

Christian MONTHLY

DEDICATED TO THE PROCLAMATION
OF THE WORD OF GOD



Psalm 119:105
Thy word is a lamp unto my feet,
and a light unto my path.

August 1944 — August 2019

75th ANNIVERSARY EDITION

The *Christian Monthly* has been published for 75 years this month! Faithful pastors and teachers have written, our readership has waxed and waned, we've gone through changes in editors and style, and in this electronic age we are even available online at www.christianmonthlyalca.org. May this publication continue to be dedicated to the proclamation of God's Word, and may it find its way into many of our homes. May the Good Shepherd continue to seek the lost, bind up the brokenhearted, and strengthen the sick.

The two opening articles from the first English language *Christian Monthly* follow, as printed in the 50th anniversary edition in August 1994:

Greetings

Grace, mercy, and peace from God the Father, and Christ Jesus our Lord. Amen.

It is with a prayer to God, the giver of all good and perfect gifts, and from whom all true wisdom and understanding is received, that we have prepared and now present to you this first issue of the *Christian Monthly* in the English language. May this messenger of God's Word find its way and be welcomed into many homes. May it be a means by which the Good Shepherd of our souls will seek that which is lost, bring back that which is driven away, bind up that which is broken, and strengthen that which is sick. May the arrival of this messenger of peace be awaited for as eagerly as Noah and those who were in the ark with him, awaited the return of the dove sent forth to see if the waters were abated off the face of the ground. What tidings of rest and joy it brought when it returned with an olive leaf in its bill, by which Noah knew that the waters were abated from off the earth. Likewise may this publication bring tidings of peace, rest, and joy like the mild, patient, and humble dove brought forth to Noah. As Noah put forth his hand and took the dove and pulled her into him, into the ark, so Christ will graciously preserve, help, and welcome those that fly to Him for rest. We pray that the Lord will bless our humble efforts in His name to the furtherance of His kingdom and the salvation of undying souls.

W. A. Karvonen

An English Christian Monthly (Excerpts)

Speak thou the things which becometh sound doctrine. Thus Paul exhorts Titus in the labors of the gospel to preach that they who hear might be "nourished in the word of faith and of good doctrine." *That we henceforth be no more children tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine by the sleight of men whereby they lie in wait to deceive.* Furthermore, in receiving these words of doctrine, which is the Word of God, we must know he who preaches or writes concerning it, *neither received it of man, neither was taught it, but by the revelation of Jesus Christ. That Christ may dwell in our hearts by faith: that we being rooted and grounded in love may be able to comprehend with all the saints, what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height, and to know the love of Christ which passeth knowledge, that we might be filled with all the fullness of God.*

It is now proposed, that in the living Christianity of this visitation of grace, a Christian paper be published in the English language. Such is surely pleasing to God. And as His work, to the glory of His kingdom and the salvation of souls, it shall prosper providing that in the contents of this English paper will be found not only the writings of the young but also the witness of those who are old in faith and with sound understanding of the doctrine of Christ.

Watchfulness is especially necessary in this day of a multitude of false sects and doctrines, wherein the devil lies in wait to deceive even the elect if possible. When all around we hear the cry, "here is Christ, and there is Christ," may we find Him where He can be found—in the truth of His Word.

May we in all things be obedient unto His will, ever seeking to grow in grace and in the knowledge of Christ, so that prophecy of Amos concerning the children of God would not be our portion: *Behold the days come, saith the Lord God, that I shall send the famine in the land, not a famine of bread, nor a thirst for water, but of hearing the words of the Lord.*

Let us not sleep as do others, but let us watch and be sober.

