The Distant Triumph Song

On numerous occasions Jesus said, "He who has ears to hear, let him hear." He wasn't speaking of the large cartilaginous protrusions sticking out either side of our heads; He was speaking of the faith-opened ears that joyfully hear the message of the reign of God in Christ. Even ears deaf to sound waves can, through the Holy Spirit's calling, hear the message of Christ's kingdom.

Unfortunately, we live in a world cursed by noise. I'm not talking about the beeping microwave, humming refrigerator, whirring computer, or droning television, although these are bothersome enough and enemies of deep, prolonged thinking! I'm talking about the static background noise that crackles still today because of Adam's sin, the splintering disturbance that every ear hears: suffering. No ear is deaf to suffering. It whines, splutters, cracks, and pops in our ears. And we remain unable to mute it or cancel out its noise.

But into the Christian's ear a distant, hopeful song echoes through the rasping rattle. St. John writes of it in Revelation 5 where the angels and elders before the throne of God celebrate the victory of Christ over death and the devil and His glorious ascension into heaven by singing of Christ:

> Worthy are you to take the scroll and to open its seals, for you were slain, and by your blood you ransomed people for God from every tribe, language and people and nation, and you have made them a kingdom of priests to our God, and they shall reign on the earth (5:9-10).

The Church sings of this song throughout the year, but it finds special emphasis on All Saints' Day (November 1) when we not only remember the saints that have gone before us who have been ransomed by Christ's blood, but also as we recall this heavenly victory song in the midst of our ongoing struggles. The hymn "For All the Saints" mentions it in verse 5:

> And when the fight is fierce, the warfare long,
> Steals on the ear the distant triumph song,
> And hearts are brave again, and arms are strong.
> Alleluia! Alleluia!

That "distant triumph song" of heaven pumps new life into our weary arms, fills our hearts with heaven's song, and strengthens us for the daily fight against sin, temptation, and despair. Christ is victorious. Our champion has prevailed. He has silenced the noise of death and will soon return to mute suffering and sorrow forever and invite us to join the angelic host in the heavenly triumph song.

Until then, we're called to hear. We hear in worship. We hear in the Sacraments. We hear in personal study of the Word. The distant triumph song is echoing. He who has ears to hear, let him hear.

MINISTRY APPS—Zion Lutheran – November 2014

Applying the Gospel to Family, Community, and into the World

"Rejoice always, pray without ceasing, give thanks in all circumstances; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you." 1 Thessalonians 5:23

There is no "app" for thanksgiving that is occasionally checked for updates. For the Christian thanksgiving is more than an annual celebration. It's more than family gatherings, favorite dishes, or parades and football games on the television. Confident in our salvation in Jesus Christ and trusting in His provision, we can live the inspired words of the Apostle Paul, "give thanks in all circumstances." Have a blessed Thanksgiving Day and a joyous thanksgiving life.

Thanksgiving Eve Worship: "Ever Thankful Hearts" is the theme for the special worship service on Wednesday evening, November 26. Worshippers of all ages will be reminded that the Bible tells us to give thanks every day. Invite family and friends to join you. Start your thanksgiving celebration in the name of Jesus with the family of Zion.

Thanks-living Generously: The Christian Education Committee is coordinating a food pantry collection during the month of November. Non-perishable food items (paper products, etc.) can be brought to the collection carts in the fellowship hall. Items will be shared with local food pantries. Donations of cash and gift certificates to local and community grocery outlets are especially welcomed allowing pantries and qualifying families to purchase needed perishable items.

The Lutheran Church Extension Fund Y.I. (Young Investor) Club teaches children to share, save and then spend wisely. The "club" meets the third Sunday of each month as children bring new investments. Y.I. Club members also have the joy of knowing that their investments are building mission churches and schools around the world. New investor families are encouraged to visit with Warren Puck about the opportunity. More than 30 Zion children are already members. Only $25 opens an account.

Thanks-living Words The Monday morning LifeLight class was challenged by Peter's words on suffering in I and II Peter. The fall series concludes on November 10. God-willing another class will begin in late January. What Bible book would you like to study?

More than 20 community members gathered weekly at the Manning Regional Healthcare Center for the "caring conversations" class. Thanks to the Center for their support of this community program. God-willing additional community connecting events can be held in the future.

Thanks-living in Jesus Thanks to the special efforts of Jill Arp and Susie Ulrickson, Sunday school children will lead a special Christmas celebration on Sunday evening, December 21. Mark your calendar. Sunday school families will receive additional information on the important special rehearsal dates and times.

Living and serving thankfully in Jesus,
Pastor Riggert

Defeating Fear and Becoming Manly Men

Last month we began taking a closer look at the behavior and thought patterns that keep men from becoming truly manly. We saw how some men are driven by the passion of neediness and the deep-seated belief that wholeness and contentment could be theirs if others, especially their wife, would come through for them and meet their needs – if she could be more supportive *for him*, if she could dress more attractively *for him*, if she could initiate love making more often *for him.* When needy men's chosen few need-meeters don't come through, needy men feel let down and justified in their resentment. And, as Dr. Crabb pointed out, feelings of justified resentment lead to feelings of justified revenge and manipulation. This leaves wives of needy men feeling lonely, unloved, used, and inadequate. Men consumed with neediness miss holiness and fail to be manly men and people they love suffer as a result.

