

# Trinity Te Deum

The official newsletter for Trinity Lutheran Church

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## Letters Home

Since 1989 my Christmas Eve message has been a letter I wrote to my children. From 1989 till probably 2008 I prefaced the reading of that letter with the statement that my kids would get their letters when they were 18.

Well, that hasn't happened. I kept writing to them even once they turned 18 and I haven't given any of them their letters. Now they all are over 18. I wrote one last letter while I was recovering from hernia surgery this June. The letters are now in a safety deposit box. Can't say for sure, but I think those letters are done. Now that they are adults with families of their own, lives of their own it's hard to write one letter to them all. So from henceforth my Christmas Eve message will be based on Luke 2.

There are ongoing letters to home. You have them in the Advent and Lent devotions I have been handing out since 2000. These are taken from a devotion book I wrote for my family entitled *Me and My Arrows*. They are what we have used for family devotions since 1997.

Martin Luther famous said, "It is not many books that make

men learned...but it is a good book frequently read." This has always been my problem with *Portals of Prayer*. It is a new devotion every single day of the year. I am not saying that there is no edification in such devotions, but that there is very little learning. Luther throughout his life railed against people who could go to church regularly but know no more at the end of the year than they did at the beginning. He went on to say that even though he wrote the Small Catechism he continually read and recited it and learned much from doing so.

This has been the case with my devotions. Even though I wrote them, I continually learn from them. I am pleasantly surprised sometimes by the theological point being emphasized. Sometimes it goes the other way; I know I could have said it better or clearer. Even so, you can learn much from going over the same devotional material year after year.

A repeatable devotion book was an LCMS standard for many years. *The Family Altar* first published in the 30s and last published (I think) in the 60s contained short Scriptural devotions for family use. Day by day, year by year the family went over the same theological ground.

I had a commanding officer in the military that use to regularly say to his troops. "The average Ivy League graduate needs to hear something thirteen times before he will remember it. You guys aren't Ivy League graduates, so I assume you need to hear things even more times than that." Remembering the things of the Faith is not a matter of having enough education. What gets in the way of our spiritual education, our education in salvation, is the Devil, the World, and our own sinful nature. This unholy three fight against our believing, retaining, or using the truth. Jesus says the Devil is like a bird snatching up the seed of the Sower lest he believe it. The World spews forth so many words and ideas that are contrary to what our Lord would have us believe or remember that His truth is "lost" in a flood of lies. And our fallen nature lulls us to sleep with promises that everything is alright just the way it is; no need to pay attention or remember spiritual things.

Use the Advent devotions. These letters home are much more enduring than the ones I was sharing from and for a particular time and place.

## My Take: 'I'm spiritual but not religious' is a cop-out

By Alan Miller, Special to CNN  
September 29th, 2012

*Editor's note: Alan Miller is Director of The New York Salon and Co-Founder of London's Old Truman Brewery. He is speaking at The Battle of Ideas at London's Barbican in October.*

The increasingly common refrain that "I'm spiritual, but not religious," represents some of the most retrogressive aspects of contemporary society. The spiritual but not religious "movement" - an inappropriate term as that would suggest some collective, organizational aspect - highlights the implosion of belief that has struck at the heart of Western society.

Spiritual but not religious people are especially prevalent in the younger population in the United States, although a recent study has argued that it is not so much that people have stopped believing in God, but rather have drifted from formal institutions.

It seems that just being a part of a religious institution is nowadays associated negatively, with everything from the Religious Right to child abuse, back to the Crusades and of course with terrorism today.

Those in the spiritual-but-not-religious camp are peddling the notion that by being independent - by choosing an "indi-

vidual relationship" to some concept of "higher power", energy, oneness or something-or-other - they are in a deeper, more profound relationship than one that is coerced via a large institution like a church.

That attitude fits with the message we are receiving more and more that "feeling" something somehow is more pure and perhaps, more "true" than having to fit in with the doctrine, practices, rules and observations of a formal institution that are handed down to us.

The trouble is that "spiritual but not religious" offers no positive exposition or understanding or explanation of a body of belief or set of principles of any kind.

What is it, this "spiritual" identity as such? What is practiced? What is believed? The accusation is often leveled that such questions betray a rigidity of outlook, all a tad doctrinaire and rather old-fashioned.