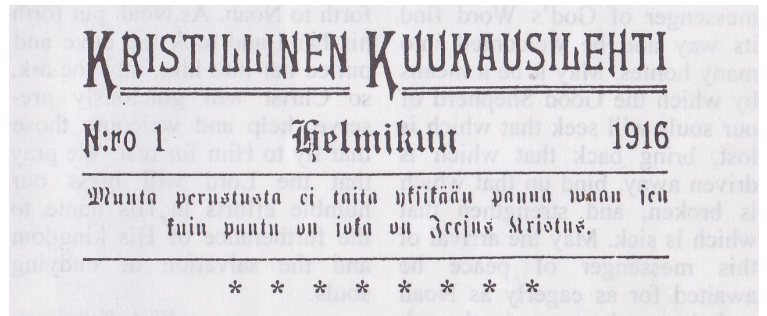
By the hand of one young in faith, who needs the sincere milk of the Word.

Carl Kulla

75th Anniversary Edition: A Little Background

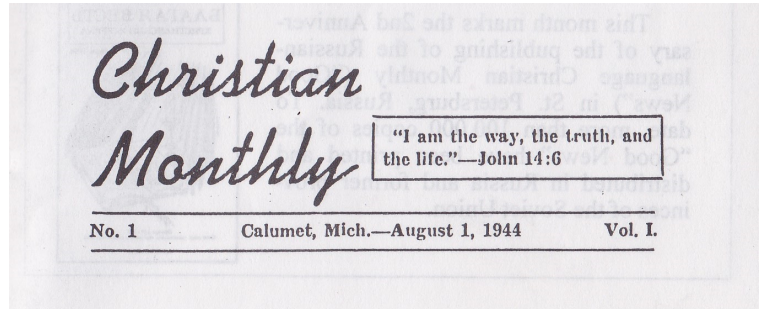
Finnish-Language *Christian Monthly*:

The first official paper of the Apostolic Lutheran Church was published by the authority of the 1915 Big Meetings. It was called *Kristillinen Kuukausilehti* (Christian Monthly) and was published in the Finnish language from 1916 through 1962. The editors of this paper during this time were: C. J. Sacarisen, Matt Mattson, Evert Maatala, Jacob Uitti, Waino Karvonen, Emil Millen and Norman Saatio. The first issue was February 1916. The masthead of that issue is shown (to the right):



English-Language *Christian Monthly*:

The *Christian Monthly* was first published in the English language in August 1944. The initial eight-page periodical explained the intent of the magazine: "It is with a prayer to God, the giver of all good and perfect gifts, and from whom all true wisdom and understanding is received, that we have prepared and now present to you this first issue of the *Christian Monthly* in the English Language. May this messenger of God's Word find its way and be welcomed into many homes. May it be a means by which the Good Shepherd of our souls will seek that which is lost, bring back that which is driven away, bind up that which is broken, and strengthen that which is sick." (W.A. Karvonen). Here is the masthead of the first edition (above):



A different Bible verse was printed on the front cover of each issue until January 1970. Since then, the cover has been graced with *Psalms 119:105: Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path.* The December 1993 issue had the first two-color cover and was also the first to state: "Dedicated to the Proclamation of the Word of God." A full-size, full-color cover design was first printed in the January 2008 issue.

Ten different editors have served since the inception of the *Christian Monthly*. These are the years that they served:

W. A. Karvonen	Aug 1944—May 1948	Helmi Kivisto	Aug 1962—Mar 1975
E. A. Millen	Jun 1948—Oct 1950	Alvar Helmes	Apr 1975—Jun 1995
Carl Kulla	Nov 1950—Apr 1952	Alvin Holmgren	Jul 1995—Mar 1999
Kenneth Hendrickson	May 1952—Jun 1958	Linda Mattson	Apr 1999—Dec 2007
Helmar Peterson	Jul 1958—Jul 1962	Lois Matson	Jan 2008—Present



Upcoming Services

Hockinson ALC	Brush Prairie, WA	Fall Services	Aug 16-18
Family Camp	Henning, MN	Dennis Hannu	Aug 16-18
Tapiola ALC	Tapiola, MI	Stig-Erik Enqvist	Sep 8-15
Eastside ALC	Greer, SC	Dale Niskanen	Oct 18-20
Seattle ALC	Shoreline, WA	Nathan Juntunen & Phil Wilson	Oct 25-27
High Point ALC	High Point, NC	Annual Fall Services	Nov 8-10

Justification (Excerpts from 1954 Article)