This month we move to the other side of relating spectrum (see chart below from Dr. Crabb's book), from needy men to tough men. Dr. Crabb details these two poles:

> Needy men are corrupted men. They are more inclined to be aware of their thirst for affirmation as they relate to others, and more inclined to enter relationships for no higher reason than to meet their own needs. Tough men are equally but differently corrupted. They deny any deep longing for relationship, and chase after goals that do not require meaningful intimacy with people.

These styles of relating represent end points on the spectrum below and all men fall somewhere on the spectrum. And lest we self-assuredly place ourselves at point C, only one man has lived a perfectly balanced life of sensitivity and strength: Jesus. Crabb points out that Jesus was, "perfectly sensitive yet unconquerably strong; humbly dependent yet resolutely determined; aware of every nuance in every relationship but unmovably centered in his priority relationship."

Jesus accomplished this balance by defining himself, as Crabb points out, "in terms of his call rather than his longings or power." This enabled him to find "the courage to do whatever his call required." This is such an insightful observation! Men who define themselves by their longings or power move toward one of the two destructive relational extremes. But men who begin with their call, (i.e. the holy vocations in which God has placed them), and define themselves in terms of this call/vocation, discover the courage to rise to the requirements of their vocation and move toward balanced strength and sensitivity.

This is, however, where men so frequently fail. Instead of beginning with our call as men, we begin with our misguided fears, longings, and desires and then act on them. Needy men developed the belief at a very early age that internal pain was best relieved through the actions of someone else. Therefore, their relationships are defined by how well other people are meeting their needs. The needy man's life motto, as Crabb puts it, is essentially, "Come through for me!" This allows him to avoid his personal darkness and his real need for God. Further, his neediness prevents him from being a strong man of God.

Style of Relating

Pattern 1 ⟷ **Pattern 2**

A	**B**	**C**	**D**	**E**
Ruled by Neediness	More Sensitive than Strong	Perfectly Balanced: Both Sensitive and Strong	More Strong than Sensitive	Ruled by Toughness

Tough men, by contrast, don't look to others to meet their needs because, at some point, they lost hope in close relationships and responded by strangling their longings for intimacy. They then decided to rely solely on themselves so they wouldn't be let down again, so they would never again experience the soul-crushing terror of not receiving the love and intimacy that they had longed for in a relationship. As a result, Crabb says, they adopt the life motto, "I can handle things without you. Believe in me from a distance, and don't give me any hassles." They believe that "distance," as Dr. Crabb points out, "maintains safety." Distance protects their heart from pain.

C.S. Lewis reflected on this in his profound little book *The Four Loves*,

> "To love at all is to be vulnerable. Love anything, and your heart will certainly be wrung and possibly be broken. If you want to make sure of keeping it intact, you must give your heart to no one, not even to an animal. Wrap it carefully round with hobbies and little luxuries; avoid all entanglements; lock it up safe in the casket or coffin of your selfishness. But in that casket — safe, dark, motionless, airless — it will change. It will not be broken; it will become unbreakable, impenetrable, irredeemable."

Driven by the fear of vulnerability and hurt, tough men harden their hearts to others and, as anyone married to a tough man knows, the results are catastrophic. As Dr. Crabb explains, wives of tough men often feel undesired and desperate for someone or something to relieve their profound loneliness. Further, they are prone to bouts of depression, gripping anxiety, and pain-numbing addictions. Unfortunately, tough men often construe their wife's struggles as weakness, a problem she needs to deal with. They remain unable or unwilling to see the destructive nature of their toughness.

Further, they falsely equate toughness with strength. Toughness and strength, however, are not the same. Dr. Crabb details why. First, "strong men feel no need to parade their strength. They have control over their power and unleash it only to further a good purpose." Tough men, however, employ power to control, to appear competent, and to keep people at a distance. As Crabb explains, they "are driven, by uncertainty about their manhood, to prove themselves. They exhibit power in order to display what they are not sure they possess." Tough men are insecure men. Strong men are secure in their sensitivity and power.

Second, "strong men are not afraid to face reality, including ugly things about themselves or others that could provoke overwhelming despair. Strong men remember God and speak with the power of hope into the darkest night." Tough men, by contrast, "are not especially aware of what is going on inside themselves or others, and feel nothing more deeply than their lust for power." Tough men are shallow men. Strong men aren't afraid of deep thought and reflection.

Third, strong men understand that sensitivity and awareness in relationships open doors to deeper relationships that require courage to pursue. They are moved by a courage that outweighs their fear of the unknowns in relationships. Further, "they define strength as power under control, not power displayed." Tough men don't get this. They believe strength is exercising power over people and situations. Further, "they mistake sensitivity for weakness" and assume that "power and strength are the same thing." As such, they never develop deep, personal relationships. Tough men misunderstand masculinity; strong men understand how to balance sensitivity and power.

No man (except Christ) gets this right consistently. Why? Crabb puts his finger on the problem: "Something vital is missing in men. We lack the courage and faith to speak into the darkness with life-giving power. And that lack of courage and faith must be understood as sin."

Crabb points us in the right direction:

> We must face the terrible truth that we are responsible for not speaking with sensitivity and strength, and we must be driven to despair by the even more terrible truth that the urge within us to not speak is too strong to resist on our own. Facing these twin truths will drive us to brokenness, confession, repentance, and trust.

