lost the centrality of Jesus Christ and His work of redemption, we know our mission is a vital necessity in this rapidly dying world. Our purpose is simply to tell it like it is—the bad news and the good news— that man is a hopeless sinner by nature, and the only solution to his dilemma is found in the person and work of Jesus Christ. In proclaiming that Law and Gospel, we're feeding those who already know Jesus as their Savior, and bringing that food to those who do not (hence our slogan: “*To know Christ and make Christ known*”). To further aid that mission, we'll soon be airing a 5-minute radio devotion called “My Redeemer Lives!” (Sundays at 7:30 am on KBK, 95.5 FM.)

Our Sunday Services are at 9:00 A.M., followed by Bible Class at 10:15 A.M. We're located at 2560 S. Main St in Cambridge (just south of the Ford dealer). Our phone number is (763) 689-2290. Please feel welcome to call or visit us.

*“For there is no distinction: for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, and are justified by His grace as a gift, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus.” (Romans 3:22-24)*

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Ecumenical Creeds, the Apostles, Nicene and Athanasian. Why this is of importance, besides the fact that these three Creeds have been received by the Church Catholic as accurately confessing the doctrine of Holy Scripture itself and thus about who and what God is since the third, fourth and sixth century respectively, is that the Lutheran reformers put these three Creeds in this place to affirm that what followed was in full conformity with the doctrine confessed in these three ancient and orthodox Creeds, and thus in conformity with Holy Scripture itself. Those who came to be called “Lutheran” were determined that the doctrine that was taught in their congregations and schools would be only that which was the ancient doctrine of the Church. This is also the reason why they concluded the Lutheran Symbols not with a document filled with doctrinal statements written by Lutherans but by what is called “A Catalogue of Testimonies.” This final document is a series of quotes from various “Church fathers” speaking forth on various questions of doctrine. It was included to show clearly that Lutheran doctrine was truly Catholic doctrine (that is the universal Christian faith, not Roman!). The Lutheran reformers quite rightly presented the doctrine they believed, were teaching and confessing and were willing to die for in a fashion that in essence put not themselves in the forefront, but behind the confession of the faithful of the Church Catholic who had preceded themselves in the various doctrinal struggles to finally articulate in the most accurate and proper words “who and what” God really is! The God of the early orthodox Church fathers was in fact the very same God of those who were given the name Lutheran. This was in fact the Catholic faith. And so it must remain!

Who, then, is this ‘god’ of whom so many speak in public life? “Who and what” is this god who holds such an important place in their lives? And why will they not clearly state “who and what” he—or “she” for that matter—is? It surely is not the God whom we believe, teach and confess, for He has commanded that we shall have no other gods before Him! To confess God in spirit and truth is to both recognize and believe, that there are three Persons of the Godhead: “... equally powerful, equally eternal, God the Father, God the Son, God the Holy Ghost, who are of one divine essence, eternal, incorporeal, indivisible, infinite in power, wisdom, and goodness, the Creator and preserver of all things visible

and invisible” (*Augustana*). Thus the reality of the one true God is as He has revealed Himself to be in the only book of eternal life, the only “religious” book given among sinful mankind by which sins can be forgiven and the only Lord and Savior of the world is revealed to be the resurrected Jesus of Nazareth, the pages of an unchanged Holy Scripture.

One of the ancient axioms, or “basic principles” of historic Lutheran practice is that a “confessing church must be a condemning Church.” Now, this assertion is held to be most un-loving and goes directly against one of the most widely held, cherished, and vigorously promoted “doctrines” of our increasingly spiritually darkening time: the doctrine of “tolerance,” most especially in matters of religion.

Such spiritual “tolerance” is in a very real and growing tension with the doctrine of the Lutheran Symbols, in particular pertaining to “who and what” God is. Simply put, the one true God, the Holy Trinity who has elected us unto salvation by His working His saving will in our life through “The Gospel preached in its purity and the sacraments are administered according to the Gospel” (*Augustana*, Article vii, Of the Church) commands that we confess Him, and Him alone, in both spirit and truth. In other words, we are not divinely charged to speak of a God “of the abstract” nor “in the abstract,” but to speak of Him as He has divinely revealed Himself to be: God the Father, God the only-begotten Son, and God the Holy Ghost, yet not three gods, but one God!

There is something else confessed in this article that again confronts us with a very serious and growing spiritual challenge, and that is to both recognize and thereby confess that there is such a thing as “heresy.” Again, here the words of this article of “your” confession: “All heresies are, therefore, condemned which are in opposition to this Article: . . .” (*Augustana*). All teaching which would sunder or deny the reality that there are three divine Persons (“... in this one divine essence, equally powerful, equally eternal, God the Father, God the Son, God the Holy Ghost, who are of one divine essence, eternal, incorporeal, indivisible, infinite in power, wisdom, and goodness...”) is not to be “tolerated” but rejected and condemned as heresy. There is evidence in abundance that we are now living in a time when the word “heresy” has been long removed from the worship and catechetical

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**A BEAUTIFUL GIFT TO HER CHURCH—** Alvina Janssen of Christ Lutheran Church (Richmond, MO) made a beautiful quilt as a gift to her congregation to help raise support for parish building fund. Congregation members made donations to the building fund as they saw fit, and then drew names for the recipient of the quilt. (Photo: Herb and Mary Benton— the recipients of the quilt, together with Alvina Janssen and Pastor Hudson.)



**CONFIRMED IN THE FAITH—** On Palm Sunday, Kadee McMillan was confirmed in the Evangelical Lutheran confession and became a member of Christ Lutheran Church (Richmond, MO).

**CALLED TO SERVE—** Rev. Tony Oncken (Grayslake, IL) has been called to serve as a deacon of Salem Lutheran Church (Malone, TX) and as missionary to Northern Illinois. His installation is scheduled for April 6 and will take place at Salem-Malone.



*St. Henry Mission in Tony, Wisconsin*

## **Expanding The Kingdom Of The God We Believe A Report From The Mission Field**

**Jeffrey A. Ahonen**  
Deacon, Salem Lutheran Church, Malone, Texas  
Mission Pastor, Saint Henry Lutheran Mission, Montreal, Wisconsin

“Thy kingdom come.”

This is the daily prayer of the Christian. The child of God, adopted by The Lord out of His gracious mercy upon the sinner, prays this petition each day to our Father in Heaven. This prayer is uttered in faith every day to the God we believe is our true Father, through Jesus Christ His Only-Begotten Son, believing that we may ask Him confidently with all assurance, as dear children ask their dear father, that His kingdom would indeed come into the world.

Thus, this prayer—“Thy kingdom come”—is a daily prayer for missions.

Dr. Luther indicates that very thing in the Large Catechism’s explanation of this Second Petition of The Lord’s Prayer, writing thusly: “Therefore we pray here in the first place that this may become effective with us, and that His name be so praised through the Holy Word of God and a Christian life that both we who have accepted it may abide and daily grow therein, and that it may gain approbation and adherence among other people and proceed with power throughout the world, that many may find entrance into the Kingdom of Grace, be made partakers of redemption, being led thereto by the Holy Ghost, in order that thus we may all together

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# Who is the One True God?

by Rev. Donald R. Hunter

St. Paul Lutheran Church (Taylorsville, NC)

When the early reformers were compiling the Augsburg Confession to witness to the hope that dwelt within them, they firmly believed that if they would ever be able to witness to the truth they needed to start where truth starts, with the Triune God. We see this set forth in Article I: Of God, of the Augsburg Confession, which reads:

*1] Our Churches, with common consent, do teach that the decree of the Council of Nicaea concerning the Unity of the Divine Essence and concerning the Three Persons, is true and to be believed without any doubting; 2] that is to say, there is one Divine Essence which is called and which is God: eternal, without body, without parts, of infinite power, wisdom, and goodness, the Maker and Preserver of all things, visible and invisible; and 3] yet there are three Persons, of the same essence and power, who also are coeternal, the Father the Son, and the Holy Ghost. And the term "person" 4] they use as the Fathers have used it, to signify, not a part or quality in another, but that which subsists of itself. 5] They condemn all heresies which have sprung up against this article, as the Manichaeans, who assumed two principles, one Good and the other Evil: also the Valentinians, Arians, Eunomians, Mohammedans, and all such. 6] They condemn also the Samosatenes, old and new, who, contending that there is but one Person, sophistically and impiously argue that the Word and the Holy Ghost are not distinct Persons, but that "Word" signifies a spoken word, and "Spirit" signifies motion created in things.*

First they write of what is truth regarding the Triune God, then they write of what is not truth regarding the Triune God, and then, condemn such error. It is a style which every catechized Lutheran should recognize from being instructed with Luther's Small Catechism. It is a format of writing in forms of thesis and antithesis; that is, what is truth, and what is not truth. While this format of writing is found throughout the entire Book of Concord, the most clear writing-format is found within the pages of the Formula of Concord's Epitome, where one finds such affirmative statements-that is, what is (truth), and such negative statements-that which is not (truth) regarding such articles of doctrine as original sin, free will, etc.

In our culture today this manner of writing and speaking is no longer "politically correct" when speaking of the identity of the Triune God in a public forum. To write that there is only One God, the Triune God, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, and that all other gods are false gods, supposedly violates another person's freedom to express his religious preference as valid in the worship of their false gods. This argument falls under the UN's International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, Article 18.2, which reads, "No one shall be subject to coercion which would impair his freedom to have or to adopt a religion or belief of his choice."

Of course, we must remember that while we are in this world as Christ's holy people, we are not of this world. In other words, we must render unto Caesar that which is Caesar's, but unto God which is God's. As Christians, it is essential to abide by the laws of the land but at the same time to boldly bear witness to the truth of the existence of only one God, and His true identity, at every opportunity.

Sometimes we Christians forget to struggle in fighting the good fight of faith, and publically denounce that which is false, even within the realms of our family, friends and church. Sometimes that old evil foe, who "now means deadly woe," strikes in one's heart the desire to abandon our fight of faith due to the position of life in which we live. Too often it leaves us asking, "how will this effect me?" That happens because too often we forget to see the importance of daily renouncing sin through daily repentance, and we forget to come forth to live the new man in Christ, into whose death and resurrection we are united through baptism (Romans 6:1-5).

When that happens, Satan easily begins working with his greatest ally, our sinful nature, where we can become convinced not to regularly be fed the Bread of Life. Over time, God's Word of forgiveness is set aside as we fail to hear His sweet words of absolution proclaimed in our ears as part of the Body of Christ. Slowly, we fail to regularly hear His Word of Law and Gospel for daily guidance and strength every Sabbath. Eventually, we fail to see the urgency of feeding on His holy Body and Blood in the Lord's Supper where are sins are personally forgiven, and were are strengthened to live a

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## ***Rutowicz from Page 5***

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teachings for his own political purposes. And the merchants, property owners and artisans in the city of Riga also had their reasons for embracing the Reformation. For the peasants of Latvia there was really no choice over what form of Christianity they participated in: For the peasant on the manor, those decisions came from the top down. Peasants were required to attend church on fear of reprisal. However, the Reformation was favorable to the native Latvians. Local Reformers took great pains to organize non-German congregations, which were provided with church buildings and pastors; for example, St. Jacob's church in Riga. The pastor of St. Jacob's church, Sylvester Tegetmeier, has been called the "Father of the Livonian Reformation" for his work among the native Latvians. And the Lutherans emphasized the importance of teaching in the native language of the people. This brought with it the idea that the individual, common man was valuable before God.

Unlike many other Lutheran countries, Latvia did not have an independent episcopal structure until the twentieth century, because Latvia itself was not independent until the twentieth century.

The first bishop of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Latvia was Karl Irbe who was consecrated to his office in 1922 by Archbishop Söderblom. At that time Söderblom suggested that the leader of the Latvian Church should have the title of archbishop. When Irbe voluntarily resigned his office as a result of an ecclesiastical-political conflict which concerned his defense of the independence of the Church Teodors Grünbergs was chosen in 1932 as his successor. At this time the leadership of the Church adopted the title "archbishop" in order to give greater authority to the highest pastoral office, perhaps being influenced by the usage in the Swedish and Finnish Churches. However, Grünbergs was not consecrated according to the traditional forms; the laying on of hands was performed by some of the deans and other clergy immediately after the election in the assembly hall of the synod. Sometime later the oldest dean of the Church, assisted by the other deans, conducted the Service of Installation.<sup>17</sup>

Teodors Grünbergs led the Latvian Church during World War II, at least during part of it. After the Soviet

Union's second occupation (when the Germans were in retreat), Grünbergs, and sixty per cent of the Lutheran clergy, had to flee and go into exile. The Red Army's advance was terrifying for the church. The former archbishop "Karl Irbe was elected to lead the church. Initially Irbe and others believed that cooperation with the new Soviet government would allow the church to retain some independence. However, this optimism was destroyed with the arrest and deportation of Irbe and other active clergy."<sup>18</sup> The Soviet government oversaw the election of a new archbishop, Gustavs Tušars, "though it was not possible to arrange the desired episcopal consecrations."<sup>19</sup> "In turn he was succeeded by Peteris Kleperis and Alberts Freijws both of who, however, died shortly after their election and were never consecrated. From 1969 until 1983 the ELCL was led by Janis Matulis."<sup>20</sup> The lack of desired episcopal consecrations continued to be the case until the present archbishop of Latvia, Janis Vanags. "Archbishop Janis Vanags, first elected in 1993 at a special synod meeting following the untimely death of Archbishop Karlis Gailiitis in 1992, was consecrated bishop on August 29, 1993 by the Archbishop of" <sup>21</sup> Uppsala. [Gunnar Weman?] This would once again establish the so-called "apostolic succession" to Latvia.

### ***Apostolic Succession***

The subject of apostolic succession is not strictly part of what is being considered in this paper, but it is so often a topic with regard to episcopacy that I would like to make a brief mention of it. Should Lutherans care about so called "apostolic succession?" For the most part, the answer should be "no." On the one hand, Lutherans have no problem obtaining or maintaining "apostolic succession" for the sake of tradition or for the sake of a weaker brother's conscience. On the other hand, Lutherans ought not be in the business of obtaining "apostolic succession" in order to make some other group or organization see them as legitimate. Chasing after Roman or Eastern or Anglican approval through so-called "apostolic succession" plays into the errors of these churches. They make lists of successive office holders the test as to their own legitimacy, rather than an examination of doctrine that is passed on. If Roman "apostolic succession" can't keep Popes from kissing Korans or praying with imams in mosques, I fail to see its value. Likewise, Anglican apostolic succession hasn't stopped the

Archbishop of Canterbury from being an honorary Druid. (I still like Hermann Sasse's treatment of the subject thus far in the *We Confess Anthology*.)

We should also note that there is no sort of "apostolic succession" that Lutherans can obtain that will make Rome or the East view their orders as valid. A Lutheran church body's "Lutheranism" invalidates any succession. Neither Rome nor the East recognize the Swedish succession, which is probably the only one worth having anyway, for a Lutheran, in regard to tradition.

The Church of Sweden has had "apostolic succession" since Stefan was consecrated Archbishop of Uppsala in A.D. 1164 by Pope Alexander III and the Archbishop of Lund, who was made Primate over Uppsala. Uppsala became independent of Lund when Folke Johansson Ängel was consecrated as Archbishop of Uppsala directly by Pope Gregory X in A.D. 1274. During the Reformation, Laurentius Petri was elected Archbishop of Uppsala by all the pastors of Sweden. "The Consecration took place on 22<sup>nd</sup> September 1531 at Stockholm, being performed by Petrus Magni, Bishop of Västerås, who had himself been confirmed and consecrated by the authority of Pope Clement VII in 1524."<sup>22</sup> "It was through this bishop that the Apostolic Succession was preserved in the Church of Sweden."<sup>23</sup> When Laurentius Petri Nericius died, the next archbishop of Uppsala, Laurentius Petri Gothus, maintained "apostolic succession" by having as one of his consecrators the bishop of Abo, Paul Juusten.