Andrew Mickelsen
August 1994 CM

THE LOVE OF GOD IS not satisfied with anything less than full fellowship with God. That is the goal toward which God leads men; therefore it is written: *And whom he called, them he also justified (Romans 8:30).*

Volumes have been written on justification, but the Apostle Paul simply states in Romans 4:25: *Who was delivered for our offenses, and was raised again for our justification.* The love of God toward sinners is made manifest by the fact that He laid all our sins upon His only begotten Son, who was delivered to judgment for our offenses. Yes, He was delivered to judgment before a righteous God to answer for our sins, the innocent in place of the guilty, the righteous instead of the sinner, to be judged according to His law which plainly says: *the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die. (Genesis 2:17).* And again, *Cursed is he that confirmeth not all the words of this law to do them. (Deuteronomy 27:26).*

We have done that which God has forbidden us. We have not confirmed all the words of the law to do them, therefore, the judgment of a cursed death is ours. This judgment fell upon Jesus because of our sins. Jesus said: *Now is my soul troubled, and what shall I say? Father, save me from this hour: but for this cause came I unto this hour. (John 12:27).*

Oh, what love God must have had for lost and condemned sinners when He delivered His Son to a cursed death on Calvary's cross! The knowledge of this love inspired Paul to say: *If God be for us, who can be against us? He that spared not his own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shalt he not with him also freely give us all things? (Romans 8:31, 32).*

Do you believe this, dear soul? Then why do you doubt concerning the forgiveness of your sins? Have they not been atoned for by the suffering and death of your Savior? If God is calling you, be not fearful, but be of good cheer, and your sins shall be forgiven you. His grace is sufficient, His blood has the power to remove your sins from you as far as the east is from the west (Psalm 103:12).

If you believe your sins forgiven in Jesus' name and blood, your faith shall be accounted to you for righteousness and you are justified by faith (Romans 4:3; 5:1). The word "justified" means vindicated or absolved. How wonderful it is to be absolved from all the guilt and punishment of sin, to be released from a guilty conscience and freed from the punishment of a righteous judgment. How wonderful it is to experience that which Paul experienced when he wrote: *Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ: by whom also we have access by faith into*

this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in the hope of the glory of God (Romans 5:1, 2).

It is impossible to be justified without believing the forgiveness of sins in Christ Jesus, because it is through Him that we have access by faith to this grace. Likewise, it is impossible to have peace without the forgiveness of sins. Thus justification and peace go hand in hand, and both of them are obtained by faith in the crucified and resurrected Lord Jesus, who died for our sins and rose again for our justification. If Christ had not died, our sins would not have been atoned for, and if He had not risen from the dead, there would be no mercy seat, no gospel of forgiveness, no peace, and no justification. Therefore it is written in 1 Corinthians 15:17: *And if Christ be not raised, your faith is vain; ye are yet in your sins.*

Oh, what love God must have had for lost and condemned sinners when He delivered His Son to a cursed death on Calvary's cross!

If you're still in doubt, behold how all the powers of hell were arrayed against our Savior on Good Friday and Easter morn, when the greatest issue of all times was being settled, an issue which was most vital to every human being. If Christ is conquered, then Satan would rule all mankind and no flesh would be saved. The battle was terrific, the strain was beyond human endurance.

Thanks be to God the battle was won! He arose victorious over death, hell, and the devil for our justification. Now joy reigned in heaven! Now the shout is heard according to John, who said: *And I heard a loud voice saying in heaven, Now is come salvation, and strength, and the kingdom of our God, and the power of his Christ: for the accuser of our brethren is cast down, which accused them before our God day and night. And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their testimony... (Revelation 12:10, 11).*

Have you overcome the accuser by the blood of the Lamb and the word of their testimony? Has anyone testified the forgiveness of sin to you in the blood of the lamb? Has God given you the strength to believe that testimony? If you have believed the forgiveness of your sins in Jesus' name and blood, you have overcome the accuser, for your sins are blotted out in the blood of the Lamb. He cannot accuse you before God any longer. You have no sin in the sight of God. You are justified by faith, you have peace with God through Jesus Christ our Lord. ~