But when the contemporary fashion is for an abundance of relativist "truths" and what appears to be in the ascendancy is how one "feels" and even governments aim to have a "happiness agenda," desperate to fill a gap at the heart of civic society, then being old-fashioned may not be such a terrible accusation.

It is within the context of today's anti-big, anti-discipline, anti-challenging climate - in combination with a therapeutic

turn in which everything can be resolved through addressing my inner existential being - that the spiritual but not religious outlook has flourished.

The boom in megachurches merely reflect this sidelining of serious religious study for networking, drop-in centers and positive feelings.

Those that identify themselves, in our multi-cultural, hyphenated-American world often go for a smorgasbord of pick-and-mix choices.

A bit of Yoga here, a Zen idea there, a quote from Taoism and a Kabbalah class, a bit of Sufism and maybe some Feing Shui but not generally a reading and appreciation of The Bhagavad Gita, the Karma Sutra or the Qur'an, let alone The Old or New Testament.

So what, one may ask?

Christianity has been interwoven and seminal in Western history and culture. As Harold Bloom pointed out in his book on the King James Bible, everything from the visual arts, to Bach and our canon of literature generally would not be possible without this enormously important work.

Indeed, it was through the desire to know and read the Bible that reading became a reality for the masses - an entirely radical moment that had enormous consequences for humanity.

Moreover, the spiritual but not religious reflect the "me" generation of self-obsessed, truth-is-whatever-you-feel-it-to-be thinking, where big, historic, demanding institutions that have expectations about behavior, attitudes and observance and rules are jettisoned yet nothing positive is put in replacement.

The idea of sin has always been accompanied by the sense of what one could do to improve oneself and impact the world.

Yet the spiritual-but-not-religious outlook sees the human as one that simply wants to experience "nice things" and "feel better." There is little of transformation here and nothing that points to any kind of project that can inspire or transform us.

At the heart of the spiritual but not religious attitude is an unwillingness to take a real position. Influenced by the contribution of modern science, there is a reluctance to advocate a literalist translation of the world.

But these people will not abandon their affiliation to the sense that there is "something out there," so they do not go along with a rationalist and materialistic explanation of the world, in which humans are responsible to themselves and one another for their actions - and for the future.

Theirs is a world of fence-sitting, not-knowingness, but not-trying-ness either. Take a stand,

I say. Which one is it? A belief in God and Scripture or a commitment to the Enlightenment ideal of human-based knowledge, reason and action? Being spiritual but not religious avoids having to think too hard about having to decide.

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## A Creed for the Third Millennium

(An Advent and Lent Midweek Sermon Series on the 2<sup>nd</sup> Chief Part)

All services our on Wednesdays at 7:30 PM

November 28 - Believes in a Creator

December 05 - Believes in a Provider

December 12 - Believes in a Protector

February 13 - Believes a Man is Lord

February 20 - Believes in the Purchasing Power of Blood, Suffering, and Death

February 27 - Believes Righteousness, Innocence, & Blessedness can be Eternal

March 06 - Believes it Cannot Believe

March 13 - Believes There is no Salvation Outside the Church

March 20 - Believes There will be a Last Day

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## Preparing for the ACELC Conference

Here is an article addressing the subject that the April ACELC conference will address. It is to give you food for thought, and perhaps some context.

*Why non-Liturgical Worship Cannot be Lutheran*

by Dr. Jack Kilcrease

I would put forth the following reasons why contemporary worship is inconsistent with Scripture and Confessions:

**1. It promotes a false view of evangelism:** Let's start by asking the question, why does anyone adopt contemporary worship? I would bet you 9 times out of 10 it's not because the 80 year German grandmas in your congregation can't bear to go to church one more Sunday without hearing a Boston or Eagles concert instead of the liturgy. It's always for the sake of evangelism (at least in the LCMS). The argument goes that the young folks (and I remember this argument, because I was one of them not very long ago) can't relate to the liturgy and in order to keep them we've got to relate to them through rock music. Usually this is accompanied with some sort of threat by the part of someone in the congregation that if we don't adopt this, then people will end up in Hell.

The first problem is that it actually never works. Often-times congregations will literal-

ly lose people when they do this or their decline will persist. My parents' old church in Des Moines was an example. They made the 11:00 service the rock concert service in order to draw in the young families from the school or to keep them. When they started they had 120 kids going to the school. After 5 years of contemporary worship, they had 80.

