

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.

December 2012

He Lifted Me Out of the Miry Clay

the late Albert Impola; December 1958 CM
Submitted by Dave Impola; Seattle, Washington

Dear brother and sister in the Lord, we truly can be thankful to God that He has called and awakened such great sinners as we are and has given us the grace to repent of our sins and ask forgiveness for them. When I look back at my own life, I can say that God has been a loving God toward me. I can say with King David, "He lifted me out of the miry clay and set my feet upon the rock."

So, dear soul, God is calling you also. Today if the Lord calls, do not harden your heart. He has great love for you. He will lift you out of the miry clay and put your feet upon the Rock if only you will come just as you are, a great sinner before God. Though your sins be as scarlet they shall be as white as snow. Do not listen to the devil any longer, for he is a liar and the father of all lies; for he speaks like this to you, dear soul: "Repent when you get older, not now, but some other time; enjoy yourself in the world; you'll never make a Christian." But, dear soul, do not listen to the devil any longer; he does not want anyone to reach heaven for he knows that time is short. That is why he is giving you a bad time. Remember, dear soul, Jesus won over death, hell and the devil, and He will gladly put His loving arms around you. As it is written, *not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance.* (2 Peter 3:9) If you feel in your heart that God is calling you, go to a child of God, confess your sins and ask forgiveness for them, and they will be forgiven in Jesus' name and precious atoning blood. Then you will receive that wonderful gift which Peter speaks about, *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.* (Acts 2:38) The gift of the Holy Spirit is a most precious gift God has given to man. It is such that no money nor all the gold and silver and earthly riches can buy it. As it is written, *Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain conversation received by tradition from your fathers; But with the*

precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot. (1 Peter 1:18-19) For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast. (Ephesians 2:8-9)

It was in 1948 that I was called and converted. I was in good feelings of grace for a long time and felt, "Oh, if all the people would get converted!" I spoke to many unbelievers how God had called even such a one as I. Yes, dear brother and sister in the Lord, we should not be ashamed of the Gospel of Christ, *for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek. (Romans 1:16)* Let us boldly confess what God has done for us. Let us give thanksgiving and praise to the Lord unto death.

When we look back and see where God has lifted us, we can say with David, *He brought me up also out of an horrible pit, out of the miry clay, and set*



my feet upon a rock... (Psalm 40:2) The song writer says, "The love of God is greater far than tongue or pen can ever tell; it goes beyond the highest star and reaches to the lowest hell." (Frederick M. Lehman) Yes, it pulled us out of the pit of hell, for when we were in unbelief we were traveling the road that leads to hell. God called us away from that road and put us on the narrow way that leads to heaven. As it is written, *Enter ye in at the strait gate: for wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat: Because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it. (Matthew 7:13-14)*

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from page 1: Many times as we travel on the narrow way, God tries us in many different ways. Many times for me things have looked very dark. It has seemed as though I'm walking in the valley of the shadow of death. I have had many cold feelings, but still I can feel that God is near me. He is near in joy, sorrow and trial, and we still follow the Lord. It pays to be a Christian and to have peace with God and a clear conscience. I have one great desire in my heart: to reach heaven where there will be no more tears, sorrows or trials, and the devil and this world and our own flesh cannot vex us.

Oh, dear brother and sister in the Lord, it pays to follow the Lord a little while longer. Do not let the devil spoil your peace of a good conscience. He many times spoils it by wrong doctrine. Let us remember that we are led by the Spirit and not by the Law. The Holy Spirit is our guide and He will take us through the joys, sorrows and trials in this life.

There are all kinds of voices around us in the world, but most of these are strange voices. Let us flee from them and follow the voice of the Good Shepherd. The sheep follow the voice of the Good Shepherd ...*for they know his voice. And a stranger will they not follow, but will flee from him: for they know not the voice of strangers. (John 10:4-5)* Let us always follow the voice of Jesus who loved us and died for us.