THE HOLY SCRIPTURES ARE FULL of divine gifts and virtues. The books of the heathen taught nothing of faith, hope, or charity; they present no idea of these things; they contemplate only the present, and that which man, with the use of his material reason, can grasp and comprehend. Look not therein for aught of hope or trust in God. But see how the Psalms and the Book of Job treat of faith, hope, resignation, and prayer; in a word, the Holy Scripture is the highest and best of books, abounding in comfort under all afflictions and trials. It teaches us to see, to feel, to grasp, and to comprehend faith, hope, and charity, far otherwise than mere human reason can; and when evil oppresses us, it teaches how these virtues throw light upon the darkness, and how, after this poor miserable existence of ours on earth, there is another and an eternal life.

Martin Luther

75 Years and Counting

Gwen Wilson
Ridgefield, Washington

Dear Children all around the globe,

This year is the 75th year that the *Christian Monthly* has been published. God has blessed the beginnings of the booklet. He has continued to bless us with willing people to send in articles and those who do the work to make it available for us to read.

This publication is for everyone, young and old alike. We can all read it for instruction and encouragement for our Christian walk. Some of the articles may be difficult for you children to understand. But as you grow and learn more about God, Jesus, and what being a Christian means to you, I encourage you to pick up a copy or nowadays go on the computer and read it and see if there is something in it for you.

I would like to ask that if anyone young or old has a story of something God has done in your life, or a poem or even a special quote, that you would feel free to share it. It may encourage another.

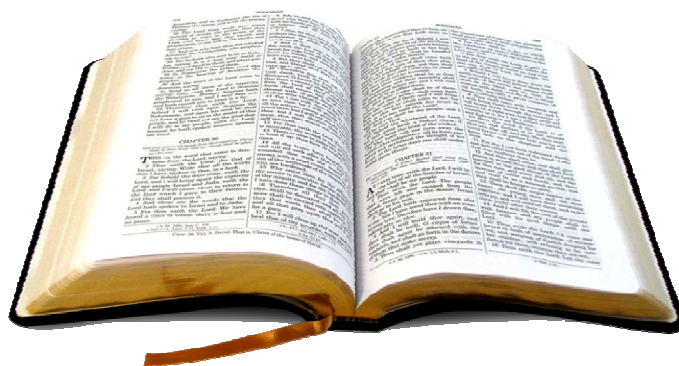
You young ones are special people and I pray that we adults would care deeply about your souls and teach you about God being first and foremost in your life, as that is the foundation you want to have your life built on. We need to keep you in mind and send words of encouragement and instruction that will help you in your Christian walk. Keep loving the God who dearly loves you and paid a great price for you, when He sent His only Son to die – FOR YOU! and all mankind.

This little booklet is for you and for me;
Open it up, dear ones, and see
The precious words written upon the pages—
God's Word being revealed as it has for ages.

The letters are written by willing hands
From here in America and other lands.
Let's read about God and Jesus, His Son—
Encouraging words for the old and the young.

Quotes from Luther and our forefathers of long ago,
Letters and poems from those we don't know.
Whatever is written, the intent is the same;
The reason for that is, God's Word doesn't change.

I pray that we'll all be reading;
I pray for those who will write;
Let's pray that God's Word keeps shining
And shedding its comforting Light.



****A note to Christian parents and other believers who are grounded in faith and truth:**

We have a great responsibility to the young Christians. They will reach the age to be confirmed and will begin taking part in the Church. They are the next generation who we pray will stand strong in faith and continue to lead and take care of the Church. They will have their struggles along the way. We must encourage them and recognize them. They need that and will need it. Not one of us is better than the other. We're all in this together. Let brotherly love continue.

I pray that God's Word will still go out and bring joy, comfort, peace and salvation to all who love the Lord and desire to one day live in that glorious heavenly home one day. Children, don't ever forget that **JESUS LOVES YOU!**

In God's peace.

Invitation to Fall Services in the Copper Country

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ, God's peace!