Failing to own the severity of our sin and the damaging impact it has had on those close to us will keep the truth at bay and lead us to believe we can solve our problems without God. This is why it's so important for us regularly as a body of believers to confess our sins together. We are poor, miserable sinners. We've made a mess of things. In one of our orders of worship the pastor exhorts the gathered worshipers to "confess before God and one another that we have sinned in thought, word, and deed, and that we cannot free ourselves from our sinful condition." In other words, we can't fix what's broken. We don't have the personal resources to absolve sin. Forgiveness must be received from Christ.

Then, after repenting of our sins of manipulative and resentful neediness and/or harsh and distanced toughness and after receiving Christ's absolution, we are ready to move forward in pursuit of authentic manhood. We do this first of all by turning to the Scriptures which are "profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work" (2 Tim 3:16).

Further, we must learn again the value of godly examples – the godly examples that have gone before us and currently walk with us and the godly examples manly man are called to set for those walking beside and after them. Therefore, next month we'll explore the importance of fathers (who walk before us) and brothers (who walk beside us) for men and their quest to become truly manly.

Why I stand with the Houston Five

In September, Houston Mayor Annise Parker, in response to several Houston pastors who had openly opposed her Homosexual Equal Rights Ordinance (HERO), which would have among other things, allowed female-identifying-males to use female restrooms (and vice-versa), subpoenaed, "All speeches, presentations, or sermons related to HERO, the Petition, Mayor Annise Parker, homosexuality, or gender identity prepared by, delivered by, revised by, or approved by you or in your possession." The Mayor went so far as to tweet about the pastors, if they "used pulpits for politics, their sermons are fair game." Included below is the response of Rev. Scott Murray, LCMS Vice President and pastor of Memorial Lutheran Church in Houston.

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Recently, Houston city attorneys, acting on behalf of Mayor Annise Parker and the City Council, issued subpoenas to five area pastors requiring they hand over copies of all communication with members of their congregations about a gay rights ordinance. The subpoena asks for communications from the pastors related to the mayor, the ordinance, and "gender equality" issues.

What are pastors to do when coerced by a government entity like the city of Houston? It seems to me that there are a two possible responses: one from a Christian pastor, who serves in Christ's kingdom, and another from a citizen of the kingdom of this world.

How did we get here? These five pastors were at the forefront of an effort to get a referendum on the November ballot to overturn a city ordinance,

which among other things would give people access to the restrooms of their choice in public accommodations as a matter of "gender equality."

Opponents of the ordinance gathered about 50,000 signatures in a petition drive to get the issue on the November ballot. The city secretary reportedly has certified that there were sufficient signatures — it takes 17,269 certifiable signatures to add the referendum. The mayor and the City Council declined to follow the city charter, refusing to place the referendum before the people of Houston.

A group that supports the ballot initiative is suing the city to force it to follow the city charter. As a way of fighting the suit, the city subpoenaed the communications of the pastors, who are not even parties to the lawsuit. So what is a Christian pastor to do?

The mayor or members of the City Council are always welcome in my congregation. Sermons aren't exactly private or privileged communications; they are proclaimed to audiences in public and placed on our website for people to listen to any time. Christian preachers condemn human sin and call people to repentance. They proclaim the forgiveness of sins for the sake of Christ, who died for us, to those who mourn their sin. Sexual immorality is sin. Christian preachers will call it what it is. If that offends the politicians, then so be it.

Christian pastors have been offending powerful authorities since Jesus angered the establishment of his day. If my sermons are subpoenaed, I would be tempted to print all of them and hand deliver them all, tied up in a ribbon, with the hope that the mayor might read them. We Christians are called by God to make our testimony before kings, and we should not be ashamed of the gospel of Jesus Christ. A pastor should be delighted when he is given an opportunity to deliver publicly the gospel of Jesus Christ. This is what those who belong to the kingdom of Christ hope and pray for.

It may be a slight variation on President Obama's line of a few months ago, but it applies here: "Go ahead, subpoena me!" Put my sermons before a court of law, please! The rage and spite of those who hate the Christian worldview might well benefit the church and her Lord. But that's not the whole story.

Pastors are also citizens of the kingdom of Caesar. In the bare-knuckled realm of American politics, the mayor and City Council are not really interested in reading a bunch of Christian sermons to find out what they say. They are attempting to stop Christian pastors from commenting on moral issues that are important to politicians. They are using the coercive power of the city's legal department and turning it on the speech of the church. Not only is this an effort to shame the pastors for their principled stand on sexual mores, but it is a naked attempt to silence them.

Lawyers from the Alliance Defending Freedom, who are defending the pastors, have called the city's action a "witch-hunt" and an "inquisition" — both terms dripping with irony.

The effort by the mayor and the City Council attacks two of the freedoms protected in the First Amendment: the free exercise of religion and the right to political speech. And while it has been argued that the city is not silencing speech, the abuse of state power will have a chilling effect on both the free exercise of religion and freedom of speech.

When will ordinary citizens exercise their right to organize a petition drive in the city of Houston again? The fear of being attacked by the unlimited resources of a bully state keeps people from speaking their minds against the wishes of their political masters. These rights remain the peoples' rights. And as citizens, the five pastors have every right and every reason to resist these bullying tactics.

