

Trinity Te Deum

The official newsletter for Trinity Lutheran Church

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Sunday School and Bible Study 9:15 AM – Divine Service 10:30 AM

July 29, 2018 Volume 20 Issue 4

August 2018 – September 2018

A Fireside Chat

President Franklin D. Roosevelt was famous for his “Fireside Chats” over the radio to the American people. If you’re like me, you think he did this every week. Presidents did do that beginning in 1982. President G.H. Bush didn’t do them. President Clinton did. President G.W. did and was the first to broadcast them in Spanish. President Obama made weekly addresses on the White House website. President Trump uses video but in addition uses a livestream on Facebook, but he releases them on Fridays not Saturdays.

There you’ve just been geeked out on the topic of “Weekly Presidential Addresses.” I never heard the term ‘geeked out’ till the automaton posing as an employee at Lowe’s did a 15-minute recitation on the pros-cons, facts-figures, legend and lore on all things lighting. He ended the discourse when another customer walked up in need of assistance. He popped almost to attention and said: “There, you’ve just been geeked-out on lighting.”

I didn’t mean to do that in regard to Presidential addresses except to say: I thought President Roosevelt did them every week. I got this impression from the TV show *The Waltons*. Unlike the millennials who get all their misinformation from the Internet, I got mine from TV. In any event, from March 1933 to June 1944, this is the heart, the depths, the despair, and the tension that was a country in depression and a world at war, Roosevelt took to addressing the American people by radio like a father to his family. He apparently coined the term ‘fireside chat.’

So how many times do you think Roosevelt addressed the nation using this cutting-edge technology in such a cozy way over that roughly 540 week timespan? Surely hundreds if not several hundreds. Nope. Thirty times, that’s 30, and that was all. Apart from *The Waltons* I never found one of the dozens of people I asked who would have been alive at the time who remembered them as important. Some, few, remembered them as happening.

Well, all this is taking the long way home to say. I will be hosting fireside chats to talk about exiting the Lutheran Church Missouri Synod and becoming an Independent Confessional Lutheran Church. The first one will be Sunday, August 19, during the Bible Class hour. You know how important Bible class is to me. You know it’s not the desert of a Christian’s life within the church. You know I regard it as absolutely essential and, after preaching and catechizing, the most important work I do. However, the decision to exit the Synod is a big one. Yes, you can read on our website the long history of our dissenting against the official doctrines and practices of our Synod that our contrary to our confession. And you should do this. But some may just what to chat. That’s what I propose to do for the Bible class hour on August 19.

It will be informal. Neither I, nor anyone else, will make a presentation. I’ll open with prayer, and say, “So what do you think?” And we will go from there. This is open to all members of Trinity, and if you are guest, you are welcome to come and listen, but the chatting will be between members. I will host another one of these after a Sunday service at a time to be determined, and I will host yet another on a weekday – maybe weekend – evening. I’m thinking wine and cheese here. I’ll provide both. Kraft singles and boxed wine. Nothing says class like individually wrapped cheese and wine without corks.

The decision-making body of our church is the Voters Assembly, but it is not to be, and hasn’t been, an oligarchy. So, if you want to know more about exiting Synod and/or expressing your opinion for or against it, come sit by the fire with me.

3 fatal flaws in the “gender as social construct” position

By Adam Groza Ben Arbour
May 25, 2018

Typical Southern Baptists are barraged with the message that gender is a social construct, which means that gender is something subjective and not the result of nature, purpose, or design. They hear this message on television, in movies, in popular songs, in schools, and even in corporate training material. Southern Baptist churches need to educate their congregants to resist this argument and tear down these lies (2 Cor. 10:5).

Society is at a crossroads—either God institutes biological sex by which a person’s gender is established (male and female, see Gen. 5:2), or gender is a social construct and thus open to be revised, rejected, or assigned.

Fatal flaws

What are the fatal flaws to the idea that gender is a social construct, or, more specifically, what's wrong with the way that transgenderism is promoted?