The Tapiola Apostolic Lutheran congregation welcomes everyone to Fall Services in the Copper Country, Michigan. We have invited Stig-Erik Enkvist from Larsmo, Finland, to be the featured speaker. Services begin Sunday, September 8, and conclude Sunday, September 15. Service schedule will be:

Sunday, September 8th: 11:00 am, 2:00 and 6:00 pm in **Tapiola**

Tuesday, September 10th: 7:00 pm in **Watton**

Wednesday, September 11th: 7:00 pm in **Atlantic Mine**

Friday, September 13th: 7:00 pm in **Tapiola**

Sunday, September 15th: 11:00 am, 2:00 pm in **Tapiola**, and 6:00 pm in **Chassell**

We pray for God's richest blessings during these services.

On behalf of the Tapiola Apostolic Lutheran Church, Jon Lehtinen
phone: 906-370-7356 email: svensk@charter.net

Original Sin

Epitome of the Formula of Concord 1: 2-9

WE BELIEVE, TEACH, AND CONFESS that there is a distinction between man's nature, not only as he was originally created by God pure and holy and without sin, but also as we have it [that nature] now after the Fall, namely, between the nature [itself], which even after the Fall is and remains a creature of God, and original sin, and that this distinction is as great as the distinction between a work of God and a work of the devil.

We believe, teach, and confess also that this distinction should be maintained with the greatest care, because this doctrine, that no distinction is to be made between our corrupt human nature and original sin, conflicts with the chief articles of our Christian faith concerning creation, redemption, sanctification, and the resurrection of our body, and cannot coexist therewith.

For God created not only the body and soul of Adam and Eve before the Fall, but also our bodies and souls after the Fall, notwithstanding that they are corrupt, which God also still acknowledges as His work, as it is written *Job 10:8: Thine hands have made me and fashioned me together round about...*

Moreover, the Son of God has assumed this human nature, however, without sin, and therefore not a foreign, but our own flesh, into the unity of His person, and according to it is become our true Brother. *Hebrews 2:14: Forasmuch, then, as the children were partakers of flesh and blood, He also Himself likewise took part of the same.* Again, *16; 4:15: He took not on Him the nature of angels, but He took on Him the seed of Abraham. Wherefore in all things it behooved Him to be made like unto His brethren, yet without sin.* In like manner Christ has also redeemed it as His work, sanctifies it as His work, raises it from the dead, and gloriously adorns it as His work. But original sin He has not created, assumed, redeemed, sanctified; nor will He raise it, will neither adorn nor save it in the elect, but in the [blessed] resurrection it will be entirely destroyed.

Hence the distinction between the corrupt nature and the corruption which infects the nature and by which the nature became corrupt, can easily be discerned.

But, on the other hand, we believe, teach, and confess that original sin is not a slight, but so deep a corruption of human nature that nothing healthy or uncorrupt has remained in man's body or soul, in his inner or outward powers, but, as the Church sings:

*Through Adam's fall is all corrupt,
Nature and essence human.*

This damage is unspeakable, and cannot be discerned by reason, but only from God's Word. And [we affirm] that no one but God alone can separate from one another the nature and this corruption of the nature, which will fully come to pass through death, in the [blessed] resurrection, where our nature which we now bear will rise and live eternally without original sin and separated and sundered from it, as it is written *Job 19:26: I shall be compassed again with this my skin, and in my flesh shall I see God, whom I shall see for myself, and mine eyes shall behold. ~*

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Concerning Christian Liberty

Martin Luther

A Christian man is the most free lord of all, and subject to none; a Christian man is the most dutiful servant of all, and subject to every one.

ALTHOUGH THESE STATEMENTS appear contradictory, yet, when they are found to agree together, they will be highly serviceable to my purpose. They are both the statements of Paul himself, who says: *For though I be free from all men, yet have I made myself servant unto all...* (1 Corinthians 9:19), and: *Owe no man any thing, but to love one another.* (Romans 13:8) Now love is by its own nature dutiful and obedient to the beloved object. Thus even Christ, though Lord of all things, was yet made of a woman; made under the law; at once free and a servant; at once in the form of God and in the form of a servant.