In a sense, just on the basis of marketing, Lutheran shouldn't try to adopt these practices because they don't work for us. The Baptists will always do them better than us and if we send the message that we're no different than the Baptists, then why choose us over them? Secondly, you basically end up alienating people who are already loyal Lutherans – like my parents. Although faith is not a choice, where I go to church is a decision “below me” as Luther would put it.

The second point is that all this ultimately assumes an anthropology that we don't possess. Namely, that people are rational and autonomous beings who can “make their decision for Jesus.” This was the whole premise of Revivalism, which comes out of Pietism. Since the Spirit doesn't effectively work faith through the mere proclamation of Word and sacrament, then you've got to somehow supplement it with a dog-and-pony show. Ultimately, it's about marketing. How can we influence people to make this decision? That's one of the reasons why all the televangelists end up getting in trouble. If the

premise is that you have to manipulate people to get them to do the right thing (believe in Jesus), then you'll be tempted to manipulate them to do other things as well once you have that power over them.

Ultimately then, the move to contemporary worship is based on a desire for evangelism that contradicts the Confessional Lutheran concept of grace and free will. God predestines the elect and causes them to have faith through the Word and the sacraments. There is a set number of the elect. If we adopt contemporary worship, there will be the same number of people in heaven as there would be if we didn't. Hence, we should simply proclaim the Word and not worry about manipulating people into “making their decision for Jesus”

**2. It promotes a false anthropology:** Let's expand on the point I made earlier about the false concept of human powers after the Fall. Contemporary worship also promotes an idea that is common in the Mainline Churches right now as well. The idea that practice makes perfect. In other words, by doing exciting, emotional worship, it will form us into a Christian community and make us better Christians. This is one of the reasons why Pastors in these congregations are thought of as “leaders” and not as “Ministers of the Word,” that is, pastoral healers. “Leaders” direct us somewhere and therefore get us to do something. “Minister of the Word” gives us the goods of

Christ's benefits which we receive passively.

In this contemporary scheme, the Pastor brings in the new worship program. It forms people's emotions to be “on fire for God.” Then he gives a kind of moralizing message so that they'll “effect real change in their community” or something. In other words, specific practices create faith and promote morals. By doing them, we become something.

Part of this is a bad doctrine of creation. The idea here is that we create ourselves by our actions. This makes us God and is in fact what the serpent promised in the garden of Eden – “eat this and become God.” Also, bear in mind, this is precisely the idea that Luther rejected in Aristotle and the *via moderna* when he started the Reformation. We are God's objects through proclamation. He speaks us into existence as justified sinners via Word and Sacrament. We do not create ourselves by our actions.

**3. It moves in the wrong direction!:** Contemporary worship is praise worship. Praise worship moves the wrong direction. It moves from us to God. We read the silly and repetitive verses off the projector. We ascend by our praises to God. We move to God, God does not move to us.

The structure of liturgical worship is to opposite. It moves from God to us and back again. In Genesis 1, God speaks forth creation and therefore creation glorifies God in return. God's

initiative prompts the return of praise. In liturgical worship, the Pastor speaks the words of grace and therefore frees the congregation to praise God. This back and forth is part of the structure of creation and new creation, as Revelation 4-5 suggest.

**4. Non-liturgical worship is a break with the biblical and ecumenical heritage of the Lutheran Church:** The Old Testament Church had liturgical worship. All churches had liturgical worship until the 17th century the “Holy Fairs” began to emerge in Northern Ireland and Scotland. These evolved into the American camp meetings and the modern church-growth style worship settings of modern Evangelicals.

The Formula of Concord states that we should not abandon any of the traditions of the Church unless they contradict the Scriptures. This is partially because they help maintain continuity with the Church-catholic (which is important if we don’t want to be a sect), but also because they teach the faith even when we have faithless teachers.

A good example of this is during the Arian controversy. In spite of the fact that Arius and some other Bishops were teaching the faith incorrectly, a great many of the laity were still saved by the fact that the liturgy contained true expositions of the faith. Liturgy saves us from unskilled or heretical pastors and teachers. It promotes and preserves the faith.

Free-form worship can’t do this because it is subject to the whim of any given church-leader that comes along. Instead of teaching the faith, it seeks to promote a sub-cognitive faith based on meaningless formulas that are repeated over and over again. It seeks to promote emotions that will manipulate people into doing things, not create real faith, which always integrates the total person, intellect and emotions. This is one of the reasons why when they do surveys in churches that have non-liturgical worship and church-growth techniques they without fail can’t even correctly explain the Apostles Creed.