This succession has been passed to others. The Church of Finland and all three Baltic Lutheran Churches also have their "apostolic succession" through Sweden. But, once again, neither the East nor Rome recognize this succession. Only the Anglicans are impressed with the Swedish pedigree.

Now, I'm not saying there is anything wrong with this Swedish succession in and of itself. The problem is with the false conclusions Rome or Canterbury come to with regard to it. If the ELDoNA were to have this Swedish succession made available to her (and I can't imagine that ever happening), it might be worth getting so long as she would not have to compromise herself in any way. The Swedish apostolic succession might be a nice bit of historic, traditional "window dressing," but certainly nothing essential.

It would seem to me that the difference between having the "historic episcopate" and simply episcopal pol-

ity is the matter of consecration at the hands of a bishop in the "historic episcopate." To see this "historic episcopate" as a necessary element for the church would militate against Lutheran doctrine. But would episcopal consecration necessarily be a rejection of the doctrine, that there is but one office of the ministry, not multiple offices. Might not the Swedes have seen the Episcopal consecration as somehow a renewing of ordination and not a re-ordination? This is a question that requires more study.

Lutherans have historically embraced the office of bishop, but have embraced it as an office by human rite. It does not seem that Lutherans could have another position on this issue. Even the Swedes, who supposedly have this "apostolic succession," do not view it as necessary the way the Anglicans do. In 1922 the Swedish Bishops' Assembly wrote the following to the English:

No particular organization of the Church and its ministry is instituted *iure divino*. Our Church cannot recognize any essential difference, *de iure divino*, of aim and authority between the two or three Orders into which the ministry of grace may have been divided, *iure humano*, for the benefit and welfare of the Church. The value of every organization of the *ministerium ecclesiasticum*, and of the Church in general, is only to be judged by its fitness and ability to become a pure vessel for the supernatural contents, and a perfect channel for the way of Divine Revelation unto mankind. That doctrine in no wise makes our Church indifferent to the organization and the forms of ministry which the cravings and experiences of the Christian community have produced under the guidance of the Spirit in the course of history. We do not only regard the peculiar forms and traditions of our Church with the reverence due to a venerable legacy from the past, but we recognize in them a blessing from the God of history accorded to us.<sup>24</sup>

This statement by the Swedish bishops clearly conforms to Article 5 of the *Augsburg Confession*, where it says, "To obtain such faith God instituted the office of the ministry,..."<sup>25</sup> There is but one office of the ministry by divine rite, not three offices. Men may sub-divide the one office into three in Christian freedom.

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### **The Call of a Bishop**

The King set aside the rights of the Chapter of Uppsala Cathedral, and held an assembly of the clergy from the whole realm at Stockholm for the purpose of electing a new Archbishop. About one hundred and seventy priests took part in the election, and in the event no less than one hundred and fifty votes were cast for Laurentius Petri, a tremendous triumph for a young man of thirty-two years.<sup>26</sup>

This was the election of Laurentius Petri as Archbishop. The election functioned as his call to the See of Uppsala. Only a few years previously he had been studying in Wittenberg. When he came back to Sweden, the King appointed him to a professorship at the University of Uppsala, at the age of twenty-eight. It was at this time he was ordained a priest.<sup>27</sup> In this case the appointment by the King functioned as his call. He was a professor and a priest, and his call was to the university. He functioned in this capacity until one hundred-seventy bishops and priests gathered in Stockholm, at the King's request, and elected him archbishop. After his election, he was consecrated.

One objection to this form of calling a bishop is that no where do we see any lay participation in the calling process. And we rightly raise the question of the legitimacy of such a call. The blessed Martin Chemnitz wrote in his *Examen*; "...the apostolic history show[s] clearly that election or calling belongs in some way to the whole church, so that in their choosing and calling both presbyters and people are partners."<sup>28</sup> The main point that Chemnitz is making is that the clergy and the laity should not be pitted against one another, and the laity should not be disregarded. Chemnitz also warns against swinging in the direction of mob rule. He says, "*But do Anabaptists do right, who entrust the whole right of calling to the common multitude (which they take the word ekklesia to mean), with the ministry and pious magistrate excluded?* By no means. For the church in each place is called, and is, the whole body embracing under Christ, the Head, all the members of that place. Eph 4:15-16; 1 Co 12:12-14, 27. Therefore as the call belongs not only to the ministry nor only to the magistrate, so also is it not to be made subject to the mere will [and] whim of the common multitude, for no part, with either one or both [of the others] excluded, is the church. But the call should be and remain in the power of the whole church, but with due

order observed."<sup>29</sup> Laurentius Petri also maintained the role of the three estates in his *Church Order* of 1571.

So, what of archbishop Petri's own election/call? Is it possible for a call to be legitimate without all three estates participating? And more to the point in our time, can it be legitimate without the participation of the laity?

Well, of course, the normal pattern of calling men to the office should include a role for the clergy and the laity. But is this some sort of iron-clad law, violation of which nullifies the call? The sainted professor Kurt Marquart briefly addressed this question. Of the standard of both lay and clerical participation in the call he says, "The basic principle is simple and remains the same. But the applications allow of considerable variety in practice, depending on circumstances. Some classic examples will illustrate the point. If a group of captive Christian laymen, isolated in a desert, were to elect one of themselves to baptize, preach, and administer the Holy Supper, that man would be their pastor "as though he had been ordained by all the bishops and popes in the world" (Luther)."<sup>30</sup> Marquart also gives examples from Scripture of clergy standing in as representatives of the whole church. He mentions specifically Acts 14:23, "So when they had appointed elders in every church,...etc.," and he explains that in this passage "appointed" does not mean that the laity took a vote on the call. The word here "often means simply appoint, designate, set in place."<sup>31</sup> While Marquart acknowledges that simple appointments of clergy are valid, he comes to his main point; "On the other hand, it would be absurd to assume that either Paul and Barnabas (Acts 14:23) or Titus (Tit. 1:5) were able or willing autocratically to impose unacceptable ministers on unwilling churches. Fraternal mutual consultation, accommodation, and cooperation are simply the self-evident rule of life in the New Testament Church (Rom. 14:1-3; I Cor. 9:19-22; Phil. 2:1-11; I Pet. 5:3)."<sup>32</sup> So, it would be possible and legitimate for a ministerium to call or elect a bishop without active lay participation (e.g. voting), so long as he is not objected to by the laity. If the laity give implicit approval, by simply not objecting, the spirit of the call is not violated. The main point is not to shove an unwanted bishop or priest down the laity's throat, so to speak.

And very often in the history of the Lutheran Church the calling of a bishop (or even a parish pastor) has been given over to a group of clergy, with the addition sometimes of a few knowledgeable laymen. This was

certainly the case for the Church of Sweden. Laurentius Petri's *Church Order* of 1571 describes "concerning the election of a bishop."