Let us examine the subject on a deeper and less simple principle. Man is composed of a twofold nature, a spiritual and a bodily. As regards the spiritual nature, which they name the soul, he is called the spiritual, inward, new man; as regards the bodily nature, which they name the flesh, he is called the fleshly, outward, old man. The Apostle speaks of this: *...though our outward man perish, yet the inward man is renewed day by day.* (2 Corinthians 4:16) The result of this diversity is, that in the Scriptures opposing statements are made concerning the same man; the fact being that in the same man these two men are opposed to one another; the flesh lusting against the spirit, and the spirit against the flesh (Galatians 5:17).

We first approach the subject of the inward man, that we may see by what means a man becomes justified, free, and a true Christian; that is, a spiritual, new, and inward man. It is certain that absolutely none among outward things, under whatever name they may be reckoned, has any weight in producing a state of justification and Christian liberty, nor, on the other hand an unjustified state and one of slavery. This can be shown by an easy course of argument.

What can it profit the soul that the body should be in good condition, free, and full of life, that it should eat, drink, and act according to its pleasure when even the most impious slaves of every kind of vice are prosperous in these matters? Again, what harm can ill-health, bondage, hunger, thirst, or any other outward evil, do to the soul, when even the most pious of men, and the freest in the purity of their conscience are harassed by these things? Neither of these states of things has to do with the liberty or the slavery of the soul.

And so it will profit nothing that the body should be adorned with sacred vestments, or dwell in holy places, or be occupied in sacred offices, or pray, fast, and abstain from certain meats, or do whatever works can be done through the body and in the body. Something widely different will be necessary for the justification and liberty of the soul, since the things I have spoken of can be done by any impious person, and only hypocrites are produced by devotion to these things. On the other hand, it will not at all injure the

soul that the body should be clothed in profane (secular) raiment, should dwell in profane places, should eat and drink in the ordinary fashion, should not pray aloud, and should leave undone all the things abovementioned, which may be done by hypocrites.

And, to cast everything aside, even speculations, meditations and whatever things can be performed by the exertions of the soul itself, are of no profit. One thing, and one alone, is necessary for life, justification, and Christian liberty; and that is the most holy Word of God, the Gospel of Christ, as He says: *I am the resurrection, and the life: he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live* (John 11:25); and also John 8:36: *If the Son therefore shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed*; and Matthew 4:4: *Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God.*

Let us therefore hold it for certain and firmly established, that the soul can do without everything, except the Word of God, without which none at all of its wants are provided for. But, having the Word, it is rich and want for nothing; since that is the Word of life, of truth, of light, of peace, of justification, of salvation, of joy, of liberty, of wisdom, of virtue, of grace, of glory, and of every good thing. It is on this account that the prophet in a whole psalm (Psalm 69), and in many other places, sighs for and calls upon the Word of God with so many groanings and words.

Again, there is no more cruel stroke of the wrath of God than when He sends a famine of hearing His Words (Amos 8:11); just as there is no greater favour from Him than the sending forth of His Word, as it is said: *He sent his word, and healed them, and delivered them from their destructions.* (Psalm 107:20) Christ was sent for no other office than that of the Word, and the order of apostles, that of bishops, and that of the whole body of the clergy, have been called and instituted for no object but the ministry of the Word.

But you will ask: "What is this Word, and by what means is it to be used, since there are so many words of God?" I answer, the Apostle Paul (Romans 1) explains what it is, namely, the Gospel of God, concerning His Son, incarnate, suffering, risen, and glorified through the Spirit, the sanctifier. To preach Christ is to feed the soul, to justify it, to set it free, and to save it, if it believes the preaching. For faith alone, and the efficacious use of the Word of God, bring salvation. *If thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved.* (Romans 10:9) And again: *Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth* (Romans 10:4); and *The just shall live by faith.* (Romans 1:17) For the Word of God cannot be received and honoured by any works, but by faith alone. Hence it is clear that, as the soul needs the Word alone for life and justification, so it is justified by faith alone and not by any works. For if it could be justified by any other means, it would have no need of the Word, nor consequently of faith. ~

Jesus set me FREE...



to be a SERVANT.

