

Trinity Te Deum

The official newsletter for Trinity Lutheran Church
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You're not going to believe what Pastor Harris is proposing!!!

(This is clickbait, and contributes greatly to the issue below.)

Out of the Shallows I call unto You.

This is a play on the beloved *De Profundis*, Psalm 130, "Out of the deep I call." I'm calling from the shallows, the shallows of the Internet age. Having just finished reading Nicholas Carr's 2011 *The Shallows*, I've come to the conclusion that my scatterbrained thinking and the concomitant nervousness is related to my use of technology. The sainted Professor Marquart said 40 years ago that technology doesn't really make things more efficient. It just speeds everything up. I feel like Lucy on the chocolate factory line, and I could put a link [HERE](#), so you could see that clip on You Tube.

What does this mean for you and why should you care?

When I first came to Trinity in 1999, I made it known I only checked email on Tuesdays and Thursdays. Now I check it every day except Friday and multiple times a day. From now on I won't check it till 5 PM. I find emails distract me; take me down many, many rabbit holes and get in the way of sermon and Bible class preparation as well as the ministry in general. If you need to reach me before that, call me. I don't screen calls except if I'm meeting with someone and occasionally between 10 and noon which every day is sermon preparation. However, if you leave a message I will check it.

This isn't meant to be personal, but it can't help but be.

I don't have a cellphone let alone a Smartphone. The church provided me one in my first two years here. I found it only rang when I didn't want it to, and I was incapable of ignoring it. My

lack of cellphone and/or Smartphone is only going to become more and more problematic as I get older and the congregation gets younger. I beg your indulgence of me. I don't have a cellphone and I am limiting how often I check emails don't to avoid you but to preserve my sanity.

One of my own kids, in college at the time, asked me how in the world did we get along without cellphones in the 70's? We did, of course, but his question illustrates the fact that once a new technology, particularly a communication one, is introduced, we can't imagine how we did without it.

I can because I did so. I want to return to those thrilling times of yesteryear. Here too I could cite a link to take you to the radio and then the TV show that used this phraseology, but then I would be doing to you what I find modern communication and information technology does to me.

All I'm sayin' is give this a chance.

I want to experiment with this through January, and I will give an update in the February-March newsletter. I foresee difficulties. It may not be possible to go back, but I'm doing my best to go no farther down into the shallows.

Coupage Coal Miner's Communion, and Mutage

Posted on August 21, 2017 by Rev. Paul R. Harris

The 1970 book *Wines for Everyone* says this. "It would be neat to say that there is only one kind of bad wine but a million sorts of good. Unfortunately, this is untrue, for the ingenuity of some wine merchants is such that are many sorts of rubbishy wine, that is, wines which have no individuality, no character. Some are made by mixing a little good wine with much bad and giving it the name of good. This is called in France, where it is a custom of enormous antiquity, *coupage*. The

result of the operation is that the best qualities of the good are destroyed without a trace" (11).

This is the truth of one bad apple spoiling the bunch. Or the divine truth "one sinner destroys much good" (Ecc. 9:18). The Strange Woman of Proverbs readily goes to bed with Truth, wants to go to bed with Truth because she has nothing to lose. Error is multifaceted and is harmed not at all by adding one more 'truth' to its collection.

We facilitate such corruption in our own congregations by committing *coupage* at the Communion rail, and we do this by celebrating Coalminer's Communion.

Luther regularly rails against what he called "coal miner's faith." Ask a coal miner what he believes and he says, "I believe what the church believes." Ask him what does the church believe? And he answers, "The church believes what I believe."

For 27 years I committed the *coupage* of coal miner's Communion by communing everyone who went by the label LCMS. Coal miner's communion is based on no deeper confession that the Synod believes what I do and I believe what the Synod does.

Interestingly, the first to ding me on this were the 5 liberal pastors in my first circuit 34 years ago. The next to ding me was Pastor Rolf Preus in an article where he said that what the LCMS really says is that we are in fellowship based on our agreement with Article 2 of the Synod's constitution. However, by a slight of hand, the "churchmen" (My word not Preus') say this means all who have, take, use the label LCMS. The truth is – as every confessional movement in the LCMS over the last 30 years knows – a church or pastor can be a member in good standing in the LCMS and believe, teach, and practice open Communion, feminism, abortion, gay marriage, praying with pagans, evolution, etc.

Here's the "churchman's" response. Well, the confession of the LCMS is orthodox, so the label LCMS means that. Even if it were true before the 2004 convention, it wasn't true after. Praying with pagans was embraced as well as a denial that the Order of Creation applied to church offices other than that of pastor. Open Communion was described in the president's official report as "a difference in practice" not doctrine and diversity in worship, contrary to our constitution, was embraced and encouraged.

For over 9 years at another church, I pastored people who believed in open Communion, happy clappy liturgy, feminism, and more. These people were at that church when I got there. I did nothing about them. Since 2010, I've repented. I don't confirm, commune, or transfer anyone spouting these theologies. When I did these things, I was practicing *coupage*, destroying the best qualities of the good theology in our confession by mixing them with error. I certainly didn't elevate their theology, but tainted my own.

The Lord of the Church promises He spits out the lukewarm. What do you think He does with a corrupted confession? Let us spit that out before we are so spat. Let us indeed perform another wine making tasks called *mutage*. This is the French term for fortifying a wine by adding alcohol (Ibid. 176). Let us repent of reducing our confession to a four-letter acronym and fortify it with a full-throated confession of all the articles of our doctrine (FC, SD, X, 31).