In former times it hath been the custom that the whole commonalty should elect the bishops as well as the other servants of the Church. Albeit this is proper, where it can be done in a Christian manner; and it must surely be accomplished by an election according to the order of the Church. Nevertheless circumstances are now otherwise in these respects both that, the dioceses of Bishops having grown larger than they were at the first, all men cannot meet for such business, and likewise also that there are few of the common folk who can have any knowledge of the persons who would best serve in such an office. Therefore shall the election of Bishops be given into the hands of some appointed persons of the estate of the clergy and others who are in some degree experienced in this matter and bound by the duty of oath, that they shall elect and nominate him who in the sight of God seemeth to be most fitted for such an office.<sup>33</sup>

I'm not saying that the laity should not be involved in the election of a bishop. I am simply saying that their lack of active participation does not invalidate the call. The church definitely has the power and authority to call bishops and parish priests, but how the church calls, how it is configured, how the process proceeds, is open to much latitude. If we do not acknowledge that, then for much of our Lutheran Church's history men have not been called. Even the Reformers themselves would have invalid calls. For example, the estate of the laity never participated in Luther's call. The great Lutheran theologian, Johann Gerhard, received his call to the superintendency of Heldburg from the prince of Coburg's chancellor, Volckmar Scherer.<sup>34</sup> Certainly we must allow for flexibility in how calls are given.

### ***The Power of an ELDoNA Bishop***

One of the criticisms that we in the ELDoNA have heard about our Episcopal polity, is that it is not a traditional episcopacy; that is, the parishes of the diocese are not under the authority of the bishop. Parishes are affiliated or associated with the diocese, but it is the pastors who are members of the diocese. Therefore, Bishop Heiser cannot directly discipline any parish; he

can only call the pastor to obedience. Some have claimed that this is an innovation for episcopacy, and it makes it a rather weak form of episcopacy. And we readily admit, that it is a weak form. In the ELDoNA the bishop may remove a parish pastor from the diocese for some sin. However, we acknowledge and affirm that such a removal from the diocese does not remove a man from his call; congregations shall be encouraged to follow their congregational constitutions and bylaws in all such matters. The bishop can do nothing else but remove a pastor from the diocese.

When forming the ELDoNA we intentionally limited the power and scope of the episcopacy for some very practical reasons. I believe that those who have criticized us for not instituting a more medieval type episcopacy do not understand what they are proposing. Medieval bishops had civil powers that simply don't exist today. If a parish is abusing its pastor, the bishop could admonish them that they are in the wrong, and call them to repentance, but he has no punitive powers. And in our twenty-first century American context, how could there be? We do not have the power of the state to bring to bear on the parish, as a medieval bishop might. Nor do we have the power to coerce by seizing property. Even if such powers were desirable (and they most certainly are not), they are not attainable in our current context. What should we do? Should we attempt to get all the parishes of our diocese to sign over the deeds to their property to the bishop? Certainly not. We knew right from the beginning of the ELDoNA that these were aspects of medieval episcopal power we wanted nothing to do with.

An ELDoNA bishop conducts visitations of the clergy to examine their doctrine and life. (In a year and a half I've already received two such visitations. I never had any such thing in the LCMS.) And the bishop conducts all ordinations and installations, and that, *de jure humano*, for the sake of unity. We view our bishop as *primus inter pares*, first among equals. He sets for us a general vision for the future of the diocese, but we can all help shape our future. Nothing in our polity ought to be seen as Romanizing or tyrannizing. We have simply tried to establish an evangelical episcopacy in our twenty-first century, American context. We believe we have honored the spirit of the *Apology*, article fourteen, as best we could.

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I am honored to be allowed to speak to you today, and I admire all of you for having the courage to follow through with your commitment to the Lutheran Confessions, even when it hard to do. I would like to extend to all of you the good will of the Evangelical Lutheran Diocese of North America. And I hope and pray that we can come closer together as church bodies. Thank you.

### Soli Deo Gloria.

<sup>1</sup> Niles Theses, Theses number four. I will quote Dr. David Scaer here: “Luther held ordination as necessary. This opinion was offered in the case of a certain Johann Sutel who had assumed the position of preacher at St. Nicolai Church in Gottingen. Luther was asked the question whether Sutel could celebrate the Eucharist without priestly ordination, priesterliche Weihe. His reply was no. Sutel should refrain from the celebration till he was ordained.” *Ordination: Human Rite or Divine Ordinance*, Concordia Theological Seminary Press, Fort Wayne, 1977.

<sup>2</sup> Treatise on the Power and Primacy of the Pope, para. 65. Theodore G. Tappert, ed., *The Book of Concord*, Fortress Press, Philadelphia, 1959, p. 331. (Jacobs, p. 349.; Kolb/Wengert, p. 340.)

<sup>3</sup> Apology of the Augsburg Confession, article 14, para. 1,2 &5. Tappert, pp. 214-215. (Jacobs, p. 217.; Kolb/Wengert, pp. 222-223.)

<sup>4</sup> J.L. Neve, *Story and Significance of The Augsburg Confession*, The Lutheran Literary Board, Burlington, Iowa, 1930, p. 76.

<sup>5</sup> Smalcald Articles, part III, signatures. Tappert, pp. 316-317. (Jacobs, pp. 336-337; Kolb/Wengert, p. 326.)

<sup>6</sup> There were a small number of bishops in the German lands who did become Lutheran bishops. For example: Georg von Polentz, Bishop of Samland 1524-1550 and Erhard von Queiss, Bishop of Pomesanien, 1525-1528.

<sup>7</sup> Bischöfe; *episcoporum*.

<sup>8</sup> Augsburg Confession, article 28, para. 21-22., German text. Tappert, p. 84. (Jacobs, p. 62. Kolb/Wengert, p. 94.)

<sup>9</sup> Augsburg Confession, article 28, para. 53&55., German text. Tappert, pp. 89-90. (Jacobs, p. 65. Kolb/Wengert, p. 98.)

<sup>10</sup> Small Catechism, [IX] Table of Duties, para. 2., Tappert, p. 354. (Jacobs, p. 376. Kolb/Wengert, p. 365.)

<sup>11</sup> Smalcald Articles, part III, article X, para. 1. Tappert, pp. 314. (Jacobs, pp. 333-334; Kolb/Wengert, p. 323-324.)

<sup>12</sup> *Episcopacy: Lutheran-United Methodist Dialogue II*, Jack M. Tuell and Roger W. Fjeld, editors., Augsburg Fortress, Minneapolis, Minnesota, 1991., p. 49.

<sup>13</sup> Eric E. Yelverton, *An Archbishop of the Reformation*, The Epworth Press, London, 1958., p. 5.

<sup>14</sup> William Tighe, *The Swedish Episcopal Succession*, [http://reader.classicalanglican.net/?page\\_id=315](http://reader.classicalanglican.net/?page_id=315)

<sup>15</sup> Ibid.

<sup>16</sup> *Episcopacy*, Tuell and Fjeld, pp. 49-50.

<sup>17</sup> *Episcopacy in the Lutheran Church?*, Ivar Asheim and Vic-

tor R. Gold, editors, Fortress Press, Philadelphia, 1970, p. 136.

<sup>18</sup> <http://www.lclb.lv/en/?ct=history>

<sup>19</sup> *Episcopacy in the Lutheran Church?*, p. 137.

<sup>20</sup> <http://www.lclb.lv/en/?ct=history>

<sup>21</sup> [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Evangelical\\_Lutheran\\_Church\\_of\\_Latvia](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Evangelical_Lutheran_Church_of_Latvia)

Evangelical\_Lutheran\_Church\_of\_Latvia

<sup>22</sup> Eric E. Yelverton, *An Archbishop of the Reformation*, The Epworth Press, London, 1958., p. 5.

<sup>23</sup> Ibid., p. 5 note.

<sup>24</sup> *Episcopacy in the Lutheran Church?*, p. 134.

<sup>25</sup> Augsburg Confession, article 5, para. 1., German text. Tappert, p. 31. (Jacobs, p. 38. Kolb/Wengert, p. 40.)

<sup>26</sup> Eric E. Yelverton, *An Archbishop of the Reformation*, The Epworth Press, London, 1958., p. 5.

<sup>27</sup> Ibid., p. 4.

<sup>28</sup> Martin Chemnitz, *Examination of the Council of Trent, Part II*, Fred Kramer, trans., Concordia Publishing House, Saint Louis, Missouri, 1978., pp. 708-709.