Start with how people tend to question their gender. The common story we’ve probably all heard goes something like this: “My child was born a biological male, and we named him Christopher, but from an early age, he only wanted to dress in pink and play with dolls. So we knew early on that our child was really a girl, and eventually, we allowed Chrissy to identify as female.”

Flaw number one

Can you spot the problem? If gender is a social construct, then playing with dolls and preferring pink instead of blue doesn't count as evidence of some individuals having a different gender identity than their biological sex. Assuming what the transgender community would have us believe about gender as a social construct, dolls and pinkness aren't essential components of femininity, nor do G.I. Joe's and blueness represent essential marks of masculinity. Pointing to meaningless and "oppressive" social constructs as evidence of one’s real gender is incoherent.

How can someone claim to have an innate gender identity if gender is socially constructed? Advocates of the social construct theory need to follow through on their own logic: If gender is a social construct, then preferences concerning societally constructed gender norms are irrelevant in determining one's gender. So the next time people tell you that someone determines their gender by preferring pink over blue, or ballet over football, tell

those people that assuming the very thing they claim to deny isn't a good way to convince us that their position makes any sense. Perhaps we can restate it this way: How can someone claim to have an innate gender identity if gender is socially constructed?

Flaw number two

Well, you might ask, if not for pink over blue, how does a person determine their gender? This important question leads us to another fatal flaw in the social construct theory of gender. If gender is a social construct, and if gender cues (colors, social preferences, etc.) are arbitrary and unrelated to one’s real gender, then the only way for a person to determine their gender is to decide for oneself, or choose one’s gender based on gender stereotypes present throughout a culture. Previous generations thought they had it tough, having to choose a mate, a career, a place to live, etc. Future generations must now choose whether or not to be he, she, them, it, we, zie, or some designation hitherto unknown in this world of socially constructed gender.

But those keeping score at home might object, “Wait a minute, I thought gender was a social construct, not an individual construct!” Gender norms are partially constructed. That’s why gender norms change from one culture to the next. Society establishes the rules for the game, not the individual. You no more get to choose your gender than you do your race, height, or species. So what are the agreed-upon social means and mechanisms by which society assigns gender to people in this unfolding dystopia?

I suppose we’ll be informed when a decision has been reached.

Flaw number three

Yet another fatal flaw with the social construct theory of gender is the claim that the newfound liberation of otherwise closeted transgender people is only recognizing a group of people that already existed in the shadows, and not creating a group of people that didn’t otherwise exist. Christians might suspect that all the talk about transgenderism will somehow have the effect of increasing the number of transgender people. Or, more bluntly, all this confused talk about gender oozing out of American culture might invite additional confusion on the part of individuals.

Advocates of the social construct theory dismiss this concern as bigoted and uninformed.

But is it? To answer that question, we just have to follow the logic. If gender is a social construct, then the category of "transgender" must also be a social construct. And, if transgenderism is socially constructed, then society can construct transgender people based on society's understanding of gender stereotypes. Funny how ideas have consequences.

The good news about gender

Now for the good news. Gender is not a social construct. Rather, gender is divinely instituted, and it's an essential aspect of personal identity that follows from biological reality. This doesn't mean things aren't complicated, because sin affects everything in our lives. "Everything," unfortunately, includes chromosomes, hormones, neuro-pathways, and other biological aspects of humanity. And it's likely that some questions will remain unanswered until we have resurrected bodies in the eternal state.

<https://erlc.com/resource-library/articles/3-fatal-flaws-in-the-gender-as-social-construct-position>

Vigilant in Christ's Truth

Rev. Philip Hale, Omaha, Nebraska

The error of evolution might seem to be a settled matter in the LCMS. It would be nice to assume so because its official statements are quite clear, but that is not the case as evidenced by a recent theological journal "issued by the faculty of the Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, Missouri." Several articles have surprised and troubled many, in light of what some of our LCMS college and seminary professors are teaching. This is yet further evidence that the truth can never be taken for granted. We must be ever vigilant in defending Christ's truth and not expect an institution or professional experts to safeguard it for us—it is too important for that!