<http://thefirstpremise.wordpress.com/2012/10/15/why-non-liturgical-worship-cannot-be-lutheran/>

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**SPOILED ROTTEN**  
*Why do kids rule the roost?*  
BY ELIZABETH  
KOLBERT JULY 2, 2012

In 2004, Carolina Izquierdo, an anthropologist at the University of California, Los Angeles, spent several months with the Matsigenka, a tribe of about twelve thousand people who live in the Peruvian Amazon. The Matsigenka hunt for monkeys and parrots, grow yucca and bananas, and build houses that they roof with the leaves of a particular kind of palm tree, known as a kapashi. At one point, Izquierdo decided to accompany a local family on a leaf-gathering expedition down the Urubamba River.

A member of another family, Yanira, asked if she could

come along. Izquierdo and the others spent five days on the river. Although Yanira had no clear role in the group, she quickly found ways to make herself useful. Twice a day, she swept the sand off the sleeping mats, and she helped stack the kapashi leaves for transport back to the village. In the evening, she fished for crustaceans, which she cleaned, boiled, and served to the others. Calm and self-possessed, Yanira “asked for nothing,” Izquierdo later recalled. The girl’s behavior made a strong impression on the anthropologist because at the time of the trip Yanira was just six years old.

While Izquierdo was doing field work among the Matsigenka, she was also involved in an anthropological study closer to home. A colleague of hers, Elinor Ochs, had recruited thirty-two middle-class families for a study of life in twenty-first-century Los Angeles. Ochs had arranged to have the families filmed as they ate, fought, made up, and did the dishes.

Izquierdo and Ochs shared an interest in many ethnographic issues, including child rearing. How did parents in different cultures train young people to assume adult responsibilities? In the case of the Angelenos, they mostly didn’t. In the L.A. families observed, no child routinely performed household chores without being instructed to. Often, the kids had to be begged to attempt the simplest tasks; often, they still refused. In one fairly typical encounter,

a father asked his eight-year-old son five times to please go take a bath or a shower. After the fifth plea went unheeded, the father picked the boy up and carried him into the bathroom. A few minutes later, the kid, still unwashed, wandered into another room to play a video game.

In another representative encounter, an eight-year-old girl sat down at the dining table. Finding that no silverware had been laid out for her, she demanded, “How am I supposed to eat?” Although the girl clearly knew where the silverware was kept, her father got up to get it for her.

In a third episode captured on tape, a boy named Ben was supposed to leave the house with his parents. But he couldn’t get his feet into his sneakers, because the laces were tied. He handed one of the shoes to his father: “Untie it!” His father suggested that he ask nicely. “Can you untie it?” Ben replied. After more back-and-forth, his father untied Ben’s sneakers. Ben put them on, then asked his father to retie them. “You tie your shoes and let’s go,” his father finally exploded. Ben was unfazed. “I’m just asking,” he said.

A few years ago, Izquierdo and Ochs wrote an article for *Ethos*, the journal of the Society of Psychological Anthropology, in which they described Yanira’s conduct during the trip down the river and Ben’s exchange with his dad. “Juxtaposition of these developmental

stories begs for an account of responsibility in childhood,” they wrote. Why do Matsigenka children “help their families at home more than L.A. children?” And “Why do L.A. adult family members help their children at home more than do Matsigenka?” Though not phrased in exactly such terms, questions like these are being asked—silently, imploringly, despairingly—every single day by parents from Anchorage to Miami. Why, why, why?

With the exception of the imperial offspring of the Ming dynasty and the dauphins of pre-Revolutionary France, contemporary American kids may represent the most indulged young people in the history of the world. It’s not just that they’ve been given unprecedented amounts of stuff—clothes, toys, cameras, skis, computers, televisions, cell phones, PlayStations, iPods. (The market for Burberry Baby and other forms of kiddie “couture” has reportedly been growing by ten per cent a year.) They’ve also been granted unprecedented authority. “Parents want their kids’ approval, a reversal of the past ideal of children striving for their parents’ approval,” Jean Twenge and W. Keith Campbell, both professors of psychology, have written. In many middle-class families, children have one, two, sometimes three adults at their beck and call. This is a social experiment on a grand scale, and a growing number of adults fear that it isn’t working out so well: according to one poll, commissioned by Time and CNN, two-

thirds of American parents think that their children are spoiled.