<sup>29</sup> Martin Chemnitz, *Ministry, Word, and Sacraments: An Enchiridion*, Luther Poellot, ed., Concordia Publishing House, Saint Louis, Missouri, 1981., p. 34. (Note also that this Enchiridion was used by Chemnitz, as Superintendent/Bishop, in his examination of parish pastors.)

<sup>30</sup> Kurt E. Marquart, *The Church and Her Fellowship, Ministry, and Governance*, Confessional Lutheran Dogmatics, vol. IX, The International Foundation for Lutheran Confessional Research, Fort Wayne, Indiana, 1990., p. 147.

<sup>31</sup> Ibid., p. 146.

<sup>32</sup> Ibid.

<sup>33</sup> Yelverton, p. 141.

<sup>34</sup> Erdmann Rudolph Fischer, *The Life of John Gerhard*, Reprintation Press, Malone, Texas, 2001., p. 52.



## The Seal of The Evangelical Lutheran Diocese of North America:

As Evangelical Lutherans, we retain the “rose” of Dr. Martin Luther, which the Reformer created to summarize the central teaching of Justification by grace through faith. The Jerusalem Cross in the center of the rose signifies the five wounds of Christ (His hands, His feet, and His side). The words “Verbum Dei Manet in Aeternum” (“The Word of God endures Forever”) have been emblazoned on Lutheran banners, shields and standards since the time of John the Steadfast (1468–1532), the Elector of Saxony, who stood with the Reformers at the time of the Augsburg Confession. “Concordia A.D. 1580” confesses that our teaching is that of all true Evangelical Lutherans across the generations, the doctrine of the Book of Concord (1580).

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life of the overwhelming majority of Christians. The consequences of this reality have been nothing short of spiritually devastating! Thus it is that multitudes of people continue to hold fellowship in various church organizations that now accept and even condone a host of practices that are specifically condemned and forbidden in the pages of Holy Scripture. The *Augustana* cited above list a number of religious groups that may be somewhat unfamiliar to you, so let's review a little of what they taught, and then we will clearly see why the Lutheran confessors included them in the doctrinal category of a "heresy." First, we have the "Manichaeans who have adopted two gods, the one good the other evil." In an attempt to explain the existence of sin, the Manichaeans developed a double principle of divine being, in essence a "good" god and a "bad" god. This false heresy was condemned long before 'Lutheranism' came into being, as it was viewed as outside the Catholic faith from its inception around 250 A.D. One might well ask, "Why is this of importance in our time, pastor, for I have never heard of this group and I certainly have not known a Manichaean?" The response is to be seen in the amazing number of books and learned journal articles of recent years that address the topic of Manichaean doctrine, a very significant number of which contend that it was not in fact a heresy, and that the early church fathers who wrote and taught against them just did not understand their doctrine rightly. There are now college presses and other widely respected publishers who have a special section marked "Manichaeism" for you to avail yourself to.

Next are the "Valentinians." This was a particular brand of Gnosticism which taught a multiplicity of gods all emanating from a divine source of pairs. Their doctrine is very complicated, but as in the case of the Manichaeans, the Church Catholic consistently contended against its many forms of false doctrine again from the third century onward. It is important to realize that, like the Manichaeans, the followers of this false doctrine were never accepted as members of the Church Catholic. The great early Church father Irenaeus the Bishop of Lyons (ca. 130 – ca. 200 A.D.) wrote what remains the most thorough and erudite rebuttal of their doctrine and practice in a treatise entitled *On the Detection and overthrow of the Pretended but False Gnosis*. This important work is still available in a number of translations (including English), but under the more commonly

recognized title *Against Heresies*. "But pastor, that was so long ago, and again, I have never met a 'Valentinian.' I don't even know of a group of them." And yet, we are being exposed to their teaching every year, especially at the time of the Christmas festival, for that is when we see seasonal specials on television about the Nativity of the Christ, Jesus of Nazareth. The new twist is that the miracle of the Incarnation and Nativity of the only-begotten Son of God is now being explained not only from the Gospel accounts, but also from the 'Gospels' of Thomas, Mary, Peter and even Judas among others, all of which are Gnostic in origin and content. Those writings have never been accepted within the life of the faithful of the Church Catholic! We must not be indifferent to this fact for again there is a continually growing number of books being published by people who contend that they are Christian, but who are also working hard to reassure us that Gnosticism was not a heresy, and that we can learn much about our faith and who and what God is, by availing ourselves to these "newly found" writings. The fact that the Church Catholic recognized these documents as thoroughly heretical by the fourth century, and declared it so, is now explained away by all sorts of novel turns and twists of history and texts. Make no mistake about it, certain aspects of Gnosticism are manifesting themselves in the religious life a many a church organization and worship life of Christians in our time. It was not by chance but by *conscious choice* that the Lutheran Reformers quote Irenaeus multiple times in *A Catalogue of Testimonies*, for again they were publicly confirming that their doctrine toward this heresy was not of "Lutheran" origin but in fact the ancient, Catholic and Apostolic faith.

Next we have: "... the Arians..." Of all the heresies of the ancient Church, this was one of the most virulent, and in point of fact one that is flourishing in our time! In the briefest of summaries, the Arians denied that the only-begotten Son of God was of the same essence as God the Father; and that He (the Son) was in fact the first of all created creatures; that He was a god, but because He was not of the essence of the Father, He was a lesser god than the Father. Also, that because He was created, "there was a time when He was not." The problem is, an attack on the Christ, that is to say, to deny the Incarnated only-begotten Son of God Jesus of Nazareth is true God, is an attack on the Holy Trinity,

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for Jesus remained fully God while becoming true Man! As you are probably aware, the spread of this heresy was the primary reason the Church Catholic convened the first Ecumenical Council at Nicaea in 325 A.D. That Council declared Arianism a heresy, but we dare not think that this heresy has ever gone away, for in fact it has manifested itself time and again through the passing of the ages. And so it is in our time. Within the past year I have witnessed two new buildings constructed for the worship of this Arian god and for the continued spread of this heresy. Their places of worship are called by the name of "Kingdom Hall" and the people who "worship" in them have claimed the name of God for themselves. But theirs is a false god, which is no god at all! If you know a Jehovah's Witness, you know an Arian, for their doctrine of God is consistent with the teaching of Arius. Also, if you know a Mormon then you also know an Arian, for their doctrine of God is at least in part consistent with the teaching of the Arians as well.

But as I said, the heresies just didn't go away. Thus "the Eunomians" are listed next, this heresy being named after its founder, Eunomius ( d. 392 A.D.) the bishop of Cyzicus, whom I have come to call through my study over the years "an Arian on steroids." The doctrine which he embrace and promoted was the result of the on-going evolution of that taught by Arius, to the extent that instead of the only-begotten Son being "like" the Father in essence, the only-begotten Son was held to be in fact different in essence from God the Father. It was Arius' doctrine carried out to its natural end, resulting in the total separation of the Persons of the Godhead into different essences.

The "Mohammedans" are listed next and this is of interest for the fact that they are the only group included that had no relationship with Christianity. They were of great importance to the Lutheran confessors, however, because they were the largest and most militant of heresies — a heresy that had waged literal war against Christians since the seventh century, and were on the march at the time of the writing of the Augsburg Confession, spreading their heresy by the sword once again. This particular heresy militantly denies the reality of God being a Holy Trinity in three divine Persons, and yet one God. They also deny that Jesus is the Incarnated only-begotten Son of God and that He is the only Lord and Savior of the world. It is significant that all the other heresies

mentioned did not deny that Jesus was the only Lord and Savior of the world, but they did give up the orthodox teaching of His relationship with God the Father in particular. Not so with the Mohammedans. They contend that Mohammed is the final messenger from God and all are to believe in him, not in this Jesus, who was indeed a great prophet, but no more than a prophet. They contend that the final words of spiritual revelation were given to mankind through the 'last and greatest' of the prophets, Mohammed. Once again, the ancient axiom is true: an attack (in this case a denial of the true and essential reality of the Godhead of the Christ, Jesus of Nazareth, being both fully God and truly Man) is also a denial of the doctrine that God in His essential reality is three Persons in one divine essence.