Many times our best friends may leave us, but Jesus will never forsake us or leave us, for He has promised, *Lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world. (Matthew 28:20)* So let us keep the Word of God always very precious and believe it. As it is written, *Heaven and earth shall pass away: but my words shall not pass away. (Mark 13:31)* Here we can see that God stays by His Word. Many times we can see men change. They begin to follow false doctrine, so let us not follow man for it could lead us into danger.

When we follow man's word it leads us into the pit of hell. *Thus saith the LORD; Cursed be the man that trusteth in man, and maketh flesh his arm, and whose heart departeth from the LORD. (Jeremiah 17:5)*

When we follow God's Word it leads us to heaven. The Apostle warns us, "we should rather obey God than man," so let us flee man's word and believe God's Word. Jesus says, *He that believeth on me, as the scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water. (John 7:38)* If someone wants to disagree with us, let us turn to the Bible and say, "God's Word says this, and I want to believe like it is written in the Holy Bible."

God's Word is like a road map when we travel. It tells us where we should go and where we cannot go. Also it tells us what we should speak and what we cannot speak, and not to add or take away from it. The Holy Bible is the most precious Book we have in our homes. Let us read it more often so we don't become lost in this wilderness of sin. If we become lost, let us look for directions in the Holy Bible, so we can get back on the right road again. Let us always keep the Bible near to us, because the devil goes around like a roaring lion seeking whom he may devour. He tries to deceive us with false doctrine so we would get lost. When we have dark trials in life, let us always turn to the Bible. There we will find the directions for how to reach heaven if only we would watch, pray and follow them, so let us follow Jesus, who is King of Kings and Lord of Lords. We have everything when we have Jesus in our hearts. Let us not trade Jesus for the false doctrines that so often blow around us. "On Christ the solid Rock I stand; all other ground is sinking sand." (Edward Mote) May we always keep Jesus in our hearts until death. Soon He will come with great power with all His holy angels to gather us to that heavenly home. *Behold, I come quickly: hold that fast which thou hast, that no man take thy crown. (Revelation 3:11)*

May the dear heavenly Father give us power to fight against the devil, the world and our own flesh and protect us from all sin, harm and dangers that lurk on the narrow road that leads to heaven.

O give thanks unto the LORD, for he is good: for his mercy endureth for ever. (Psalm 107:1) Amen. ~

Star of the East

Dear Christian Friends,

When traveling to Leduc, Alberta, with Jim to pick up fertilizer for our neighbor man, we left at 3:00 AM. The Morning Star shone so brightly that I thought of how marvelous the "Star of the East," that God set in the sky to lead the wise men, had to be. I was able to visualize the morning star, being illuminated to shine down to the earth and moving slowly across the sky, leading the wise men to the little town of Bethlehem to see the Lord and Savior



of mankind, Jesus, lying in a manger in that lowly cattle shed. If I was to see a brighter than usual star actually moving across the sky today, I would be sure I was dreaming, and yet there it became so real and beautiful to me. That bright Star still guides us spiritually to our dear Lord and Savior, Jesus. With Christmas coming, we can rejoice that Jesus is our personal Savior and is and always will be the reason for the Christmas season. May we follow Him daily, unto the very day when we can meet Him face to face in heaven.

*A blessed and merry Christmas and New Year to all,
Rhoda Olin
Vanderhoof, British Columbia, Canada*

Our Blessed Heritage

The History of the Apostolic Lutheran Church of Lake Worth, Florida

Alv Sakrison

Since World War II, the Lake Worth/Lantana Florida area has become home to a substantial Finnish community. Even as late as the 2000 census, Lake Worth boasted the biggest Finnish population in Florida and is reported to be among the largest in the United States. Many, if not most, of these people were "snowbirds" who would come down for the winter months and return to their northern homes during the warmer times of the year. The Finnish Apostolic Lutheran church people began holding home-church services in the area during the 1950s. One of the earliest couples, Eric and Hilja Rosengren, originally from Massachusetts, lived in a house about a block from the Intracoastal waterway in Lake Worth. They had previously lived in Miami. Eric had an interesting audio recorder that recorded onto spools of thin steel wire instead of tape.