Just Christians

On Homosexuality & Christian Identity

by S. M. Hutchens
July/August 2013 *Touchstone* magazine

In homosexuality's assault on the beliefs of churches that once unanimously identified it as sexual perversion—sodomy being "the abominable and detestable crime against nature"—its most potent weapon has been the counter-accusation that identification of homo-

sexuality as sinful is a detestable offense against charity. By these presents, all who hold to the ancient interdict as God's word may be numbered among the crowing yahoos of Westboro Baptist Church with its "God Hates Fags" placards.

The churches, thus accused, have divided into those that hold to the Judeo-Christian teaching and those converted to regarding homosexuality as no sin at all, for where the question is posed, as the church-homosexualists have pointedly and indefatigably done in the last generation, the winnowing fan comes into play and there is a division—for there is no third way.

At the point where the question touches the resisting churches, however, there is often much confusion, which includes a genuine concern about whether the complete rejection of homosexuality is indeed uncharitable, whether those who bear the burden of homosexual lust are being unfairly singled out as greater sinners than those with other, no less sinful tendencies. They are troubled by the question of whether they, with a perverse desire to justify themselves by condemning others, fail to distinguish between sin and sinner so that the hate banners are really their own as well.

These questions, if not resolved, lead to a kind of moral suspension in which questions like, "What about our homosexual brethren here in the church? Are we denying their existence, failing to hear them?" become askable, and, encouraged by "moderate" voices within these communions, are indeed asked in a form something like that. Once they are, however, the line between resistance and affirmation has been crossed.

The Apostolic Answer

In 1 Corinthians 6, St. Paul gives vital clarification on a subject where there is much foggy thinking among those who ask questions like, "What should the Church's approach to homosexual Christians be?" The apostolic answer is that there is no such thing as a homosexual Christian. There are brethren who struggle with various temptations, to be sure, and may on occasion fall to them before rising again. But believers who resist homosexu-

al lust are not "homosexuals." They are just Christians, as are the rest of us with our own besetting sins.

Do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? [Then comes a list of sinners, including "sexual perverts."] And such were some of you. But you were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the Name of the Lord Jesus Christ and in the Spirit of our God.

Such were some of you. The apostle is writing to the baptized saints in the church of Corinth who are no longer these things. He does not say they are no longer susceptible to their old sins, nor that these old sins mustn't be dealt with: addressing the problems old sins create is a large part of the epistle's burden. Given this apostolic definition, however, we cannot—we dare not—say there is any such thing as a "gay (or lesbian, etc.) Christian," for the Christian by definition has been cleansed of his homosexuality. He cannot regard himself as a homosexual—or idolater, or thief, or drunkard—nor can the Church affirm him, or the various acts associated with the old vice, as such.

There is no "homosexual voice within the Church," for the homosexual's conversion entails a choice—This, or That—the sin, or the Faith. He cannot have both, nor can the Church in any way accommodate the sin from which he has been cleansed. It is wholly and actively and vehemently against it as a destroyer of the souls it has been called to save. It labors among the saints only in the accomplishment of what has already been done in Christ: cleansing, sanctification, and justification in the Name of the Lord.

Its message to those who, in abandonment of hope, define themselves by some sin, and present themselves as though they, as so defined, should have a place in the Church, is and only can be that of complete rejection. With respect to loving the sinner and hating the sin, which it indeed is called to do, what can it say to those who, in contempt of the saints who have fled their sins, declare their persons to be inseparable from the sin, identifying themselves with it—and then blame the Church for hating them as persons? It

can only say to them that all perversion of what it is to be human has been destroyed in and by Christ, who makes those who love him straight and whole after his own image. To some, this is the promise of life; to others, who have bound themselves to that which is to be destroyed, it is the intolerable threat of destruction.

No Satisfaction

What do these latter have to speak to, much less teach or admonish, the Church upon? They have no voice among us. Christian authorities need to stop thinking and writing as though the categories of homosexual and Christian can be joined—as though the Church could tolerate or accommodate, or speak gently of, much less bless or sanctify, anything peculiar to the garment stained by the flesh that those who come to Christ throw off in their baptism.

In that baptism we become penitents, and as such divided from our sins. St. Paul tells us here that no penitent is to be named by, identified by, what he has abjured. Those injured people who have put on Christ have put on, in him, life, hope, healing of their diseases, and resurrection of their bodies in the image and likeness of the one who has saved them.

The Church never can and never will give satisfaction—and the homosexualist knows it, for he knows the words against him are ineradicable—to the declared and impenitent homosexual, the person who, through an act of the vermiculate will, has identified his person with a sin, whether he demands acceptance of his sin through "love," or vindication through identification of his perceived enemies as bigots. Whether he presents himself as an object of love or indignation, what he demands in either case is acceptance not of the person, but of the sin-bound and sin-defined person. He demands the declaration of spiritual authority that there is nothing objectively disordered about this binding of man to sin, and assurance that this monstrous amalgam can indeed enter the kingdom of heav-

en. This can never happen among Christians until they abandon Christianity, which is at war with every sin, and whose indelible constitution places all perversions of the perfect man at the muzzle of its canons.