The notion that we may be raising a generation of kids who can’t, or at least won’t, tie their own shoes has given rise to a new genre of parenting books. Their titles tend to be either dolorous (“The Price of Privilege”) or downright hostile (“The Narcissism Epidemic,” “Mean Moms Rule,” “A Nation of Wimps”). The books are less how-to guides than how-not-to’s: how not to give in to your toddler, how not to intervene whenever your teen-ager looks bored, how not to spend two hundred thousand dollars on tuition only to find your twenty-something graduate back at home, drinking all your beer.

Not long ago, Sally Koslow, a former editor-in-chief of *McCall’s*, discovered herself in this last situation. After four years in college and two on the West Coast, her son Jed moved back to Manhattan and settled into his old room in the family’s apartment, together with thirty-four boxes of vinyl LPs. Unemployed, Jed liked to stay out late, sleep until noon, and wander around in his boxers. Koslow set out to try to understand why he and so many of his peers seemed stuck in what she regarded as permanent “adulthood.” She concluded that one of the reasons is the lousy economy. Another is parents like her.

[http://www.newyorker.com/arts/critics/books/2012/07/02/120702crbo\\_books\\_kolbert](http://www.newyorker.com/arts/critics/books/2012/07/02/120702crbo_books_kolbert)

## God Bless Willis Carrier

By [Andy Adams](#) on Wed, July  
11, 2012

Summer is the time for fun and play in the sun. In Houston, Texas, Summer is also time to sweat. We had record breaking heat in June with triple digit temperatures. This July has been a wet heat. That's not the good kind. Yet, I have slept comfortably in my bed each night. Thankfully, my job does not involve too much real sweat because I work in an office. God bless air conditioning and the man who is given credit for inventing the first modern air conditioner in 1902, Willis Carrier. The WSJ has a very interesting article on the long history of trying to cool the air around us:

In the 2nd century, a Chinese inventor, Ding Huan, devised the rotary fan. As big as six feet across and manually powered, it could cool a whole room. In British India, wealthy homes had a cloth sail called a punkah attached to the ceiling. A servant in another room, the "punkah wallah," would move the fan back and forth by means of a rope and pulleys. These methods, of course, required the poor to get hotter so that the rich might be cooler.

In 1758, Benjamin Franklin experimented with the rapid evaporation of volatile liquids, such as alcohol and ether, to cool water to a point below freezing. He was able lower the temperature to 7 degrees Fahrenheit from 64. In a letter to a friend, Franklin wrote that the

experiment showed that, scaled up, "one may see the possibility of freezing a man to death on a warm summer's day."

Sixty years later, the great British physicist Michael Faraday demonstrated that one could use mechanical power to compress a volatile substance such as ammonia into a liquid—and then, by allowing it to rapidly evaporate, cool water.

Soon after, John Gorrie—a young doctor living in Apalachicola, Fla.—had a problem to solve. He knew that patients were more likely to survive an illness in cool weather than in hot. So he rigged up pans full of ice near the ceiling in a hospital room. The ice would cool the air around it and, because cold air is heavier than hot air, would flow downward, over the patient and then out through holes in the room's floor. It was the first effective system of air conditioning.

But ice was expensive in Apalachicola because it had to be imported by ship from the North, so Gorrie began to experiment with making ice by mechanical means. In 1851, he was granted a patent on a machine that worked on Faraday's principle. He quit medicine to work on perfecting his invention, but when his financial backer died he was unable to carry on and died in poverty in 1855.

In the hot summer of 1881, President James Garfield lay dying of an assassin's bullet. To help keep him cool, naval engineers rigged up sheets of cloth soaked in iced water with a fan blowing air across them. The method kept his room 20 de-

grees cooler, but it used half a million pounds of ice over a two-month period. And it didn't lower the humidity, a crucial part of keeping both cool and comfortable. (High humidity also affected many industrial processes, including printing, where it could cause paper jams and prevent ink from drying quickly.)