Michigan, was a winter resident and officiated at the dedication. Roy Davidson served as pastor for many years, followed by our current pastor, Ansten Tretten. A new church



Sunday School Program in the "B" Street Church

building in Western Lake Worth was completed in September 1991, again built by our congregation members.

In the 1960s and 1970s, the Finnish community was perhaps the dominant ethnic group in Lake Worth and Lantana. Along Federal Highway there were a number of hotels with Finnish owners and a good sauna was pretty easy to find. There was a Finnish radio program, and it was fairly common to hear Finnish spoken on the streets of Lake Worth. As recently as the early 2000s there were two Finnish bakeries still in the area.

Lake Worth and Lantana are still home to two Finnish heritage halls/clubs, as well as various Finnish churches, including our Apostolic Lutheran Church, St. Andrews Evangelical Lutheran Church, First Apostolic Lutheran Church, Old Apostolic Lutheran Church and even a Finnish Pentecostal church. We still hold a weekly church service at the Finnish-American Rest Home in Lantana.



L-R: Sylvia Krook, Paul Krook, Eric Rosengren, Hilja Rosengren with Arthur Inget, Verna Davidson, Alvide Inget, Roy Davidson, Walter Inget. Arthur Inget was the first baptism. This is the rented church building.

By the mid-1960s, several families from our background had moved to the area and the church moved from meeting in homes to a rented church in Lantana. This was followed by meeting on the upper floor of the Lake Worth City Hall before building our own church on "B" Street in 1968. Some of the first families were Paul and Sylvia Krook in 1964, Walter and Alvide Inget in 1965, Roy and Verna Davidson in 1966, and Wally and Betty Somero in 1968. The 1968 church construction project was run by Emil Tikkanen and the labor was provided by church members. Andrew Mickelsen, who had already retired his 40-year pastorate in Hancock,



Lake Worth City Hall with Finnish people visiting outside



This is our current church.

Our Lake Worth Apostolic Lutheran church family has, like our community, diversified and now includes people of many backgrounds. Here in Palm Beach County, we now have a population of over a million people from all over the globe. Through God's leading, we pray He will continue to use us to further reach outward while still retaining our heritage of faith. ~

Do You Hear? Part III—Christmas

Gwen Wilson
Ridgefield, Washington

Hello to each of you. We are once again in the Christmas season, when we focus on our Savior's birth and thank God for sending His one and only Son—for us. We needed someone to save us from our sin. I want you, and anyone who reads this, to stop and listen to the events that unfold for us.

• **Do you hear** Isaiah prophesying about 740 years before Christ? He said, *The people that walked in darkness have seen a great light: they that dwell in the land of the shadow of death, upon them hath the light shined... For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace. Of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end, upon the throne of David, and upon his kingdom, to order it, and to establish it with judgment and with justice from henceforth even for ever. The zeal of the LORD of hosts will perform this.* (Isaiah 9:2, 6-7)

• Do you hear Micah proclaiming about 721 years before Christ where He would be born? *But thou, Bethlehem Ephratah, though thou be little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of thee shall he come forth unto me that is to be ruler in Israel; whose goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting.* (Micah 5:2)

• **Do you hear** the angel Gabriel telling old Zachariah that he and his wife Elizabeth will have a son? His name will be John and he will be great in the sight of the Lord. He will turn the children of Israel to their God, be filled with the Holy Ghost from birth, and will prepare the people's hearts to receive the Lord.

• Do you hear Gabriel speaking to a young maiden, a virgin named Mary, who was just engaged to Joseph? The angel said, *Hail, thou that art highly favoured, the Lord is with thee: blessed art thou among women.* (Luke 1:28)

• Do you hear Mary's heart beating rapidly at hearing these words from an angel?