S. M. Hutchens is a senior editor and the book review editor of *Touchstone*.

Read more:

<http://www.touchstonemag.com/archives/article.php?id=26-04-003-c#ixzz4qDN3h1Q8>

Installation Sermon for Pastor Weslie Odom

Beautiful Savior Lutheran Church
5851 New York Ave in Arlington, TX
July 30, 2017 A.D. 3:00 p.m.
Ezekiel 3:16-21; II Corinthians 3:4-9;
Luke 10:1-11, 16

*Grace, mercy, and peace to you from God
the Father and Our Lord Jesus Christ.
Amen.*

Greetings saints of Christ, gathered here today at *Beautiful Savior Lutheran Church* in Arlington, TX for the joyous occasion of Pastor Odom's installation as your called and ordained servant of the Word. Your prayers to the Lord of the harvest to send you a laborer has been answered. And, like all of us sinners, including Pastor Odom, you don't deserve the Lord to send you a faithful pastor to rescue and harvest you from sin, death, and hell with forgiveness, life, and salvation. But by God's grace and mercy He has given you a faithful pastor to preach His pure Word to you, in season and out, to save you, his hearers, as well as himself.

So, let's start there. What has the Lord Called, through means, Pastor Odom to do among you? What are his duties as preacher and what are yours as hearers? There are many well intended, but errant, ideas of what a pastor is Called to do. Some wrongly think that he is Called to bring energy and revitalize or grow a congregation numerically, especially with the lure of his youth and nice young family—"Surely that will attract new disciples." Wrong. Only the Holy Spirit can add believers to a congregation, and He does

that, when and where He pleases, through the calling and enlightening of the Gospel. Others think pastors are to function as CEO's, making sure the stockholders are happy. Wrong again. Pastors are not to be people pleasers and give itching ears what they want to hear. Pastors are not hired by a congregation, but the Holy Spirit places them as overseers, and they are accountable to the King of Kings for delivering His message faithfully. **"The one who hears you hears me, and the one who rejects you rejects me, and the one who rejects me rejects him who sent me."**

So, what is Pastor Odom sent by Jesus here to *Beautiful Savior* to do? Pastor Odom is here to kill your congregation. Yes, he is here to run it into the ground, or more precisely to drive you to your knees. He is to hold up Moses to you, the 10 Commandments, so that you are killed. The letter of the Law kills. He is, week in and week out, to show you that you are poor miserable sinners who have no hope of salvation by works of the Law. He is, as we heard from Ezekiel, to warn those living in sin that they shall surely die eternally apart from repentance: **"Son of man, I have made you a watchman for the house of Israel. Whenever you hear a word from my mouth, you shall give them warning from me. 18 If I say to the wicked, 'You shall surely die,' and you give him no warning, nor speak to warn the wicked from his wicked way, in order to save his life, that wicked person shall die for his iniquity, but his blood I will require at your hand. 19 But if you warn the wicked, and he does not turn from his wickedness, or from his wicked way, he shall die for his iniquity, but you will have delivered your soul."**

Pastor Odom, as you know, these are serious duties. You are not to bow to the god of getting along to get along. You are to warn those living in unrepentant sin under your care, even if they are leaders or founding members of the congregation. You are to warn those living in sin like the world by cohabitating outside of marriage, desiring an unscriptural divorce, or those who embrace an

LGBTQ lifestyle. You are to practice closed communion and lovingly not commune the heterodox and those LCMS members not in *good standing*. You are to warn, even sweet grandmothers, if they are killing reputations by participating in the gossip-chain. You are to warn your members to flee false teachers in books, devotionals, and on the radio and TV. You are to warn families that choose sports, entertainment, and pleasure over coming to gladly hear and learn preaching and God's Word—calling for fruits of repentance—reminding them of their Confirmation vows that they would rather die than not receive the Lord's gifts in His Church and live godly lives.

Yes, you are to warn the openly wicked, but also the legalistic-self-righteous-Pharisees who reject and stumble over the Gospel because they think they are good and not like the tax collectors and sinners. You are to remember that it is not your warning that you speak, but you are just the messenger and watchman. You are sent like the 72 as a lamb amidst wolves with Jesus' message. **The one who hears you hears me, and the one who rejects you rejects me, and the one who rejects me rejects him who sent me.** This is your duty, Pastor Odom, to preach the whole counsel of God's Word—especially the Gospel that the world finds foolish—even if you are rejected and killed for it—for your eternal soul is at stake, not just that of your hearers. As you know, these duties are spelled out for you in *The Table of Duties* in our catechism, as are the duties of your hearers.

Members of *Beautiful Savior*, the duty of the congregation is to hear, listen, pay, pray, and obey. When Pastor Odom preaches God's Word, in accordance with our *Lutheran Confessions*, even though it convicts you or your children, you are to listen and support It. If you reject the message and run out or starve out Pastor Odom for 'killing' the congregation—you really reject Jesus, Who by human wisdom, even during His visible earthly ministry, didn't grow the Church numerically or revital-

ize it by bringing worldly peace. By the way, Jesus' earthly ministry goes on today—pastors speak in His stead and should expect to be rejected and received as Jesus.