Against this bullying, I am glad to stand with them — both as a Christian pastor and as a citizen. You should too.

(The Rev. Scott R. Murray is senior pastor of Memorial Lutheran Church in Houston, and is the fourth vice president of the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod.)

When Bad Theology Gets Worse

"We tried to give it zero stars, but our tech system won't allow it." – *Christianity Today* movie reviewer

Yeah, the movie *Left Behind,* which hit theaters in October, is that bad. Of course, the novels on which they're based are bad, too, but for different reasons. The novels (by the same name), written from 1995 to 2004 by Tim LaHaye and Jerry Jenkins, revolve around the "rapture," the arriving of the Antichrist, and the end of the world. They're bad not because of poor writing (although many critics have made this point); they're bad because they are just plain false theology. The movie struggles even to rise to false theology because, in an attempt to make a buck off gullible Christians, it ditches the novels' theological backbone in favor of the explosions, crashes, and chaos brought on by the rapture. God is reduced, as one reviewer put it, to "a mysterious force that's directly behind millions of disappearances and indirectly behind millions more outright deaths." God in the film, as he puts it, is "capricious and terrifying, and he is going to hurt you."

So, let me save your time and money: don't waste your cash or mind on this film.

Now, with the time you saved not watching a bad film, read the rest of this article and learn why the theology in the *Left Behind* novels is bad theology and what the Bible really says about the rapture, the Antichrist, and the end of the world. Let's start with a quick overview of the books (No, I haven't read them. I have, however, studied their theology.). The main action centers on LaHaye and Jenkins' particular misunderstanding of the rapture. In the first book passengers aboard a 747 bound for London suddenly find half the seats empty – nothing but clothes, jewelry, and dental fillings left behind. On the ground cars careen out of control, people awake to discover their spouse missing, and every child under 12 disappears. Characters slowly realize that God has raptured the true Christians and all children under the age of accountability (another false teaching). The next 11 books in the series chronicle the wild tribulations of those "left behind," the international turmoil that ensues, and the rise of the Antichrist. I'll leave others to critique the quality of the writing and coherence of the plotlines in the series; what concerns us now is the theology presented by LaHaye and Jenkins, which they claim accurately depicts Biblical teaching.

"Premillennial Dispensationalism": Big Words for Bad Theology

LaHaye and Jenkins' novels set their peculiar view of eschatology, known as "premillennial dispensationalism," in an imaginative story. Don't be scared away by the big words. "Eschatology" simply refers to the end of the world (it comes from the Greek word "eschaton," which means "end"). And "premillennial dispensationalism" can be understood when it's broken down into pieces: pre (before) the millennium (the thousand year period mentioned in Revelation) there are a certain number of divinely ordained dispensations (periods in history), the last one being the millennium (the thousand years of Revelation).

This particular eschatology is relatively new on the doctrinal scene as it wasn't expressed until the early 1800s by John Nelson Darby. It was later expanded by Cyrus Scofield, who is known for the *Scofield Reference Bible.*

The Rapture

Of central importance in premillennial dispensationalism is its distinctive understanding of the rapture. The word shows up in 1 Thessalonians 4:17: "Then we who are alive, who are left, will be caught up ("raptured") together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air…" Up until Darby and Scofield this "rapture" was understood to occur

simultaneously with the final resurrection at the end of the age, which, as we'll see in a moment, is what the context indicates.

Darby, however, uniquely repositioned and re-characterized the rapture. He repositioned it by ripping it from the end of the age and dropping it at the end of his artificially contrived sixth dispensation. According to Darby, God has divided history into seven dispensations, which he identified throughout the Old Testament (the dispensation of innocence, conscience, government, promise, and law) and into the New Testament (the dispensation of grace, in which we now live, and then the Millennial Reign of Christ). Darby rightly highlights several important events throughout the Old and New Testaments, but the Scriptures never indicate that these serve as some sort of divinely ordained dispensation that are slowly tallied until we arrive at a final dispensation.

Darby re-characterized the rapture by changing it from a visible, end-of-time event into an invisible, dispensational event. According to Darby, this invisible, secret rapture is for Christians (and children under his artificial "age of accountability") so that they can avoid Darby's misinterpreted 7-year tribulation that immediately precedes his seventh dispensation of Christ's millennial reign. Everyone who isn't raptured is "left behind" (which is where LaHaye and Jenkins pick up the story in their novels) to face the disasters of the tribulation.

To put it bluntly: Darby is wrong. He has failed to appreciate the rapture's context. St. Paul writes,

> For the Lord himself will descend from heaven with a cry of command, with the voice of an archangel, and with the sound of the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first. Then we who are alive, who are left, will be caught up (raptured) together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, and so we will always be with the Lord" (1 Thes. 4:16-17).

The context is clear: the resurrection of the dead and the return of Christ. Notice the "cry of command," "voice of an archangel," "the sound of the trumpet of God." There's nothing secretive about this rapture. *All* eyes will see and *all* ears will hear this return of Christ.