• Do you hear Mary's thoughts as she says to herself, "What does this mean?"

• Do you hear the angel reassure Mary? He said, *Fear not, Mary: for thou hast found favour with God. And, behold, thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and bring forth a son, and shalt call his name JESUS. He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Highest: and the Lord God shall give unto him the throne of his father David: And he shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever; and of his kingdom there shall be no end.* (Luke 1:30-33)

• Do you hear Mary ask, "How shall this be, as I don't have a husband?" Do you hear the angel answer, *The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the*

Highest (God) shall overshadow thee: therefore also that holy thing (baby) which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God (Luke 1:35)?

- Do you hear Gabriel tell Mary that her cousin Elizabeth is also going to have a son, even in her old age?
- Do you hear Mary plan to visit her cousin Elizabeth?
- Do you hear the joy of old Elizabeth and young Mary when they see each other?
- Do you hear the praise of Elizabeth? She was filled with the Holy Ghost and loudly proclaimed, *Blessed art thou among women, and blessed is the fruit of thy womb.* (Luke 1:42) Read the rest of her praise in verses 43-55.
- Do you hear Elizabeth say that as soon as she heard Mary's greeting her own baby leaped in her womb?
- Do you hear the wonderful time these women had as they spent 3 months together?
- Do you hear Zachariah and Elizabeth (soon after Mary left) rejoicing over their new son, John?
- Do you hear Mary explaining to her family and Joseph how she is with child, and they in turn being troubled?
- Do you hear Mary asking God for strength and for those she loves to understand?
- Do you hear Joseph fretting to himself as to what to do about Mary? He does not want the townspeople to know about her new condition as he knows she could be stoned.
- Do you hear the gentle voice of an angel in the middle of Joseph's troubled dream? The angel said, *Joseph, thou son of David, fear not to take unto thee Mary thy wife: for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Ghost. And she shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call his name JESUS: for he shall save his people from their sins.* (Matthew 1:20-21)
- Do you hear Joseph's glad footsteps as he runs to tell Mary and her family what the angel told him, that all will be ok, and the joy as he and Mary become man and wife?
- Do you hear the decree of Caesar Augustus that all people must go to the town of their birth to be counted and taxed? Joseph must take Mary to Bethlehem, although she is nearly ready to give birth.
- Do you hear the frantic Joseph as he knocks on doors to find room for Mary? It is time for the baby to come, but he is turned away and finally shown to a stable.

• **Do you hear the good news?**

Mary has brought forth her firstborn son and His name is JESUS.



- **Do you hear** the angel of the Lord speaking to the shepherds in the field? The angel said, *Fear not: for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord. And this shall be a sign unto you; Ye shall find the babe wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger. (Luke 2:10-12)*
- Do you hear the heavenly host praising God with the angel, **Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men (Luke 2:14)?**
- Do you hear the shepherds saying to one another, "Let's go now and see this thing which has happened, which the Lord has made known to us"?
- Do you hear the awe in the shepherd's hushed voices as their eyes gaze on the small Babe wrapped in swaddling



Praise God for this perfect gift. I pray that your Christmas season will be blessed and that you keep it in your heart always, not just at Christmastime.

God's peace.

Where Have All the Soul Winners Gone?

*Humbly submitted by Reverend Elmer R. Liimatta; Chassell, Michigan
Ordained August 17, 1958; Detroit, Michigan*

This is a tribute to a dear sister, Mrs. Helen (Edwin) Marie Tapio Juntunen, of Chassell, Michigan, December 17, 1925-July 17, 2012, wife and mother of six children, and step mother of Jane Liupakka and Judy Somero.

I will never forget, as a teenager sitting in the back seat of a '36 Ford on a hot summer Sunday afternoon in Chassell, when Helen walked up and through the open window asked me, "How is it with your soul?" Even though I had no idea what a soul was, it struck me as something important. Right then I wished the seat would open up and swallow me or that I was someplace else. I did not want to face the question. I had no answer.