Big C, Little C, What Begins with C?

Lois Matson
Yacolt, Washington

SOME WORDS USED IN CHRISTIANITY can cause confusion if they aren't defined and properly understood. Two examples are the words "catholic" and "creed."

Depending on usage and capitalization, catholic can have different meanings. In general terms, Catholic with a capital C is used as the shortened form of the Roman Catholic Church. The Roman Catholic Church is the largest Christian church in the world, and the oldest. It was founded by Christ, and was led by the apostles in the early church age. This was the church Martin Luther attended for much of his life. As Luther grew up, became a monk, and taught theology in Wittenberg, he likely never considered that he would ever be forced to leave his Catholic home church.

Lower-case catholic, on the other hand, means "universal" and when used in reference to the Church it means the whole Christian Church on earth, the whole body of believers in Christ. It encompasses different denominations and different races, tribes, and families. It is made up only of those who profess faith in the crucified and risen Christ, the Savior who was sacrificed for the forgiveness of sins.

Creed also begins with the letter c. Creed comes from the Latin word "credo" which means "I believe."



The Church catholic holds to the truths of the Scripture as set forth in the Nicene Creed, which contains this phrase: "And I believe in one holy catholic and apostolic Church." In the Nicene Creed, we profess belief in the holy catholic (universal) Christian Church, the same one that was led by the apostles. Here is the text of the Nicene Creed, from the Book of Concord:

I believe in one God, the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth, and of all things visible and invisible. And in one Lord Jesus Christ, the only-begotten Son of God, begotten of the Father before all worlds, God of God, Light of Light, very God of very God, begotten, not made, being of one substance with the Father;

by whom all things were made; who for us men, and for our salvation, came down from heaven, and was incarnate by the Holy Ghost of the Virgin Mary, and was made man, and was crucified also for us under Pontius Pilate; He suffered and was buried; and the third day He rose again according to the Scriptures; and ascended into heaven, and sitteth on the right hand of the Father; and He shall come again with glory to judge the quick and the dead; whose kingdom shall have no end.

And I believe in the Holy Ghost, the Lord and Giver of life, who proceedeth from the Father and the Son; who with the Father and the Son together is worshiped and glorified; who spake by the Prophets. **And I believe in one holy catholic and apostolic Church.** I acknowledge one Baptism for the remission of sins; and I look for the resurrection of the dead, and the life of the world to come. Amen.

In previous years, the Apostles' Creed also used the term catholic, and some of the older people in our congregations learned it that way. Here is the text of the Apostles' Creed, with a footnote, as found in the Book of Concord:

I believe in God the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth.

And in Jesus Christ, His only Son, our Lord; who was conceived by the Holy Ghost, born of the Virgin Mary; suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, dead, and buried; He descended into hell; the third day He rose again from the dead; He ascended into heaven, and sitteth on the right hand of God the Father Almighty; from thence He shall come to judge the quick and the dead.

I believe in the Holy Ghost; **the holy catholic* Church**, the communion of saints; the forgiveness of sins; the resurrection of the body; and the life everlasting. Amen.

***catholic means 'universal'** and is not a reference to the Roman Catholic Church.

Some people say we should not hold fast to some old-fashioned doctrine (teaching), that deeds are more important than creeds. Deeds are important, but if we don't know what we believe, or if we don't believe the truth, it will profit us nothing.