The Book of Revelation

The book of Revelation doesn't teach any pre-tribulation rapture of Christians either. The whole point of Revelation is that God will preserve His saints *through* tribulation and suffering. And, speaking of Revelation, Darby (and LaHaye and Jenkins) teach that it's a prophecy about the events that will transpire during the last seven years before Christ's millennial reign. I'll spare you all the gory details about the Antichrist, the battles leading up to Armageddon, and the creative interpretation of the book of Daniel. The simple point for now is that Darby and company misinterpret Revelation. Revelation is built around three seven-fold visions (interspersed with interludes on the end of the world) that all recount the same time period: Pentecost through the Last Day. They are not meant to be read like a historical narrative, but Darby and co. do precisely that by mapping them out chronologically.

The Antichrist and the 1000 Years

As for the Antichrist and the 1000 years that play prominently in Darby's theology and Lahaye and Jenkins' novels, the Antichrist isn't primarily a political figure trying to overtake the U.N. (as in the *Left Behind* novels) and the 1000 years isn't a literal span of 1000 years. According to the Bible, the Antichrist rises from within the church (2 Thess. 2:4) and leads people astray by teaching them the false doctrine that they are not saved solely through the work of Christ (1 John 2:18-25, 4:1-3; 2 John 1:7; 2 Thess. 2:1-12).

As with the other numbers in Revelation, "1000" is symbolic; it is a symbol for completeness. That means we're not looking forward to a literal 1000 year reign of Christ on earth before the end of the age when He restores the earth; we're currently living in the "1000 year" period. The Bible makes it clear that Jesus has already established His reign (the Kingdom of God is here) among all believers in Christ (Mat. 12:28; Jn. 18:36; Rom 14:17; Rev. 1:5-6). Yes, the Bible speaks of Satan being released at the end of the 1,000 year

period (Rev. 20:3, 7-8), but it never says Christians will be raptured from earth so as to avoid this little season of Satan. Instead, Revelation calls Christians to endure.

Israel and the Church

Finally, it's important to point out how Darby and co. misinterpret Israel and the Church. According to Darby and co. the establishment of Israel as a modern nation in 1948 fulfilled the Old Testament's prophecies regarding Israel and the land. In other words, they equate the modern country of Israel and the Jews/Israelis who live there with the Old Testament people of Israel and the Jews/Israelites who comprised it. We'll explain why in a moment, but Israelis are not Israelites.

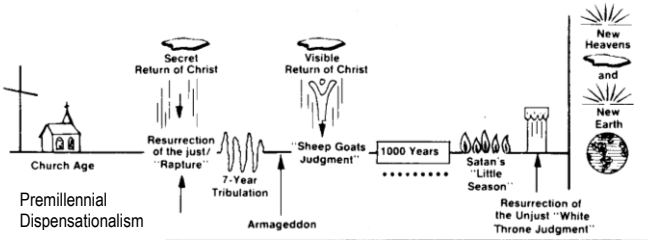
Because of their misidentification of the Israel, Darby and co. misunderstand the Church. According to them the Church is essentially a parenthesis, a sort of pause from God's main interest in the Jews. Since the Jews rejected Jesus, God formed the Church, which He will bring to an end in the end of this dispensation so He can get back to His primary interest in the Jews.

What does the Bible say? The Bible doesn't depict the Church as a parenthesis of God; the Church has been God's plan all along. Yes, the Gentiles are described as being "grafted in" to Israel, but through the joining of Gentile to Jew God has widened the limits of Israel's identity. So, Paul calls everyone baptized into Christ "Abraham's seed" (Gal. 3:26-29), that is, Israel. Further, in Romans 9-11 Paul clearly explains that membership in God's Israel isn't determined through lineage or bloodline, but through inclusion in Christ. The Church, comprised of Jew and Gentile, is God's Israel. God hasn't established two different communities (Jew and Gentile) with two different means of salvation. God has established one true vine, one foundation, one flock, one way, and one olive tree. These are the symbols the Bible uses to describe the unity of Jew and Gentile in Christ. Darby and co. miss this. Further, they wrongly equate the Old Testament Israelite covenant people with Israelis living in the country of Israel. An Israelite was a member of God's covenant people, a covenant that found its fulfillment in Christ. An Israeli is a citizen of the country of Israel. They are not the same thing.

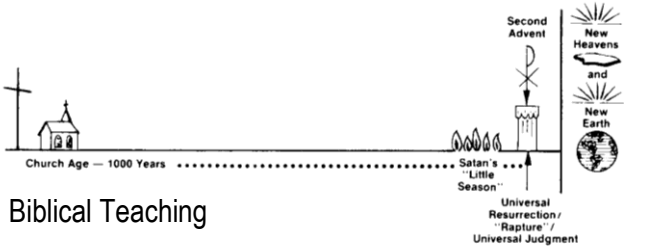
The Old and New Testaments

Further, Darby and co. miss Christ not only as the fulfillment of the Old Testament, but also as the interpretive key to the entire Old Testament. In other words, Premillennial Dispensationalism reads the New Testament through the lens of the Old and the prophecies of Scripture through the lens of current events. The Bible, however, instructs us to read the Old Testament through the lens of the New Testament and the Scriptural prophecies through the lens of Christ (Col. 2:16-17; Luke 24:25-27, 44-47; 1 Cor. 15:3-8). St. Paul calls the Old Testament the shadow of the things that were to come; the reality, however, is found in Christ. Darby and co., by reading the Old Testament apart from Christ, sacrifice the reality in favor of the shadow.