In 1902, Willis Carrier, a young engineer at the Buffalo Forge Company in Buffalo, N.Y., invented the first modern air conditioning, to cool a printing plant. He used a compressor to liquefy ammonia and then evaporated it to cool water. Running the water through coils, he blew air across them, cooling the air and causing it to lose moisture through condensation on the coils. The air was then ducted into the workspace. While useful for industrial purposes, Carrier's air-conditioning system was both large and dangerous, as ammonia is very toxic. But by the early 1920s he developed a much more efficient compressor and started using a much safer refrigerant called dielene as the volatile. (DuPont would invent Freon in 1928.)

In 1925, New York's Rivoli movie theater became the first to be air-conditioned. It proved a huge hit with moviegoers and other large theaters around the country followed. So did department stores, which saw increased summer sales as a result.

It figures that old Benjamin Franklin would have predicted what was to come. The article goes on to ascribe much of the economic growth in the South

to air conditioning. No doubt, this is true. It is hard enough to get people to want to visit Houston in the Summer. I cannot imagine if there were no respite from the heat.

At the outset of World War 1, Carrier and six other engineers pooled their life savings, \$32,000, to start the Carrier Engineering Corporation. In 2007, Carrier Corporation had sales of more than \$15 billion and employed more than 45,000 people. We stand on the shoulders of giants.

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## Worshiping the One True God In Unity

One of our members vividly remembers planning a vacation in California's wine country with his wife several years ago. It seems that our dear ladies have a way of cutting to the chase with us men. Knowing that he really, really does not like so-called "contemporary" worship services, she advised him: "Sweetheart, I really don't want to listen to you gripe and grouse about sitting through a contemporary service, so please get on the phone or the Internet and find a place where we can worship without that." As always, she was quite right.

So he got out his *Lutheran Annual*, looked up five LCMS congregations in the approximate area they thought they'd be in on the Sunday in question, and he began making the calls. It was an interesting experience. All five congregations referred him to a congregation of the

ELS (Evangelical Lutheran Synod). Not one of the LCMS congregations had a Liturgical Divine Service (non-blended), nor did any of them indicate that they practiced closed Communion! He was upset, but sadly not surprised. The more he thought about the situation, the more he realized that this matter goes far beyond mere personal preference.

Worship is the central activity in which the Church of Jesus Christ engages. It is from worship that all other activities flow, and it is our Lord's service to us through the giving of His Word and Sacrament which empowers the Holy Spirit to generate in us all other Christian activity. To put it another way, worship is the one thing we really must get right!

Worship that pleases God really ought to reflect the nature of God Himself. And what is that divine nature? Above all, His nature is divine unity. It is simply inconceivable that there be any kind of variation within the Godhead. Certainly, the Triune God does not have internal debates about doctrine and practice. Assuredly, within the Godhead there is no difference in will, thought, or action. If any of that were the case, then God simply couldn't be God!

This concept and reality concerning the nature of God is expressed by our Lord in His high priestly prayer recorded for us in John 17:20-26, where He says: "*I do not ask for these only, but also for those who will believe in me through their word, that they may all be one, just as you, Father, are in me, and I in you, that they also may*

*be in us, so that the world may believe that you have sent me. The glory that you have given me I have given to them, that they may be one even as we are one, I in them and you in me, that they may become perfectly one, so that the world may know that you sent me and loved them even as you loved me. Father, I desire that they also, whom you have given me, may be with me where I am, to see my glory that you have given me because you loved me before the foundation of the world. O righteous Father, even though the world does not know you, I know you, and these know that you have sent me. I made known to them your name, and I will continue to make it known, that the love with which you have loved me may be in them, and I in them."* (ESV)

Here Jesus prays that just as He is united with the Father, so must we also – because we are His people – be united as one. (Please note: Twice Jesus makes the point that this unity is for both this age and the next when He says, "...so that the world may know that you sent me.")

Then it dawned on him: **Unity is the reflection of the divine God, but division/diversity is the mark of the sin-fallen world.** Who is it that seeks to divide? Who is it that desires a diversity of doctrine and practice? Who is it that relishes in breaking what was meant to be whole? Satan and none other!

No wonder St. Paul made it unmistakably clear to the divided Corinthian congregation that their divisions must cease

when he wrote: "I appeal to you, brothers, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that all of you agree, and that there be no divisions among you, but that you be united in the same mind and the same judgment." (I Corinthians 1:10 ESV)

Have you ever examined the various Old and New Testament passages which describe worship? They never portray worship as a place for individual preferences or personal license. Especially look at the Book of Revelation and the multiple glimpses God gives us there of what worship looks like in heaven. The picture painted for us there is that all God's saints are before His throne of grace, and that all of them are saying precisely the same thing at the same time. All of them are perfectly united with the One they worship. And all of them have only one desire: to reflect that unity in their worship!