That isn't to say that Pastor Odom is Jesus and that there aren't Biblical reasons to remove a pastor. If he doesn't preach the Gospel purely and administer the sacraments rightly, but persists in false doctrine or scandalous living, as defined in Scripture, then he must cease being a pastor. And understand that Pastor Odom's flesh, the world and the devil are all against him to get him to abandoned his duties. He gains nothing worldly by offending sinners with God's Word, and so the temptation to serve his belly is real. Therefore, pray for him, encourage him, put the best construction on him and his family, as love covers a multitude of sins, which is what you vow in *the Rite of Installation*. Believe the truth that all the forces of evil are against Pastor Odom preaching God's Word faithfully to you, and they are against you to faithfully listen. Fellow saints, we all are being saved by the preaching of the pure Gospel and the right administration of the mysteries of God. Since Pastor Odom, by God's grace, has proven a faithful steward of the sacraments of God, he is a good fit for your congregation, even if a pseudo-scientific study may say he's not the perfect fit because he prefers Alabama football over Texas teams.

But, Jesus didn't send Pastor Odom to kill you with the letter and leave you dead, but in order to give you life. He is not to simply to hold up Moses, but Christ all the more. The letter kills, but the Spirit gives life. The Law is good—it curbs sin, serves as a guide for Christians, but it primarily shows us sinners that we need Jesus--killing our works-righteousness. The purpose of the Lord killing us is so He can resurrect us to new life, *to live under Him in His kingdom and serve Him in everlasting righteousness, innocence and blessedness*. The 10 Commandments can't give us life, but the Gospel does. The Good News is that Jesus alone has kept the Law perfectly. He did this for you, Pastor Odom, your hearers, and for the whole world. Jesus is our righteousness—a right-

eousness outside of our sinful hearts. Jesus never gossiped, lived in sin, despised preaching, or broke any of the Commandments. Quite the opposite; He obeyed the letter of the Law perfectly in His deeds, words, and thoughts. He lived this perfect life for us all, preachers and hearers included.

But the letter of the Law kills; those who break the Law deserve not only temporal death, but eternal death in hell, which includes us. Enter Jesus, our substitute. Sinless Jesus was made to be sin. All of our breaking of the Commandments was placed on Him. All of our original sin and the actual sins that flow from it. All of our things done and left undone. All LGBTQ sins. The sins of divorce, cohabitation, and self-righteousness—all placed on Jesus. All our failures as parents, workers, and church members—all placed on the spotless Lamb of God that takes away the sin of the world. Jesus went to the cross and received the entire wrath of God the Father for all our sins. Jesus was punished and received real hell on the cross until He died. And His death is not bad. Jesus' death is what gives life to dead sinners who are killed by sin and the demands of the Law. Jesus' bloody body hanging dead on the cross is our victorious-*Beautiful Savior*. This is why, "We preach Christ and Him crucified!" This is what Jesus sent of the 72 preach and what He has sent Pastor Odom to preach to you 2,000 year later.

Pastor Odom runs to you with beautiful feet proclaiming the Gospel of peace. "There is peace between you and God for the sake of Jesus alone. You are reconciled. The Father accepted Jesus as payment for all your sins, shown in His resurrection on the third day. You are declared righteous." But how would we know and believe this Good News without someone preaching it to us? We wouldn't. The Gospel is not written on our hearts. So that we know the grace of God in Christ, He sends preachers into His harvest. So that He can create living faith in dead hearts, He creates the Office of Preaching. So that we repent and keep on repenting unto salvation, He Calls, ordains, and sends some sinful men to

sinful men and women with His Holy Word. So that we have faith, which God counts as righteousness, apart from works of the Law, the Lord of the harvest sends out laborers into His harvest.

Pastor Odom is sent here by Christ to deliver to you the forgiveness of all your sins that Jesus won for all on the cross. He is here to absolve the repentant and bind the unrepentant, so long as they do not repent. He is here to baptize and celebrate communion, according to Christ's institution. He isn't here to bring worldly success and prosperity to your congregation temporally. No, far better. He is here to give you the Word of the Lord that endures forever, which gives you abundant eternal life now by faith and on harvest day by sight. He is here to give you the gift of baptism that "now saves you." He is here to comfort you that you didn't choose Jesus, but He chose you. He is here to give you the forgiveness of sins, and where there is forgiveness there is also life and salvation.

Listen to Pastor Odom and receive him as the joyous gift and blessing he is; don't reject him and therefore reject Jesus. **"The one who hears you hears me, and the one who rejects you rejects me, and the one who rejects me rejects him who sent me."** Rather welcome him and so welcome Jesus. Invite your family and friends to come and hear the Good News too. The Lord may bless your congregation with many new disciples or you all may be dragged into the streets to die as martyrs. Either way, the Lord's duties for preachers and hearers are clear and His good and gracious will is being done. Reject all unbiblical and unrealistic expectations for pastors and their families. Have the proper expectations of your new pastor. *Let each of you, pastor and hearer, his lesson learn with care, and all the household of God well shall fare.*

With the help of God, do your duties. Your new Pastor is here to kill your congregation with the Law, and raise it to new life in Christ with His Word and Spirit—a life of faith toward God and fervent love toward your neighbor, guided by the 10 Commandments. Pas-

tor Odom, with the help of God, kill your sinful flesh and that of this congregation with the Law of God, and have the Gospel predominate your preaching and teaching, for only the Spirit gives life to you and your hearers. Amen.

May the peace of God that passes all understanding keep your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus. Amen.

Pastor Clint Stark of *St. John Lutheran Church* in Frisco, TX

Answer to the Fabricated Luther

In the August- September 2017 newsletter, I published an article entitled "In Preparation for the 500th Anniversary of the Reformation" warning that the popular view of Luther and Lutheranism is a caricature based on the 1960 book by William Shirer *The Rise and Fall of the Third Reich*. A member remembered that there had been a book published in response to this work. There was in 1993. It's entitled *The Fabricated Luther* and subtitled *The Rise and Fall of the Shirer Myth*. I read the 1993 original edition but there is a 2016 edition for twice the price. The author is Uwe Siemon-Netto.