Despite premillennial dispensationalism's popularity, it's still bad theology. It misreads texts, misunderstands Biblical themes, and misidentifies prophecies, and obscures Christ. Aren't you glad you didn't watch the movie? And aren't you glad you don't have to waste your time on the novels, too? If you want to learn more, come talk with Pastor Conner or Google "A Lutheran Response to the *Left Behind* Series."



Diagrams from *A Lutheran Response to the Left Behind Series*, available in the church office or online.



Biblical Teaching

October Highlights

LADIES GUILD MEETING…..OCTOBER 8, 2014

President Schilling called the meeting to order with 15 members and one guest in attendance. Christian Life Chair, Margaret Backhaus read "What Do Angels Look Like" followed by the mite box prayer. Pastor Conner led a devotion based on Isaiah Chapter 25 and talked about the banquet that God has prepared for his children at world's end.

The business meeting was then brought to order in the name of the Triune God. The secretary read the minutes of the previous meeting, followed by the treasurer's and kitchen treasurer's reports. Human Care Chair, Audrey Roe, reported that 25 quilts have been completed and added that Bob Genzen had constructed new shelves to hold the sewing materials. Sunshine Chair, Bev Grundmeier , reported sending 6 cards. It was noted that Circle 3 will have the October fellowship coffees followed by Circle 4 in November. Circle 1 will have the next funeral luncheon.

Old Business included a report that there were 5 Guild members that attended the Fall LWML Rally in Coon Rapids. The speaker was Pastor Vogel.

President Schilling thanked Pastor Conner for a meaningful LWML service on the previous Sunday. She also thanked Bev Grundmeier and Cheral Buhr for taking charge of the ticket sales for Advent by Candlelight scheduled for December 7th. She reminded the ladies that we continue to collect stamps, Campbell soup labels, the fronts of Christmas and greeting cards, box tops for education, cell phones with batteries and some ink cartridges.

In New Business, Janet Smith, of Thrivent explained how to obtain Thrivent funds for projects at the church. Janet is trying to find a Manning member to host Advent by Candlelight with Thrivent as a sponsor. It was decided that the ladies of the congregation will be decorating the tables and making the desserts as usual. Darlene Vollstedt will be kitchen chairman. Sandra Vahl will be in charge of showing guests where to sit and Manning's praise band will be the entertainment.

Margaret Backhaus will explore using Thrivent to sponsor the gift boxes for the Clarinda home at Christmas time. Next month will be election of a new president and president elect. The nominating committee was reminded to have a slate of officers. The November meeting will be on the 12th with Carol Kahl and Mary Grimm serving as hostesses.

The meeting closed with the table prayer and Lord's Prayer.

Respectfully submitted,
Sue Puck, secretary

Charles, Cheryl, Caleb, Caitlin, Carissa, and Cassie Ferry
Missionaries to Indonesia

September 2014

Hari-Hari Persiapan (Indonesian for "Days of preparation")

The sermon characterizes a very important job of the pastor: to proclaim the Word of God to His people, to rightly divide Law and Gospel so sinners can be put to death and raised to new life in the forgiveness of Jesus Christ.

Most people only experience the final 15–30 minutes of the sermon. They have no idea just how much time goes into the *preparation* of that sermon: Pastors sit in their study, poring over the Scriptures, determining how to communicate God's truths in ways that will communicate best to his particular flock. It's hours and hours of work.

The work of sermon preparation is not glamorous, but it's vital and necessary. There would be no public proclamation on Sunday if there was no quiet, secluded preparation during the week.

This has been a "sermon preparation" type of month for the Ferry family. There was much work accomplished, but it's work that is hard to capture in pictures or newsletters. Many hours were spent in the office at home in Jakarta, sending emails, making phone calls, reviewing and preparing documents, and meeting with people over video calls.

And to be completely honest, this kind of month was just what we needed. After all the travel experiences of July and August, this quieter and more subdued September was welcome. It's allowed us to get into a more regular routine of school for the kids, and to get out into our community to meet a few neighbors and practice our *Bahasa Indonesia*. Living in Jakarta continues to be a big adjustment, getting used to the traffic and sheer congestion with this many people in one city.

SELAMAT

Our one trip this month was a quick jump over to Singapore for some preventive medical care that's not readily available in Indonesia. It also gave me a chance to deliver God's gifts in Word and Sacrament to some expat Lutherans in Singapore, some of whom had not partaken of the Body and Blood of Christ for several months because there was no LCMS pastor available to them. It was a great privilege to feed these hungry souls with the nourishment God provides in His Means of Grace.

Thank you for your partnership with us in this work, whether we're running around Southern Asia, or safely at home working behind the scenes. It is a great privilege to be doing our Lord's work here, and we're only able to be here because of your prayers and support.

Prayers, Praises, and Thanksgiving

- Thanksgiving for all our supporters who have made this work possible!
- Thanksgiving for our friends in Seymour, IN and Sun Prairie, WI who are mailing things in paper to those who aren't online.
- For sharp minds and humble hearts to learn the Indonesian language.
- For the Ferry and Olson families as they mourn the death of Chuck's grandmother Betty Olson
- For *ongoing* pledged support, that we might continue serving overseas according to our Lord's will.
- That our gracious Lord Jesus would grant His wisdom and grace, that many would be blessed by the work we're doing in Indonesia.