Perhaps this is why our Synod's first Constitution described their desire as a Synod "To strive after the greatest possible uniformity in ceremonies." (Constitution of the German Evangelical Lutheran Synod of Missouri, Ohio, and Other States, Article IV - Business of the Synod, 10) In the same original Constitution it also states, that as a condition of membership, we bind ourselves to "The exclusive use of doctrinally pure church books and

school books (Agenda, hymnals, readers, etc.)." (Article II, 4)

The same paragraph then continues as follows: "If it is impossible in some congregations to replace immediately the unorthodox hymnals and the like with orthodox ones, then the pastor of such a congregation can become a member of Synod only if he promises to use the unorthodox hymnal only under open protest and to strive in all seriousness for the introduction of an orthodox hymnal." (Article II, 4)

Were our fathers in the faith only being pig-headed and hard-nosed, or was there a sound theological reason for writing their Constitution as they did? Just because these people of God lived over 100 years ago doesn't mean they weren't theologically astute. They understood quite well that the very soul of any Christian congregation is their worship together. There is where Christ serves His people with His gifts of Word and Sacrament. Therefore if we are to worship the One, True God, then we ought to engage in the kind of worship which gives proper testimony to His unity. The historic liturgies (which date back to the early Christian way of worshipping), do precisely this.

This is but one reason why the ACELC has written concerning our Lutheran faith: "In accord with the Scriptures and the Lutheran Confessions, Con-

fessional Lutherans retain, honor, and will not dispense with the liturgical worship of the Church and will resist any attempt to conform the worship of the Church to the expectations of the world. This is done so that the unity of the faith and of our Triune God is expressed through the unity of our worship and the faith it conveys."

(Genesis 13:18; Exodus 12; Exodus 25:9; Exodus 28:1-2; Exodus 40; II Samuel 24:25; I Kings 8:22-66; II Chronicles 29:27-30; Luke 4:15; Acts 14:1; I Corinthians 14:26-33; Hebrews 10:24-25; Revelation 4; Revelation 5; Revelation 7:9-12; Revelation 15:2-4; Revelation 19:1-8; AC Article X, 1-2; AC Article XXIV, 5; AP XV:4; AP XXIV:1; AC XXIV:40; AC XXIV:34; LC 1:94; AP XV: 20-21; AP VII/VIII:33; AP XXIV:99; AC, epilogue to XXI, 4,5) (Definition of Confessional Lutheranism In Light of Present Day Issues, 5)

It is time for us to recapture our own Lutheran heritage with respect to our Church's worship practices. So that the world will know the Father has sent the Son, let us be one just as the Son is one with the Father. Let the world show itself to be divided, but let the Church show the unity of God in her worship.

If you have a desire to know about the work of the ACELC, then we invite you to visit our website, read the documents, teaching materials and studies which are posted there, and consider joining us in this work which, by the mercies of Almighty God, we have undertaken.

Wishing You Every Blessing In Christ,  
ACELC Board of Directors

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### December 2012

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THURS	FRI	SAT 1
2	3	4	5	6	7	8
	5 PM JR Confirmation		7:30 PM Advent Vespers			
9	10	11	12	13	14	15
1 PM Bus Caroling	5 PM JR Confirmation		7:30 PM Advent Vespers			
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
	5 PM JR Confirmation					
23	24	25	26	27	28	29
	7:30 PM Candlelight Service	10 AM Festival Communion Service			<b>PASTOR</b>	<b>ON</b>
30	31					
<b>VACATION</b>						

### January 2013

SUN	MON	TUE 1	WED 2	THURS 3	FRI 4	SAT 5
		<b>PASTOR</b>	<b>ON</b>	<b>VACATION</b>		
6	7	8	9	10	11	12
5PM Epiphany Dinner	5 PM JR Confirmation	7 PM Voters Meeting	10 AM Bible Stories 7:15 Revelation II			
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
		6:30 PM Elders	10 AM Bible Stories 7:15 Revelation II			
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
	5 PM JR Confirmation		10 AM Bible Stories 7:15 Revelation II			
27	28	29	30	31		
	5 PM JR Confirmation		10 AM Bible Stories 7:15 Revelation II			