Some time before I had heard Rev. Andrew Mickelsen speak on the last days from the Revelation and how the Christians would suffer. That had shocked me. I had never heard anything like that.

There were Christians in those days who would confront you about your salvation. I don't see or hear that today. Yes, I know a sermon is an appeal to be saved or have faith in the Lord. But I don't see the personal

concern over souls. Helen's question led to my personal conversion, my life changed, over fifty years in the ministry, and a lifetime study of what the soul is. The Old Preacher said, "The soul is the undying portion of a person."

The fruit of the righteous is a tree of life; and he that winneth souls is wise. (Proverbs 11:30)

There are various approaches to personal salvation, but I like the Roman way. When you enter a serious talk with a person about spiritual matters and their relationship with the Lord, and they have not been saved, ask them to open the Bible to the following verses:

The power of the Gospel: For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek. For therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith: as it is written, The just shall live by faith. (Romans 1:16-17)

Condemnation: For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God; Being justified freely by his

clothes, lying in a manger, just as the angel had said?

- Do you hear the shepherds returning to their sheep, proclaiming to all what they had seen and heard concerning this Child, and the words of wonder from the people?
- Do you hear Mary pondering all these things in her heart?

Children, the Christmas story is such a beautiful account of our Savior, this baby Jesus, who came to save people from their sin.

grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus. (Romans 3:23-24)

Justification: Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. (Romans 5:1)

Wages and Gifts: For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord. (Romans 6:23)

Personal Salvation: That 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. For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation. (Romans 10:9-10)

Commitment: I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service. And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God. (Romans 12:1-2) ~

Believe All That Don't

Have you ever taken a second to think about your life? Do you believe in God, Jesus, and the Holy Spirit? Do you know God loves you? These are questions not just you but everyone should ask themselves. We all need to answer these questions. Your answer could change your life or help you make some important changes to your life. Think, pray, and answer when you're ready!

God loves you, beyond words! No matter what things you've done. He desires a broken and contrite heart. You need to repent of your sins and believe the gospel message! Believe all your sins forgiven in Jesus name and blood. God's love is so great that John 3:16 says, "For God so loved the world he gave his only begotten Son, for whosoever believeth in him shall not perish but have everlasting life." He loves you and has forgiven you, but you need to believe your sins were already paid for in Jesus' precious blood. God wants you to be his precious child. Will you?

Like I told you in the previous paragraph, God sent his son to pay the price for your and my sins. As Romans 5:8 says, "But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us." You need to believe Christ came, suffered, and died for us and he now sits on the right hand of God the Father Almighty Maker of Heaven and Earth.

Lastly, God is our Heavenly Father that will never let you down. This doesn't mean he will give you whatever you ask for, it means he will provide you with what you need when you need it, even if you don't think it's what you need. God has a plan and a purpose for you. He wants you to know he will protect, guard, and keep you from evil and through hard times he will carry you through.

In conclusion, God loves us all equally! If we steal a car or a penny it's the same to God. In God's eyes they are both sins that we need to repent of. God wants your sins so you can be with him. He, also, wants you to believe Jesus came to save you, that he made you, that your sins are forgiven in Jesus' precious name and blood, and that they live in you. Last, as Jesus told his disciples in Mark 16:15, "...Go into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature." Be disciples of Jesus and preach the good news to all the nations. Read the Bible, pray, and preach!



By: Kaisha Coddard, Age 11

Greer, South Carolina; written as an essay in homeschool

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Let All Mortal Flesh Keep Silence

Let all mortal flesh keep silence,
And with fear and trembling stand;
Ponder nothing earthly minded,
For with blessing in His hand
Christ our God to earth descendeth,
Our full homage to demand.

King of kings, yet born of Mary,
As of old on earth He stood,
Lord of lords, in human vesture,
In the body and the blood;
He will give to all the faithful
His own self for heavenly food.