Last listed are: "those of the ancient and modern Samosatenians, who adopted but one person, and sophistically explain these two, the Word and the Holy Spirit, and assert, that they must not be distinct persons, but that the Word signifies the oral word or voice, and that the Holy Ghost is the motion created in the creatures" (*Augustana*).

Again we see the presence of heretical teaching so clearly in the phrase quoted above: "... that they must not be distinct persons..." Paul of Samosata flourished between the years ca. 265-275 A.D. during which time he was the bishop of Samosata. The church historian Eusebius of Caesarea, who had access to the acts of the council that condemned Paul of Samosata says that Paul taught that Jesus was an ordinary man who was inhabited by the Word, and who thus "became" the Son of God. For the bishop of Smaosata, the Word was the eternal power of the divine wisdom. That his doctrine of God was early recognized as heretical is seen in the fact that councils of bishops in A.D. 264 and again in 268 met in Antioch to condemn his theology and secure his deposition, but his influence was so strong that he simply dismissed the process and carried on. He was finally removed when an appeal was made to the emperor Aurelian. It is also important to realize that Canon 19 of the Council of Nicaea (there are 20 Canons attached to this Conciliar Creed) specifically addresses the process by which the followers of Paul's doctrine be allowed to come back to the Church Catholic.

The doctrine that these faithful teachers embraced and promoted is the doctrine which you have willingly and freely adopted as you own in relation to

God. Your willing reception and subscription of Article I of the *Augustana* as your own confession clearly and quite properly circumscribes who the one true God is: "...one divine essence only, which is called, and truly is, God, but that there are three persons in this one divine essence, equally powerful, equally eternal, God the Father, God the Son, God the Holy Ghost, who are of one divine essence, eternal, incorporeal, indivisible, infinite in power, wisdom, and goodness, the Creator and preserver of all things visible and invisible" (*Augustana*, Article 1). This God and this God alone is He of whom you are to *believe, teach and confess*.

Dear redeemed, this short and very brief essay is not simply an academic exercise, nor is it some musings of a pastor who has too many free times on his hands. (If only it were!) In fact, the topic of "God" is a most serious one for what is at stake is ultimately the difference between the reality of heaven or hell. (And yes, that second place does indeed exist!)

Thus the question posed takes on an even more urgent meaning: "Who is this god of whom you speak?"

Is it the "god" of one of the candidates (who is a Mormon and proud of it, and who has argued strenuously that he is a Christian). "He believes in Jesus!" That may be well, but that's not sufficient, for the question which must be answered is "what does he believe *about* Jesus?" The Mohammedan knows of Jesus, but does not believe He is the incarnated only-begotten Son of God and the only Lord and Savior of the world!

Is it the 'god' of another of the candidates who hold membership in the United Church of Christ, which officially denies the teaching of God being a holy Trinity? What does it mean when two people hold high public office and profess that they are Christian, and yet holds diametrically opposed positions on the value of pre-born life; the reality of the sinfulness of homosexual acts; the destruction of human life for the obtaining of cells for research, and worship and are members in good standing in the same congregation? How can this be? "Who is this god of whom you speak?" We need to be very clear here: these are not political, but theological and even more importantly soteriological questions as well!

Here the confession of one of the ancient Church fathers concerning the God of which we are so privileged to believe in and speak of:

Therefore, we believe the nature and the essence of the Trinity to be one perceived in three characteris-

tics, the power is undivided, the kingdom without partition; [there is] one Godhead and one lordship. The unity is shown in the sameness of the essence, whereas the Trinity is perceptible not in bare names, but in the hypostases. For we do not call the one 'three-named' according to the contraction and mixture of Sabellius, Photinus and Marcellus. We do not say that there are three persons of different kind and distinct essence, unequal and dissimilar one superior to the other, measurable and definable by human mind and tongue, according to the impious meddling of Arius, who separated and estranged the Persons of the Trinity from each other. Rather we speak of three hypostasis, but one nature of the Trinity, a nature which is incorporeal, unchangeable, immutable, endless, immortal, infinite, incorruptible, unchangeable, immutable, endless, immortal, infinite, incorruptible, indescribable, boundless, imperceptible, inconceivable, self-existent, spiritual light, the fountainhead of benefits, the thesaurus of wisdom, Creator of the universe and provider of all, the Wisdom steering the ship of creation. This faith we preserve, since we were taught by the theologians. To those who argue on the basis of human reasoning, we shall say: that is your share, your heritage according to your fate; our share however, is the Lord, and following Him we shall not forsake the right way, for we have the divine Scripture re as our teacher. This is why we rightly exclaim: 'Your lamp is a law unto my feet, and a light unto my paths.' Being illuminated by this light let us let us recognize the footprints of the foregoing fathers and let us follow them until we all reach the resurrection of the dead in Christ Jesus the Lord, to whom shall be glory forever. Amen (Theodoret, Bishop of Cyrus, ca. 393-468 A.D., *On the Holy and Vivifying Trinity*).

I thus ask you, the reader: "Who is this God of whom you speak"?

holy life. The end result: we begin to lose all sense of hope, sometimes to the point of questioning our faith, even the existence of God Himself. Such was the case when a young woman walked into her pastor's study and revealed some unfortunate news about her lack of faith in God.

With tears in her eyes the young woman began saying, "Pastor, I don't think I believe in the God you preach about any longer. He never seems to answer my prayers. Last Fall He let my mother die in a car accident before I got a chance to be reconciled with her; and now my son has leukemia. Not only that, my husband has been out of work for two months, and we can't make our mortgage payments. God just doesn't seem to be the kind of caring, merciful and compassionate God that you make Him out to be! Instead He seems so far away from us. If He really was a loving and compassionate God, He surely wouldn't be letting all these terrible events be happening to me and my family. In fact, the more I think about it, what kind of a God would let all this terror go on in our world today? Maybe I just don't have faith in the kind of God you preach about. Besides that, who is to say there's only one God anyway?"

Unfortunately, this situation is becoming more and more familiar among pastors as they deal with the concept of God's identity being the Triune God, with three distinct persons in one Godhead. It appears to be a re-occurring fulfillment of what Dr. Gene Edward Vieth writes about in his book entitled, "Postmodern Times: A Christian Guide to Contemporary Thought and Culture." Vieth writes, "The church has always had to confront its culture and to exist in tension with the world. To ignore the culture is to risk irrelevance; to accept the culture uncritically is to risk syncretism and unfaithfulness. Every age has had its eager-to-please liberal theologians who have tried to reinterpret Christianity according to the latest intellectual and cultural fashion. Enlightenment liberals had the rational religion and the higher criticism of the Bible; romantic liberals had their warm feelings; existentialist liberals had their crises of meaning and leaps of faith; there is now a postmodern liberalism" (page 5).

Several years ago, the late Dr. A.L. Barry quoted Veith by saying, "today the church faces a different set of challenges than it has in the past. In the past, the predominant challenge was for the church to defend its

teachings against attack from those who wanted to disprove the faith. A large challenge to the church today is to help her own members come to terms with a culture that does not merely question the truth of Christianity, but challenges the very notion that any person, or any group, can actually make claim for absolute truth." (Catechesis in the Lutheran Church, CPH)

So why does that lack of absolute truth seem to be more and more prevalent today? We could say that history is merely repeating itself. Or we could say just as in times past, when there had been eager-to-please liberal theologians who attempted to reinterpret Christianity according to the latest intellectual and cultural fashion, and they again are becoming more prevalent. Or, we could say today's bishops (pastors) who once vowed to uphold Christ's Church through the Holy Scriptures and the Confessions of those Scriptures, have succumbed to latest trend of Satan: to believe that truth lies in the heart and mind of each person to determine its validity. Regardless of such reasons of abandoning truth briefly described, we do know they and other reasons have arrived because Satan continues to be an ever present threat in the heart and mind of man, regarding the question, "What is truth?"