To solidify the point of my initial article I quote from Siemon-Netto book. "Visitors to the Holocaust Memorial Museum in Washington, DC, are shown a film unequivocally stating that the 16th century Reformer, Martin Luther, was the progenitor of Germany's National Socialism, and the leaders who carried out the mass destruction of Jews" (15). He does a capable and quite thorough job of tearing down this libelous, slanderous, hateful myth by which Lutherans and Lutheranism has been dogged ever since. The book is based on his Ph.D. thesis which showed clichés or stereotypes take on a life of their own, and once they gain that status they are virtually irrefutable.

He begins with the cliché that accuses Luther of being a lackey of princes and points out that this is as old as Protestantism itself being first formulated by his chief antagonist Thomas Muntzer over the Peasant Revolt of 1525 (43). Fredrich Engels in 1850 repristinated this charge (Ibid.). In 1935 on Reformation Day a German professor exclaimed, "Hitler is

today...what Luther was then, the tutor of the whole German nation" (50). However, a German scholar has since noted "after 1933 'a whole series of prominent Luther scholars' joined in conscripting Luther into the National Socialist cause..." (50). A 1944 pamphlet *Martin Luther, Hitler's Spiritual Ancestor* sealed the deal: Luther produced a dogged, slave-mentality in people (44-5). Shirer's book published in 1960 only repeated allegations that had been made in print 15 and 17 years earlier (46). In a summary of sorts, Siemon-Netto says that "a specimen of honest scholarly analysis was perverted into a stereotype to fit personal or political agendas. This was accomplished by simplification, exaggeration, and by omitting" at least one scholar's own adjustment of his claims (55).

In refuting the allegations, Siemon-Netto says that while it's true Luther was a patriot, he did not make a religion out of nationalism. If this were a true of his teaching it never would have converted Finland, Norway, or prospered in America (48).

It is true that shortly before his death in 1543 Luther published "his venomous book" *On the Jews and Their Lies*" (49). Sin can't be passed over because it comes from a bitter old man. However, it is fair to point out in earlier writings he had said, "'You will find plenty of Christians...who in their secret unbelief are worse than any Jew, heather, Turk, or heretic'" (Ibid.). In 1523 Luther wrote *That Jesus Christ was Born a Jew*. He says here, "'If the apostles, who were also Jews, had dealt with us Gentiles as we Gentiles deal with the Jews, there would never have been a Christian among the Gentiles. Since they dealt with us Gentiles in such a brotherly fashion, we in turn ought to treat the Jews in a brotherly manner in order that we might convert some of them'" (49).

The charge that Luther encouraged quietism or dogmatic obedience to rulers is answered by "his ceaseless admonitions to speak up in the face of governmental evil." The charge of "warmongering" is answered by "his unequivocal opposition to all wars of aggression" and his advice

to soldiers that they had to disobey orders that were contrary to God's commandments. Also, Norway based its resistance to Nazi tyranny on Luther's theology. Austria, which was primarily Roman Catholic, provided 75% of all extermination camp commandants. We don't want to shift the crimes of the Nazi's from Catholics to Lutherans. We do want to point out how absurd it is to think the theology of one denomination paved the way for genocide (65).

Even after Luther's death, Lutheranism continued with a stand opposed to absolute obedience. In fact, in a sermon, newsletter, and/or a blog, I wrongly attributed the following quote to Luther when it came from the *Magdeburg Confession* of 1550 (seven years after Luther's death): "...if say a prince or emperor were to become so reckless or mad as to suspend the law of marriage and discipline and set up another law...permitting all sorts of shameful misbehavior...we and other Christians can resist with calm confidence" (90). You could say the legacy of Luther is quietism in the face of lawful government but activism in the face of unjust government.

The whole subject of activism in Luther is controversial. On many things, you can find Luther over the course of many sermons, writing, and letters saying two different things. People emphasize the one that supports what they want to do. "[W]hen faced with a Hitler or a Stalin, a Lutheran has two Luthers to appeal to. Neither countenances insurrection and mob rule. But the younger Luther teaches that only passive and verbal resistance is permissible. The older Luther says that under certain circumstances the Christian must take up arms against an evil ruler – never to fight for his own cause, but in defense of his faith and his family" (98). The different Luthers is why we don't hold each other to everything Luther wrote, said, or did, but to the confession of faith contained in the Book of Concord of 1580 which lay people come to know in summary form through Luther's Small Catechism.

To be clear, this is not about clearing Luther's name. He who so often referred to himself as a 'maggot sack' would not care much for his name being cleared. It's about a stigma, a cliché, a stereotyped that has been hung around the neck of Lutheranism dimming the pure light of the Gospel that by God's grace Martin Luther had a hand in bringing to light 500 years ago. In statues or paintings of Luther I have never seen him pointing at himself but only at Christ, Scripture, or Sacraments. May that be the legacy of Luther we treasure.

American College of Pediatrics reaches decision: Transgenderism of children is child abuse

March 25, 2016

The **American College of Pediatricians** issued a statement this week condemning gender reclassification in children by stating that **transgenderism in children** amounts to **child abuse**.

"The American College of Pediatricians urges educators and legislators to reject all policies that condition children to accept as normal a life of chemical and surgical impersonation of the opposite sex. Facts – not ideology – determine reality."