Rank on rank the host of heaven
Spreads its vanguard on the way,
As the Light of light descendeth
From the realms of endless day,
That the powers of hell may vanish
As the darkness clears away.

At His feet the six wingèd seraph,
Cherubim with sleepless eye,
Veil their faces to the Presence,
As with ceaseless voice they cry:
Alleluia, Alleluia,
Alleluia, Lord Most High!

*Greek text, 5th Century
English translation, Gerard Moultrie*

**The LORD is in his holy temple: let
all the earth keep silence before him.**

Habakkuk 2:20

The majestic and well-loved hymn "Let All Mortal Flesh Keep Silence" inspires our awe at the Incarnation: God became flesh and lived among men. Through the mystery of Holy Communion, we still partake of Christ's body and blood today. Through His victory over death and hell, we have abundant life. May we join the angelic throng, covering our faces and raising our voices to ceaselessly cry, "Alleluia, Alleluia!" in praise to the Lord Most High. And may the wonder of Christmas live in your hearts this season and through the coming year.

*Lois Matson, Editor
on behalf of the Christian Monthly staff*



"He That Is Without Sin..."

Author Unknown

Submitted by Alvar Helmes; Battle Ground, Washington

And the scribes and Pharisees brought unto him a woman taken in adultery; and when

they had set her in the midst, They say unto him, Master, this woman was taken in adultery, in the very act. Now Moses in the law commanded us, that such should be stoned: but what sayest thou? This they said, tempting him, that they might have to accuse him. But Jesus stooped down, and with his finger wrote on the ground, as though he heard them not. So when they continued asking him, he lifted up himself, and said unto them, He that is without sin among you, let him first cast a stone at her. And again he stooped down, and wrote on the ground. And they which heard it, being convicted by their own conscience, went out one by one, beginning at the eldest, even unto the last: and Jesus was left alone, and the woman standing in the midst. When Jesus had lifted up himself, and saw none but the woman, he said unto her, Woman, where are those thine accusers? hath no man condemned thee? She said, No man, Lord. And Jesus said unto her, Neither do I condemn thee: go, and sin no more.

John 8:3-11

Each of us, in an instant, can think of humanity at its worst. The atrocities and genocide in many countries of the world can quickly come to our mind. Other thoughts are also not too far off, like public bombings, taking advantage of natural disasters, and the greed and corruption that we read so much about. These are visions that challenge the widespread hope that people are generally good, leaving in its wake the sick feeling of human depravity. Perhaps unconsciously we place ourselves in a different category—we consider their inferior nature, their primitive sense of morality, or their depraved nature. It is rare that we see the stones in our hands, as in the story of the woman taken in adultery: *Now Moses in the law commanded us, that such should be stoned: but what sayest thou?* Jesus replied, *He that is without sin among you, let him first cast a stone at her.* (John 8:5, 7)

In this story, Jesus stood with this woman while a group armed with rocks was ready to stone her to death, in accordance with the Law of Moses. As Jesus stood there, He crouched down in the sand and wrote something. We don't know what He wrote that day with the Pharisees, yet we often emerge from the story not with curiosity, but with satisfaction. The conviction of the Pharisees strikes with the force of

victory. Their air of superiority is very noticeable, and it is satisfying to picture them eventually owning up to their own sins. If we imagine ourselves in the scene at all, it is most likely in a crumpled heap of shame with the woman at Jesus' feet; it is rarely, if ever, felt by the Pharisee.

But are we not like the group of men, with their pharisaical nature? Most of us recognize in ourselves the potential for something other than good, for greed or for cruelty, for vice just as easily as for virtue. Even those who disapprove of the word "sin" have seen it in expressions in their lives and in others. Looking below the surface of our good days or friendly moments, it is hard not to admit who we really are at the heart of things—on good days or even average days—when we are tempted. It is not a giant leap to see ourselves in the adulterous woman.