As always, there's too much going on to fit into one newsletter article. Please check out our blog for more stories and pictures:
http://cferry.wordpress.com

Thank You from Indonesia

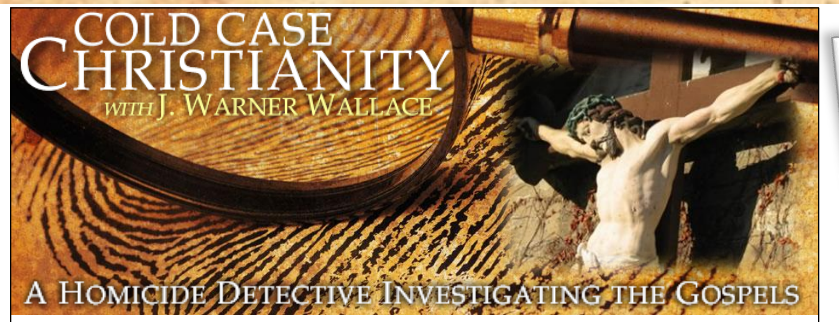
Dear brothers and sisters at Zion, Manning,
The Lord is with you!

I can only imagine what the colors must look like on the trees in Iowa at this time of year. I'm sure the temperatures are dropping somewhat, and the crops are well on their way in by now. Please think of us during those brisk times of day as you look outside... the weather here in Indonesia (and especially in Jakarta) is very constant: it's still in the 90's every day and there really is no changing of the seasons. The kids here have no idea (literally) what it's like to play in the fallen leaves or in the snow (*salju*).

Mission Central has recently given us the wonderful news of your very generous donation to our support account. We were touched! Thank you for your ongoing trust and partnership in the work we've been called to do here in Indonesia. Life here is not easy, but we're enjoying the opportunities to learn, to grow, to teach, and to share that hope and joy we have from belonging to Christ Jesus. We just could not be here at all if it were not for your prayerful support, holding us up as we live and work in this strange place.

We pray the Lord continues to bless our friends at Zion with His peace and joy as you serve Him faithfully. We are so grateful to be on your team!

In our Lord Jesus,
Charles Ferry and the Ferry family (Cheryl, Caleb, Caitlin, Carissa, & Cassie)



Want to sharpen your skills in Christian case making? Have worldview questions? Want to learn how Christianity stacks up against other world religions? Check out www.coldcasechristianity.com and watch videos, listen to podcasts, or read cutting edge articles on topics ranging from Mormonism, Buddhism, Biblical reliability, culture, morality, and more.

And! Check out the book *Cold Case Christianity* from our church library and join Jay Warner Wallace as he investigates the Gospels and the resurrection of Jesus Christ.

China Lutheran Seminary
Our Missionary in Taiwan
Dr. Stephen and Maggie Oliver

"My 72 year old father-in-law discovered this month that he has lung gland cancer, which has already spread into his bones and lymph nodes, and is in stage 4. We are sharing the Gospel with him and praying for God's work in his life. Pray for Haiting Hsieh (my father-in-law) and his family members, especially for the work of God's Spirit in our lives." – Pastor Oliver

……..

On October 31st Professor Oliver gave a presentation in Singapore on "how Luther and the Reformation can help us understand human sexuality." He sought "to present a God-pleasing response from His Word in light of two extremes: the tidal wave of the homosexual movement extending its influence into every corner of society and the murderous homophobic reaction, both of which break God's commandments and are not with Jesus in extending His hand of Grace to save sinners from their sin (Luke 15:2, John 8:11, Luke 19:10). My wife and I both sense spiritual attack because of this (a lot of things recently)."

THANK YOU ….. The Children enjoyed singing on Sunday, October 19th. They want to sing again for all of you. They did a great job!☺

The Preschool Teachers and Children say "Thank You" to you the members of Zion Lutheran Church for an "Awesome" fundraiser. Our annual fundraiser with the generous support from the congregation, community and the preschool parents raised $1649.69 after paying expenses. Thrivent will supplement $1000.00 for a grand total of $2649.69.

Mrs. Fink and Mrs. Nemitz attended the Iowa District West Lutheran School Teachers Conference at Gloria Dei in Urbandale on October 23 & 24. The keynote Brian Young was uplifting and reinforced the importance of teaching Creation to children.

The preschool held on October 30 their Fall Harvest Celebration – inviting preschool families to come, play games and enjoy hot dogs, chips, and a drink. Over 125 people signed up to attend.

November "Thank You God"
Parent Teachers Conference November 13 & 18th
Grandparents' Day is on November 25. The Morning Class will celebrate Grandparents from 9 to 11:00a.m.and the Afternoon Class will celebrate from 1 to 3 p.m.

Praise the Lord,
Deb Fink

ZioN Lutheran Preschool
Manning, Iowa
Christ Centered... Child Focused... Family Connecting

!Amigos En Cristo!
News from IDW Hispanic Ministry
Missionary/Pastor Daniel Vogel

Iowa District West, LCMS
Year 10, Issue 11, November 2014

The Installation of the Teachers of Zion: As the new school year started Zion School Principal Tammy Langfield asked if the teachers could also be installed in our Spanish service. I was more than happy to invite them to a bilingual worship service to celebrate with our Hispanic congregation. This school has been such a blessing to our ministry among Spanish families. This year we have 10 Hispanic children in the school and 6 from the African country of Sudan. God is bringing the world to Denison and to Zion Lutheran Church and School. We thank the teachers and the staff at Zion School for ministering to all the children of this school.