Moreover, brethren, I declare unto you the gospel which I preached unto you, which also ye have received, and wherein ye stand; By which also ye are saved, if ye keep in memory what I preached unto you, unless ye have believed in vain. For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures; And that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day according to the scriptures... 1 Corinthians 15:1-4

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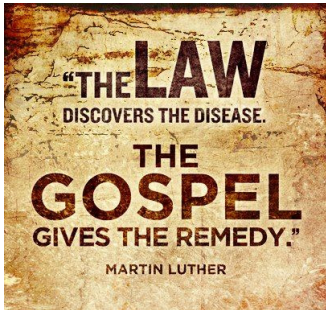
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Effects of Law and Gospel

C. F. W. Walther

WHEN THE ISRAELITES, at Mount Sinai, were given the Ten Commandments, they were all a-tremble. Their natural behavior revealed the condition of their hearts. On that occasion God wanted to point out to us for all time to come: Behold, that is the effect of the Law! Accordingly, when the rich young man came to Christ, asking how he might be saved, and was so utterly blind that he did not at all perceive his sinful corruption, we are told: *He went away sorrowful. (Matthew 19:22)* Christ could not yet apply the Gospel to this young man; He first had to convince him that he was utterly incapable of fulfilling the Law. Again, when Paul preached to Felix, the governor, concerning righteousness, temperance, and the Judgment

to come, we read that Felix trembled and answered, *Go thy way for this time; when I have a convenient season, I will call for thee. (Acts 24:25)* But he never called for Paul again; he wanted to be rid of the thunder and lightning of the Law. Again, when Peter on the first Christian festival of Pentecost had preached the Law to his hearers, we are told that they were pricked in their hearts and said unto Peter and the rest of the apostles, *Men and brethren, what shall we do?* namely, to be saved. Then Peter said to them: *Repent, and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost.*

The effects of the Gospel are of an entirely different nature. They consist in this, that, in the first place, the Gospel, when demanding faith, offers and gives us faith in that very demand. When we preach to people: Do believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, God gives them faith through our preaching. We preach faith, and any person not willfully resisting obtains faith. It is, indeed, not the mere physical sound of the spoken Word that produces this effect, but the contents of the Word.

The second effect of the Gospel is that it does not at all reprove the sinner, but takes all terror, all fear, all anguish, from him and fills him with peace and joy in the Holy Ghost. At the return of the prodigal the father does not with a single word refer to his horrible, abominable conduct. He says nothing, nothing whatever, about it, but falls upon the prodigal's neck, kisses him, and prepares a splendid feast for him. That is a glorious parable exhibiting to us the effect of the Gospel. It removes all unrest and fills us with a blessed, heavenly peace.

In the third place, the Gospel does not require anything good that man must furnish: not a good heart, not a good disposition, no improvement of his condition, no godliness, no love either of God or men. It issues no orders, but it changes man. It plants love into his heart and makes him capable of all good works. It demands nothing, but it gives all. Should not this fact make us leap for joy?

The effects of the Gospel are exhibited to us Acts 16, in the case of the jailer of Philippi. He asked Paul and Silas: *Sirs, what must I do to be saved?* and received this answer: *Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved and thy house.* The jailer does not say to the apostles: How am I to go at this? No; he promptly believes, for the apostles' words have spoken faith into his heart. The story concerning him goes on immediately: *He rejoiced, believing in God with all his house.* Observe that the Gospel bestows the faith which it demands. In the demand for faith there is nothing of the nature of the Law; it is a demand of love.

Romans 1:16 Paul says: *I am not ashamed of the Gospel of Christ; for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth.* Here we have a record of something glorious. Can there be anything more glorious, more beautiful, more blessed, more precious, than what the Gospel gives - eternal salvation? ~

But their scribes and Pharisees murmured against his disciples, saying, Why do ye eat and drink with publicans and sinners? And Jesus answering said unto them, They that are whole need not a physician; but they that are sick. I came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance. (Luke 5:30-32)

Are we the whole, or are we the sick? Maybe we are so holy that we don't even want to associate with the sick—the sinners. And when we are holy, we don't need the Great Physician, the Lord Jesus Christ. But when we are the sick ones, then we need the aid of that Physician who alone can heal us of the deadliest disease of condemnation from sin. He came not to call the righteous, for they have no need of His grace. But He calls sinners to repentance and faith. May each of us, as a sinner, find in Jesus what He truly is—a Savior. And when we see Him thus, then we can say as Simeon, “...for mine eyes have seen thy salvation...” Wonderful!

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