It is far more difficult, however, to consider how well we play the role of the Pharisee. But like the Pharisees, Christians who have come to recognize the dark realities of sin before the light of God are troubled at sin's bleak pervasiveness. Hence, sometimes standing with stones, other times simply putting ourselves in lesser categories of depravity, we can look at the crumpled sinful world around us with an air of disgust. In fact, no matter one's profession of belief or practice of faith, we can rally together in circles of righteousness, surrounding those whose lack of virtue is far more obvious. We can name their sins publicly and consider their humiliation well-deserved, perhaps even beneficial. All the while, we fail to see our pharisaical similarities. Jesus crouches beside us writing something in the sand that fails to catch our attention.

In the worst images of humanity, we cannot afford to leave ourselves out. For in them is a picture of how far the curse extends within, and how great is the reach of God's cure. Considering the depths of human depravity without seeing ourselves in the picture is failing to see the true depths. Viewing the sins of the world with a position of superiority is like picking up the stones God has saved you from and hurling them at someone else. Jesus has called us to examine both the stones in our hands and our rocky hearts, and to drop every one at His feet.

After the Pharisees had released the rocks they held and walked away one by one, Jesus asked the woman beside Him: *Woman, where are those thine accusers? hath no man condemned thee? She said, No man, Lord. And Jesus said unto her, Neither do I condemn thee: go, and sin no more. ~*

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Unto Us a Child is Born!

For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given; and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace.

Isaiah 9:6

Such was the triumphant exultation of the Old Testament Church! Their noblest hopes were founded upon the promise of **MESSIAH**; their most sublime songs were derived from the prospect of His Advent. By faith, *which is the substance of things hoped for*, they considered the gracious declarations of the faithful unchangeable God as already accomplished, though the actual performance respected a period, as yet, future and distant. Believers under that dispensation already felt the influence of the redemption which **MESSIAH** was to consummate in the fullness of time. It was the knowledge of His engagement on the behalf of sinners that gave life and significance to all the institutions of the ceremonial law which otherwise, though of divine appointment, would have been a heavy and burdensome yoke (Acts 15:10). Isaiah therefore prepares his joyful song for the true servants of God who lived in his time; and though it was a day of trial and rebuke, they were provided with sufficient compensation for all their sufferings, being warranted to say, *Unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given; and the government shall be upon His shoulder...*

This ancient song is still new. It has been, and will be, taken up from age to age by the New Testament Church, with superior advantage. I trust many of you understand it well, and rejoice in it daily. Men naturally look for something wherein to rejoice and glory. Little reason have the wise to glory in their supposed wisdom, or the strong in their fading strength, or the rich in their transitory wealth (Jeremiah 9:23); but this is a just and unfailing ground of glory to true Christians, that,

***Unto us a Child is born,
unto us a Son is given...***

John Newton



“Baby Jesus”
by Simon Dewey

Praise the Lord

Heralds of creation, cry!
Praise the Lord, the Lord most high!
Heaven and earth! obey the call,
Praise the Lord, the Lord of all.

For He spake, and forth from night
Sprang the universe to light:
He commanded, nature heard,
And stood fast upon His Word.

Praise Him, all ye hosts above,
Spirits perfected in love;
Sun and moon! your voices raise,
Sing, ye stars! your Maker's praise.

Kings! your Sovereign serve with awe;
Judges! own His righteous law;
Princes! worship Him with fear;
Bow the knee, all people! here.

High above all height His throne,
Excellent His name alone;
Him let all His works confess,
Him let every being bless.

James Montgomery

O LORD my God, I will give thanks unto thee for ever.

Psalm 30:12

2013 ALC Calendars

You may order the Apostolic Lutheran Church calendar for the year 2013. The price for each calendar is \$5.50 to cover the cost of printing and mailing. Do not send payment with your order. An invoice will be included with the shipment for payment to be mailed to the Federation treasurer.

Please send your order in one of the following ways:

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Corrie Karlsen, ALC Calendar Committee