The Future of Our Ministry among Hispanics in Denison: Last month we completed the first step in becoming an independent Lutheran congregation affiliated with Iowa District West of the LCMS. We received our certificate of incorporation from the State of Iowa. We thank Zion member and lawyer Rick Franck for donating his time and expertise in preparing this legal document. The name of our new church will be: LA IGLESIA EVANGELICA LUTERANA AMIGOS EN CRISTO (*Friends in Christ Evangelical Lutheran Church*). We have also written and translated our Constitution and By-Laws and sent it to the IDW's President's office for approval. On Sunday, October 12 we met with our voters to study the Constitution. It's an exciting and historic time. Our ministry is celebrating its 15th year, so it's time to become more organized and structured. But none of our Hispanic members have been through a process like this with lay leadership leading a Christian congregation. Please pray for this historic step in Jesus' church.

Thank You LWML: Last month I had the honor of speaking to the Carroll Zone of the Lutheran Women's Missionary League. They met at Trinity, Coon Rapids. We had a great gathering of very supportive and interested sisters in Christ! They asked many questions regarding our Hispanic ministry in Denison as well as our three other Hispanic missions around the District. God bless our missionary sisters!

My Tyson Chaplaincy at the Plant in Denison: In October I went to Springdale, Arkansas for the Tyson Chaplains' Conference at the international headquarters. In the picture at the right I am with the two other LCMS pastors who also serve as Tyson chaplains: Rev. Eric Moeller of Storm Lake and Rev. Eddie Mekasha of Omaha. Together we gathered with about 80 other Chaplains from the Tyson plants around this country, Mexico and Canada. We participated in the four day conference on how to better serve the workers of Tyson. We even prepared meals for the needy of Arkansas.

Our group packaged 20,000 bags of food in one hour! We pray that God will continue to open doors to share the Gospel with those in the work place, those in crisis and those searching for the Truth.

Please Pray: +In thanksgiving for mission presentations at Trinity, Coon Rapids, and St. John's, Kiron. +For the process of affiliating with IDW-LCMS and for our mission leadership and church ownership. +For my work as a Chaplain at Tyson and for our upcoming annual clergy visitation day. +In thanksgiving for our Walk for Life and our efforts to organize a Hispanic pro-life group. +For our upcoming annual Unity/Thanksgiving joint worship service with our four District Hispanic churches. +*In thanksgiving for the mission hearts of the many individuals and congregations of IDW who monthly support the Lord's work among Hispanic immigrants in Denison and in our other three Hispanic missions.*

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November Birthdays and Anniversaries @ Zion

1. Joy Umland
2. Derek Hodne
   Dillon Mohr
3. Taylor Beckendorf
   Wade Janssen
4. Caleb Alexander
   Kori Beckendorf
   Mason Benton
   Charles Hickman
   Carol Kahl
   Barry Kusel
5. Joe Riesberg
6. Albert Vahl
7. Barbara Anderson
   Samantha Doyel
   Fred Gruhn
   Levi Lapel
8. Ken Grimm
   Travis Mohr
   Alexander Thelen
9. Rick Lohrmann
   Kenneth Stripling
10. Jean Kusel
    Jeanette Lerssen
11. Larry Genzen
    Arlene Musfeldt
    Debbie Musfeldt
    Tammy Winter
12. Kyle Vetter
13. Jacob Dreier
    Jordan Edgington
    Rodney Frank
14. Steve Renze
15. Jesse Johnson
16. Sam Musfeldt
    Rachel Nulle
    Paula Vogel
17. Macie Doyel
    Shelly Gruhn
    Sandra Vahl
18. Beverly Grundmeier
    Scott Robinson
19. Ryan Doyel
    Garrett Renze
20. Barbara Gore
21. Margaret Backhaus
    Dustin Bruch
    Daniel Mohr
22. Matthew Rosener
    Thomas Walters
24. Allen Ehlers
    Kelly Page
25. Luann Langel
    Amber Neumann
26. Nancy Baack
    Amy Borkowski
    Nicholas Diersen
    Rebecca Eischeid
27. Ryan Willison
28. Diane Genzen
29. Daniel Behrens
30. Alberta Dreier

11. Ken & Rhonda Grimm
14. Elissa & Joe Riesberg
16. Allen & Becky Ehlers
24. John & Nancy Opperman
26. Ken & Becky Eischeid
    Stacie & Nels Nelson
29. David & Kelli Page

If we missed or misspelled your name, please inform the church office.

Thanksgiving Eve Service
Wednesday, November 26
7:00 p.m.

Sing to the Lord of harvest,
Sing songs of love and praise;
With joyful hearts and voices
Your alleluias raise.
By Him the rolling seasons
In fruitful order move;
Sing to the Lord of harvest
A joyous song of love.

Advent by Candlelight
December 7
6:30 p.m.

Advance ticket sales only ($5)
Available before and after
the Divine Service
And in the Church Office

Want to be a hostess or learn about what being a hostess entails? Visit with Susie Schilling, Bev Grundmeier, or Cheral Buhr

There are still a few tables available to hostess.