To combat this attack, the Holy Scriptures first tell us to be aware of Satan's lies, as he is compared to a roaring lion ready to deceive and tear apart whomever will fall prey to his deceitfulness which can result in unbelief (1 Peter 5:8). Secondly, we should expect these attacks. That's right, our Lord tells us to expect such attacks: "Remember the words I spoke to you: 'No servant is greater than his master.' If they persecuted me, they will persecute you also" (John 15:20).

For the Christian today, as always, this means he must daily return to the only source of battling Satan and his onslaught of lies and deceit, and return to God's Holy Word, where we can believe by faith that God's will for us has been revealed in the flesh and person of His Son, Jesus Christ, Who is truth (John 17:17).

Yes, God's Word is still sufficient for us to use today, not only because it never changes, as God Himself is everlasting, but also, it is exactly what Jesus called upon as He battled against Satan's temptations in the wilderness.

In Matthew 4, right at the beginning of Jesus ministry, is the account of when Satan tempted Jesus to abandon His goal of going to Jerusalem and Calvary to atone for the sins of mankind, destroy death, and crush the

authority of Satan once and for all.

How brutal it was, as three times Satan spoke his deceitful lies and temptations for Jesus to abandon His goal, by first thinking of Himself to turn rocks into bread and fill His hunger; then by tempting Jesus to mock His Heavenly Father's power by jumping to a premature death, and then to abandon His allegiance to His Father alone, by instead worshiping Satan and receiving the glamor of this world in exchange.

To each temptation, Jesus spoke and quoted the texts of the inspired Old Testament prophets to expose Satan's deceitful lies: "Thou shall not live on bread alone, but on every Word that proceed from the mouth of God; As it is written, thou shall not put the Lord your God to the test;" and "Worship the Lord your God, and serve Him only." Therefore, Satan had to depart until another time as his lies could not stand against the truth of God's Holy Word (which is light), which always has and will expose the falsehoods (which is darkness) of Satan (Matthew 4:1-11).

Another reason for us to daily return to this only source of truth, God's Holy Word, is because that is where the third person of the Holy Trinity, the Spirit of God, the Comforter, is able to work in the heart, mind, and soul of man (John 16:13-15). The Holy Spirit is the only One who can keep mankind living by faith to believe what God's Word says true, and trust in Him and rely on Him with firm confidence (Qu 103 SC). By the work of the Holy Spirit through the Word, man can be convinced that only the Triune God is our shield and defender, and that He will never abandoned His children to Satan's attacks in times of unrest, such as afflicted the young woman who began questioning her faith as well as the identity of the One True God. Only through God's Holy Word, His Son, whom He reveals to mankind, can the Spirit of God lead us deeper into the life of faith to believe our inheritance of salvation is safe and reserved for us in heaven, but that God our heavenly Father continues to allow such unrest to surround us in order that He may continually refine our faith until that day that He returns to take us home with Him (1 Peter 1:3-9).

Where better to turn for refined faith, than to the Small Catechism, which is a clear and precise explication of God's Holy Word in which you were instructed as communicant members to see exactly who God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit is, and

how the three distinct persons of the Triune God are continually working for us against such brutal attacks of Satan.

Just think if that young woman in the pastor's study would have remained strong in her daily reading of the Holy Scriptures and recalling her catechism instruction. She would have been strengthened in her faith to remember that God walks through every valley of every shadow of death; that He has been tempted as we are tempted, that He is man's refuge and strength in times of trouble, that even tho the earth should fall into the midst of the sea, the God of Jacob is always with us (Psalm 46).

Daily reading of the Holy Scriptures and recalling her catechism instruction, the young woman would have also been reminded of the truth that God never abandoned the children of Israel once as they passed through the wilderness, but was always willing to show mercy and compassion upon them, even when they found themselves going in the opposite direction.

My dear friends in Christ, we must ever be about humbling ourselves in reading of this work of the Triune God as penned by Luther in the meaning of the First Article of God of the Apostles Creed:

*I believe that God has made me and all creatures; that He has given me my body and soul, eyes, ears, and all my limbs, my reason, and all my senses, and still preserves them; in addition thereto, clothing and shoes, meat and drink, house and homestead, wife and children, fields, cattle, and all my goods; that He provides me richly and daily with all that I need to support this body and life, protects me from all danger, and guards me and preserves me from all evil; and all this out of pure, fatherly, divine goodness and mercy, without any merit or worthiness in me; for all which I owe it to Him to thank, praise, serve, and obey Him. This is most certainly true.*

If the young woman would have, and, we shall keep our focus upon the work of God our heavenly Father, we will forever remain convinced that He will daily provide for our wants and needs; that He will forever defend us against every danger, and preserve us from every evil until the Day of the Lord. Of course that means it is necessary to remember how that is all possible. This means we must remember how God reveals Himself to us in the flesh of His only begotten Son, Jesus Christ. We can read of this glorious Gospel described by Luther

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in his description of the Second Person of the Holy Trinity in the following manner:

*I believe that Jesus Christ, true God, begotten of the Father from eternity, and also true man, born of the Virgin Mary, is my Lord, who has redeemed me, a lost and condemned creature, purchased and won [delivered] me from all sins, from death, and from the power of the devil, not with gold or silver, but with His holy, precious blood and with His innocent suffering and death, in order that I may be [wholly] His own, and live under Him in His kingdom, and serve Him in everlasting righteousness, innocence, and blessedness, even as He is risen from the dead, lives and reigns to all eternity. This is most certainly true.*

It is in this beautiful Gospel announcement that enables us to remember that just as God has reconciled us to Himself in the Person of His only begotten Son; in that while we were still spiritually, blind, dead, and enemies of God, He sent His Son to be our Savior from sin, death, and the power of the devil, who are we to withhold our forgiveness to those who have offended us, such as family members, friends, or even an enemy, and be left living in guilt if they should die before we have a chance to be reconciled.

Of course this Christ-like action can only begin to happen as we continue to be strengthened by the power of the Third Person of the Triune God, as He bears witness to the Word of Jesus Christ as Luther points out to us in the meaning of the Third Article:

*I believe that I cannot by my own reason or strength believe in Jesus Christ, my Lord, or come to Him; but the Holy Ghost has called me by the Gospel, enlightened me with His gifts, sanctified and kept me in the true faith; even as He calls, gathers, enlightens, and sanctifies the whole Christian Church on earth, and keeps it with Jesus Christ in the one true faith; in which Christian Church He forgives daily and richly all sins to me and all believers, and at the last day will raise up me and all the dead, and will give to me and to all believers in Christ everlasting life. This is most certainly true.*

And where has the Holy Spirit enlightened us to be present for this forgiveness but at the throne of Grace where the Triune God continues to pour out Himself through His means of Grace? Only in the one holy apostolic and catholic Church is God present as His Word

is taught in all its truth and purity, and His Sacraments of Holy Baptism and Holy Communion are administered according to Christ's institution for our preservation are they present. Only then and there are we strengthened in times of unrest and heartache, not to lose hope, or to begin to question our faith in the one true God.

The early Lutheran reformers when standing before Emperor Charles the Fifth to present the Augsburg Confession were ready to forfeit their lives rather than submit to the rule of error, lies and falsehoods of the pope's assumed authority throughout the Roman Catholic Church. How could they do that? The same way that you and I can remain firm in the truth of the One Triune God—the Father, Son, and the Holy Ghost—in our day and age. It happens through the power of each person in the Godhead fulfilling His work in our hearts, minds, and souls, whereas we will find ourselves responding as did St Paul who was inspired to write in Romans 1:16–17: "I am not ashamed of the gospel, because it is the power of God for the salvation of everyone who believes: first for the Jew, then for the Gentile. For in the gospel a righteousness from God is revealed, a righteousness that is by faith from first to last, just as it is written: "The righteous will live by faith."