The policy statement, authored by Johns Hopkins Medical School Psychology Professor Paul McHugh, listed eight arguments on why gender reclassification is harmful.

1. *Human sexuality is an objective biological binary trait: "XY" and "XX" are genetic markers of health – not genetic markers of a disorder.*

2. *No one is born with a gender. Everyone is born with a biological sex. Gender (an awareness and sense of oneself as male or female) is a sociological and psychological concept; not an objective biological one.*

3. *A person's belief that he or she is something they are not is, at best, a sign of confused thinking. When an otherwise healthy biological boy believes he is a girl, or an otherwise healthy biological girl believes she is a boy, an objective psychological*

problem exists that lies in the mind not the body, and it should be treated as such.

4. *Puberty is not a disease and puberty-blocking hormones can be dangerous. Reversible or not, puberty-blocking hormones induce a state of disease – the absence of puberty – and inhibit growth and fertility in a previously biologically healthy child.*

5. *According to the DSM-V, as many as 98% of gender confused boys and 88% of gender confused girls eventually accept their biological sex after naturally passing through puberty.*

6. *Children who use puberty blockers to impersonate the opposite sex will require cross-sex hormones in late adolescence. Cross-sex hormones (testosterone and estrogen) are associated with dangerous health risks including but not limited to high blood pressure, blood clots, stroke and cancer.*

7. *Rates of suicide are twenty times greater among adults who use cross-sex hormones and undergo sex reassignment surgery, even in Sweden which is among the most LGBTQ – affirming countries.*

8. *Conditioning children into believing a lifetime of chemical and surgical impersonation of the opposite sex is normal and healthful as child abuse.*

The left, as one might expect, reacted swiftly with claws fully extended.

Think Progress described the American College of Pediatricians as a "hate group masquerading as pediatricians."

The Huffington Post said that "Once again, Paul McHugh has used the ever more tarnished name of Johns Hopkins to distort science and spread transphobic misinformation."

McHugh, who formerly served as Johns Hopkins' psychiatrist in chief, issued an opinion last year stating the transgenderism is a "mental disorder" and sex change is a "medical impossibility."

The statement was also signed by Drs. Michelle A. Cretella, M.D., president of the American College of Pediatricians, and Quentin Van Meter, M.D., the organization's vice president.

SCIENCE INCREASINGLY MAKES THE CASE FOR GOD

Eric Metaxas

The op-ed, "Science Increasingly Makes the Case for God," was published in the Wall Street Journal on December 25, 2014. Since then, the article has garnered over 600,000 Facebook shares and more than 9,250 comments, making it, unofficially, the most popular article in Wall Street Journal history.

In 1966 Time magazine ran a cover story asking: Is God Dead? Many have accepted the cultural narrative that he's obsolete—that as science progresses, there is less need for a "God" to explain the universe. Yet it turns out that the rumors of God's death were premature. More amazing is that the relatively recent case for his existence comes from a surprising place—science itself.

Here's the story: The same year Time featured the now-famous headline, the astronomer Carl Sagan announced that there were two important criteria for a planet to support life: The right kind of star, and a planet the right distance from that star. Given the roughly octillion—1 followed by 27 zeros—planets in the universe, there should have been about septillion—1 followed by 24 zeros—planets capable of supporting life.

With such spectacular odds, the Search for Extraterrestrial Intelligence, a large, expensive collection of private and publicly funded projects launched in the 1960s, was sure to turn up something soon. Scientists listened with a vast radio telescopic network for signals that resembled coded intelligence and were not merely random. But as years passed, the silence from the rest of the universe was deafening. Congress defunded SETI in 1993, but the search continues with private funds. As of 2014, researchers have discovered precisely bubkis—0 followed by nothing.

What happened? As our knowledge of the universe increased, it became clear

that there were far more factors necessary for life than Sagan supposed. His two parameters grew to 10 and then 20 and then 50, and so the number of potentially life-supporting planets decreased accordingly. The number dropped to a few thousand planets and kept on plummeting.

Even SETI proponents acknowledged the problem. Peter Schenkel wrote in a 2006 piece for *Skeptical Inquirer* magazine: "In light of new findings and insights, it seems appropriate to put excessive euphoria to rest . . . We should quietly admit that the early estimates . . . may no longer be tenable."

As factors continued to be discovered, the number of possible planets hit zero, and kept going. In other words, the odds turned against any planet in the universe supporting life, including this one. Probability said that even we shouldn't be here.

Today there are more than 200 known parameters necessary for a planet to support life—every single one of which must be perfectly met, or the whole thing falls apart. Without a massive planet like Jupiter nearby, whose gravity will draw away asteroids, a thousand times as many would hit Earth's surface. The odds against life in the universe are simply astonishing.

Yet here we are, not only existing, but talking about existing. What can account for it? Can every one of those many parameters have been perfect by accident? At what point is it fair to admit that science suggests that we cannot be the result of random forces? Doesn't assuming that an intelligence created these perfect conditions require far less faith than believing that a life-sustaining Earth just happened to beat the inconceivable odds to come into being?

There's more. The fine-tuning necessary for life to exist on a planet is nothing compared with the fine-tuning required for the universe to exist at all. For example, astrophysicists now know that the values of the four fundamental forces—gravity, the electromagnetic force, and the "strong" and "weak" nuclear forces—were determined less than one millionth of a

second after the big bang. Alter any one value and the universe could not exist. For instance, if the ratio between the nuclear strong force and the electromagnetic force had been off by the tiniest fraction of the tiniest fraction—by even one part in 100,000,000,000,000—then no stars could have ever formed at all. Feel free to gulp.

Multiply that single parameter by all the other necessary conditions, and the odds against the universe existing are so heart-stoppingly astronomical that the notion that it all "just happened" defies common sense. It would be like tossing a coin and having it come up heads 10 quintillion times in a row. Really?

Fred Hoyle, the astronomer who coined the term "big bang," said that his atheism was "greatly shaken" at these developments. He later wrote that "a common-sense interpretation of the facts suggests that a super-intellect has monkeyed with the physics, as well as with chemistry and biology . . . The numbers one calculates from the facts seem to me so overwhelming as to put this conclusion almost beyond question."

Theoretical physicist Paul Davies has said that "the appearance of design is overwhelming" and Oxford professor Dr. John Lennox has said "the more we get to know about our universe, the more the hypothesis that there is a Creator . . . gains in credibility as the best explanation of why we are here."

The greatest miracle of all time, without any close seconds, is the universe. It is the miracle of all miracles, one that ineluctably points with the combined brightness of every star to something—or Someone—beyond itself.

Mr. Metaxas is the author, most recently, of "Miracles: What They Are, Why They Happen, and How They Can Change Your Life" (DuttonAdult, 2014).

Correction

An earlier version understated the number of zeroes in an octillion and a septillion.

The Dangerous Moral Morass You Don't Have to Step On To

Posted on July 24, 2017 by Rev. Paul R. Harris

In south Louisiana the rabbit hunting is spectacular. You would have to be a pretty lousy shot not to bag your limit. The problem is you're hunting at times on top of bogs. In the swamp, these are floating masses of dead vegetation. You think they are part of the land mass that you have beached your boat on, but they are not. You feel like you are walking on soft, spongy ground that you might sink into a boot length or more, but you're not. You're walking on water, and your next step could be through a loose place in the matted vegetation and down you will go. This is where we are with easy divorce, living together, and gay marriage. Always keep these three together because these have been our steps out on to the current moral morass.

What keeps so many Christians thinking they have to walk on this floating mass of faithless morals is the following syllogism. Thesis 1) What is believed to be moral differs from culture to culture. Number 1 is true, therefore Thesis 2) is also true: What is moral will differ from culture to culture and from age to age. People have defended tectonic shift in morals with either "When in Rome..." or "Hey it's the 21st century!" See? Different places or different times have differing morals.

What you haven't noticed when you buy into this line of thinking is that where you thought you were stepping on to a solid land mass in the first thesis, you were really stepping on to a floating bog. There is a suppressed premise behind that first

thesis which you automatically buy into when you accept the stated one. What comes before Thesis 1 and is assumed in that statement is: What is moral depends on what is believed to be moral.

Here's the tricky part. No one believes that unspoken assumption who doesn't already believe Thesis 2 is true. That means Thesis 2 doesn't flow from Thesis 1 at all. It rests on the unspoken assumption that what is moral depends on what is believed to be moral. Without stating that unspoken assumption you beg the question, i.e. you force people – under color of a logical syllogism – to say that it goes without saying morals will differ from culture to culture from age to age. It is unreasonable to think otherwise.

Make them state the unspoken assumption they are beginning with. Thesis 1) What is moral depends on what is believed to be moral; therefore, Thesis 2) follows: What is believed to be moral differs from culture to culture; therefore, Thesis 3) follows: What is moral will differ from culture to culture and from age to age.

Christianity has always denied Thesis 1, so Theses 2 and 3 aren't accepted. What is moral is not based on the shifting opinions of men or majority vote or new scientific discoveries. When you accept that unspoken premise you've stepped out on to a floating bog, and you won't be hunting rabbits. Lying and deceiving spirits are hunting you.

Author's Disclosure: I found the above, minus the illustration, from rabbit hunting on a scrap of paper dated 1999. It is in my writing, but I'm sure I got it from someone else. I don't know whom. I say this in case you're thinking: "Wow that's good." I think so too, but I didn't notice this on my own.

From Amazons to "Fearless Girl"

Posted on August 14, 2017 by Rev. Paul R. Harris

This is a link to the article "Standing with the bulls" by Jane B. Cheaney published in the May 2017 *WORLD Magazine* (p. 14):

<https://world.wng.org/2017/05/standing-with-the-bulls> If it doesn't work, my October-November 2017 newsletter will have it printed. The article refers to the statue in this picture.



The genesis of the following comments below is not, however, the article below. I began ruminating on this subject when I first heard in January 2017 that the word Amazon literally was the alpha privative attached to the Greek word for 'breast.' I marveled that in decades of reading about feminism and feminist's writings I had never heard that. I think below explains why. However, even a "folk" etymology says something about how people see the facts. No, this observation is not the favorite refuge of psychobabblers and churchmen everywhere that "perception is reality," but the truth that words or their origins invented by men say something about the facts.

The *WORLD Magazine* article applies to LGBTQ issues, women in combat, marriage, and men and women in general. A fact not mentioned in this article is that the French painting "Liberty Leading the People" which commemorates the 1830 overthrow of the Charles X portrays Liberty as a lady leading her people with her right breast exposed. Take this factoid into account when considering that the legendary Amazons of the Greeks literally means a = without + mazos = breast. This supposedly referred to the fable that the Amazons cut off their right breast so that they would be able to draw a bow

properly. My 1972 Webster's Unabridged dictionary says this is "Greek folk etymology" which Google explains as "probably a popular etymology of an unknown foreign word." Others say the word comes from the Iranian word for warrior or a Slavic word for "without husbands"

(<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Amazons>).