God had used these men as instruments to hold fast to the truth of God's identity as revealed in the inspired, inerrant Word of God, both for the sake of the Gospel, and the continued existence of the one true catholic Church then and for us today. Instead of just claiming God existed, they firmly believed that the Triune God works in the heart of man, making him a new creation in Christ, where the old is passed away, and the new has come (II Cor 5:17), come to bear forth the news that mankind has been reconciled through the Second Person of the Triune God, Christ Jesus our Lord, who having no sin became sin for us that we might become the righteousness of God in Him. (II Cor 5:21)

As we have just finished passing through another Lenten season, examining our hearts and minds with the law of God, humbly seeing our weakness to keep that law perfectly as God demands, may we rejoice in the Gospel message concerning the life, death, and resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ, who rose victoriously over the grave to give us the hope of eternal life still today. May we be strengthened to not just celebrate Easter as the close of another Lenten Season, but remember year after year, month after month, week after week,

and day after day to pray the Collect for the Word which says, "Blessed Lord, who has caused all Holy Scriptures to be written for our learning, grant that we may in such wise hear them, read, mark and inwardly digest them, that by patience and comfort of Thy Holy Word we may embrace and ever hold fast, the blessed hope of everlasting life, which Thou has given us in our Savior Jesus Christ, who liveth and reigneth with Thee and the Holy Ghost, ever One God, world without end. Amen."

By the power of the Triune God, as Christians today, we can and will be ready to battle against the attacks of Satan, for they will come. Until the last day, there will always be false gods introduced just as there were for the early reformers. But keeping God's identity intact as He intends it to be, we will be faithfully prepared to stand firm in the faith until the very end.

*There is one Divine Essence which is called and which is God: eternal, without body, without parts, of infinite power, wisdom, and goodness, the Maker and Preserver of all things, visible and invisible; and 3] yet there are three Persons, of the same essence and power, who also are coeternal, the Father the Son, and the Holy Ghost.*

## **2008 DIOCESAN SYNOD of The ELDoNA**

This year's synod is scheduled for Thursday, May 22, and will be held at Christ Evangelical Lutheran Church in Richmond, Missouri. Agenda items include updates on home missions; contacts with confessional Lutherans overseas; seminary plans; colloquies; and parish reports are among the items of business

If you wish to attend the synod, and are not a member of the diocese, or of a congregation served by a member of the diocese, please contact Bishop Heiser ([bishopheiser@mac.com](mailto:bishopheiser@mac.com)).

For more information regarding accommodations for the synod, please contact Pastor Hudson ([phoebadius@aol.com](mailto:phoebadius@aol.com)).

### ***Continued from page 14 (Ahonen)***

remain forever in the one kingdom now begun."

"Thy kingdom come—not only to us, but to all the world." Such is the daily prayer of Christians for God's ongoing mission in all the world—even among us.

God has been answering that prayer of His children—our fellow Christians and ourselves—by expanding His kingdom in Northern Wisconsin and Michigan. The Lord has blessed richly the labors of Saint Henry Lutheran Mission, a mission society supported by the Evangelical Lutheran Diocese of North America and her affiliated congregations. Through Christ's Word and Sacraments, the Holy Spirit has come and expanded God's kingdom at our preaching stations in the small Wisconsin towns of Winter and Tony, and in Ironwood, Michigan.

The Winter Mission started informally—even accidentally, humanly speaking—in the Summer of 2007 with a biweekly study of Martin Luther's Large Catechism in a private home. In the Fall of 2007, we began to meet on Saturday evenings in the town hall for Bible Study, and are currently halfway through the Gospel of Luke. In January 2008, a Vespers service was added to our Saturday evening schedule, and we have been richly blessed by God through His bringing of His kingdom to Winter. The Holy Spirit has gathered to Himself a small but faithful group of Lutherans at the Winter Mission, and we are hopeful of organizing a Lutheran congregation during this Easter season.

Prayers for a second mission site were answered when, by God's providence, a former church building became available for rental in the little town of Tony. Since October 2007, we have continued to meet each Sunday morning with the Lord at "Paradise"—the name given to the facility by its current owners—where He opens up His Heavenly Paradise to all who believe that He justifies the sinner by His grace for the sake of Christ Jesus. Matins is prayed each Sunday, followed by a Bible study on the Book of Daniel. A third mission site is being prayerfully considered. Current exploration is being undertaken in Ironwood, Michigan, where a Divine Service is being held on Sunday nights at our Ironwood home.

We ask you to keep us kindly in your prayers for the expanding of God's kingdom. We will continue to keep you informed of God's gracious response to those prayers—and the expanding of His kingdom, via our website ([www.SaintHenry.info](http://www.SaintHenry.info)). God grant that "we may all together remain forever in the one kingdom now begun." Amen.

**Congregations served by Pastors  
of the  
Evangelical Lutheran Diocese of  
North America (ELDoNA)**

**CALIFORNIA**

**Saint Laurence Evangelical Lutheran Church**  
meeting at:  
16079 Via Harriet  
San Lorenzo, California 94580-1919  
Pastor Michael Totten, Ph.D.  
Phone: (510) 481-7018  
Sunday: Bible Study 9:00 a.m.; Divine Service 10:15 a.m.

**MICHIGAN**

**Christ our Redeemer Lutheran Church**  
2619 Superior (“Superior Place”)  
Trenton, Michigan 48183  
Pastor Mark Raitz  
Phone: (313) 278-4091  
Sunday: Divine Service 9:30 A.M.; Bible Study 10:30 A.M.

**Saint Boniface Evangelical Lutheran Church**  
meeting at:  
104 N. 3rd Street  
Niles, Michigan  
Pastor John Rutowicz  
Phone: (269) 683-5169  
Sunday: Divine Service 9:30 A.M.; Bible Study 10:45 A.M.

**MINNESOTA**

**Redeemer Lutheran Church**  
2560 South Main Street  
Cambridge, Minnesota  
Pastor Mark Mueller  
Phone: (763) 689-2290  
Sunday: Divine Service 9:00 A.M.; Bible Class 10:15 A.M.

**MISSOURI**

**Christ Evangelical Lutheran Church**  
4H Building  
Ray County Fairgrounds  
Richmond, Missouri 64085  
Pastor C. D. Hudson  
Phone: (660) 259-2728  
Sunday: Divine Service 9:30 a.m.; Christian Ed. 10:45 a.m.

**NORTH CAROLINA**

**Saint Paul Lutheran Church, UAC**  
323 First Avenue SW  
P.O. Box 535 (mailing address)  
Taylorsville, North Carolina 28681  
Pastor Donald R. Hunter  
Phone: (828) 632-2695  
Sunday: Sunday School 9:45 a.m.; Divine Service 11 a.m.

**TEXAS**

**Salem Lutheran Church**  
718 HCR 3424 E  
Malone, Texas 76660  
Pastor James D. Heiser, Dcn. Jeffrey Ahonen  
Phone: (254) 533-2330  
Sunday: Sunday School 9:30 a.m.; Divine Service 10:30 a.m.

**WISCONSIN**

**Saint Henry Lutheran Mission**  
meeting at:  
*Winter, WI*—Town of Winter Hall, N4680 Co. W  
**Saturday Evening Service** at 5:30 P.M.  
Bible Study at 6:30 P.M.  
*Tony, WI*—‘Paradise’ Building, Intersection of North &  
Maple Streets, Tony, WI  
**Sunday Morning Service** at 9:30 A.M.  
Bible Study at 10:30 A.M.  
*Ironwood, MI*—**Sunday Evening** Divine Service at 7 P.M.  
Dcn. Jeffrey Ahonen  
Phone: (715) 403-1433