What is worth noting to me is that in 19th century popular thought a woman led by exposing her sexuality but in the 5th century BC for a woman to be warrior she had to lose some of her sexuality. Let such insights incite you to realize that if we do nothing to educate our children on the God-given and God-gifted differences between men and women, if we ignore what LGBTQ-ism is doing to language, thinking, and acting, our children will develop an understanding that produces, accepts, and promotes either Lady Liberty or Amazons, both misuse their God-given sexuality.

Standing with the bulls What the Fearless Girl statue really symbolizes is denial of reality

May 27, 2017

On March 7, a bronze statue popped up on Manhattan's Bowling Green at the intersection of Broadway and Whitehall. The timing, one day before International Women's Day, is no accident: "Fearless Girl" faces the "Charging Bull" of Wall Street with feet spread, hands on hips, and puny chest thrust out like an 8-year-old insisting she will not, absolutely not, clear the table because it's her brother's turn.

The statue was commissioned by State Street Global Advisors, a mutual fund specializing in gender-diverse compa-

nies. It's artful advertising, and clever of SSGA to capitalize on the moment. Even better for their word-of-mouth when local media, not to mention Twitter and Instagram, went nuts over the symbolism. We're all about symbolism these days. Mayor de Blasio praised Fearless Girl's standing up to Wall Street, adding, "Men who don't like women taking up space" demonstrate "why we need her." U.S. Rep. Carolyn Maloney saw in the girl's defiant stance "the resiliency of women."

Fearless Girl had her detractors as well, such as Washington Post columnist Christine Emba, who wonders why such resiliency must be portrayed as a child, "reinforcing the idea of femaleness as cute and inoffensive." Arturo Di Modica, sculptor of the Charging Bull, says the new installation undermines the symbolism of his work: The bull represents strength and prosperity, but with a little girl in its path, it becomes a public menace.

We can play the symbols game all day, especially since bronze figures stand still and let us. But will anyone deny that, in a face-off between a real bull and a real girl, the girl wouldn't stand a chance, no matter how confident her posture?

Actually, some people might deny that if they confuse symbolism with reality. Lethal females in stiletto heels wipe out squads of thugs all over TV- and movie-land, because women could totally do that if they just believed in themselves enough. Or, if they can't quite manage the heels, they can at least carry a 50-pound pack plus an M-4 rifle and 30 rounds of ammo on a quick march over hill and valley. Anything you can do, says Fearless Girl to her bullish counterpart, I can do better. Or at least just as well, so there's no reason whatsoever to bar women from anything they want to do.

Except biology, physiology, and psychology. Allowing as always for the ex-

ceptions, women tend to be less careerist, more risk-averse, less violent, and more relational than men. They are the circle rather than the tangent, the buoy not the speedboat. Men and women share all the virtues, such as strength, creativity, generosity, and courage, but express them in different ways and circumstances. The big difference comes down to this: Men, in general, drive a culture; women, in general, stabilize it.

Today the elites tell us it's time for women to take the wheel. That seems only fair, after millennia of male domination, but what it amounts to is pushing women into attitudes and positions that go against their nature, while letting men stand down when they should be stepping up. The stats are alarming. For example, ages 18 to 24 are prime years for moving out, moving up, and building a resumé, but 35 percent of American males that age haven't taken the first step—they still live with their parents, and 1 in 4 of that 35 percent doesn't even have a job. Meanwhile, more women of this age are living with a husband or partner than their male peers are, and at least 16 percent of women head their own (mostly low-income) households, compared to 13 percent of men. The trends show no sign of turning.

God made them male and female, two sides of one image. We need each other to live up to that image: builders and occupiers, managers of the political and the social, influencers of opinion and influencers of the heart. Men will always drive a culture, even if it's only a handful of them who violently seize the wheel. The question is whether they drive it forward or into a ditch.

World Magazine

Janie B. Cheaney VOICES

October 2017

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THURS	FRI	SAT
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Adult Confirmation 12:30 PM	Jr. Confirmation 5 PM	Floor Art 6:30 PM	7:15 Romans			
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
Adult Confirmation 12:30	Jr. Confirmation 5 PM					
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
NO Adult Confirmation	NO Jr. Confirmation		7:15 Romans			
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
Adult Confirmation 12:30	Jr. Confirmation 5 PM	Budget Meeting 6:30 PM	7:15 Romans			
29	30	31				
12:30 Adult Confirmation	Jr. Confirmation 5 PM					
Reformation Dinner 5:15 PM						

November 2017

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THURS	FRI	SAT
			1	2	3	4
			7:15 Romans			
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
Adult Confirmation 12:30	Jr. Confirmation 5 PM	Voters Meeting 7 PM	7:15 Romans			
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
Adult Confirmation 12:30	Jr. Confirmation 5 PM		7:15 Romans			
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
Adult Confirmation 12:30	NO Jr. Confirmation	Elders Meeting 6:30 PM	Thanksgiving Day Communion Service 7:30 PM			
26	27	28	29	30		

Adult Confirmation 12:30	Jr. Confirmation 5 PM		7:30 Advent Vespers			
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Oct - Nov 2017