John Jurchen, an associate professor of chemistry at Concordia University in Seward, NE, authored an article in the "Summer 2017 issue of the Concordia Journal, in partnership with Concordia, Nebraska," entitled "The Age of the Earth and Confessional Lutheranism: Speaking the Truth in Love." He does show in it that many

churches have completely succumbed to the culture and its version of scientific truth. The Presbyterian Church (USA) officially states: "there is no contradiction between an evolutionary theory of human origins and the doctrine of God as Creator" (67). Unfortunately, one can easily end up with a different god than the God of the Bible, by going this route. The Episcopal church goes even further in blessing evolutionary teaching: "the theory of evolution provides a fruitful and unifying scientific explanation for the emergence of life on earth ... and an acceptance of evolution is entirely compatible with an authentic and living Christian faith" (67). The ELCA is in full communion with both of these bodies, giving its tacit approval to their positions, so the name "Lutheran" on the outside of many churches and schools does not automatically stand for the truth of Christ.

Why do science, the age of the earth, and evolution matter? Creation is not just a historical fact—it describes what man is and how he is to relate to Christ, the Lord, through whom all things were made. The fact of creation from nothing in six days is significant, but the denial of that fact radically changes preaching and teaching today. If we cannot clearly say how we were made, that God made me and all creatures directly by His Word, the obligation of the Law and import of the Gospel are impacted. Creation affects the doctrine of man, which affects the redemption of man, by the man Jesus Christ.

What is the temptation today in regard to the teaching of creation in Gen. 1-2? There is great pressure to tone down the scriptural doctrine of creation, to appeal to those who have been indoctrinated into scientific truth as the only absolute truth. I would argue that the greatest danger is not a flat denial of a six day creation (which is obviously wrong), but rather being ashamed of what Christ reveals to us in Scripture and afraid to apply the undiluted truth to sinners. It appears that those teachers in this camp do not wish to appear to contradict our church body's established positions, but lack the confidence in the truth to speak incisively. While they would not consider it as such, aren't they really playing nice with satanic error? But we should not handle the error of evolution and its many dangerous assumptions (including the anti-scriptural assumption of an "old earth") with kid gloves. In general, these ideas aim to eliminate God's

involvement in creation and among mankind. Carried all the way through, they destroy Christianity, because “lots of time,” “chance,” and “randomness” end up replacing God the Father and His righteous Law. It leaves next to no purpose for man and little reason for our existence. It undoes the Father’s order for man and animal and the physically evident order between men and women. Without creation by a personal Creator, our redemption in Christ make little sense and man is free to create his own sense of purpose, justice, and meaning of life.

Jurchen, in his now withdrawn article, stated:

Adherence to a young-earth creation perspective of six, twenty-four-hour days may be a historic position of the LCMS, as presented by the Society of Creation; however, for individuals struggling to reconcile faith in the God of Genesis with what is read in literature or heard in the media, six, twenty-four-hour days is not a requirement. As long as parishioners are able to accept the historicity of Adam and Eve, the corrupting influence of sin, and the gospel of salvation, they can expand the days of creation week to encompass unspecified [time] periods.

Why is this minimalist idea of truth legislated from the professor’s podium? As Charles Arand, a St. Louis Seminary professor, says in a companion article: “one of the primary reasons why many young people have left the church has to do with the conflict between science and their faith.” The issue, however, is not individual facts, but ultimate authority. In other words, which god do we have? Is all of Scripture God’s truth, inspired by His Spirit, revealing our salvation in Christ? Or, should we worship reason, compelling verifiable (or unverifiable) evidence, and sinners who want their atheistic theories accepted on their own personal authority? The issue is not science, in general, but which god is highest—the god of reason in us (the glue of science is to distrust authority and tradition and depend on one’s own observation) or the God who speaks in His Son. Nothing man says can limit God or what He says in Scripture. To even allow the possibility is to not take His Word and truth seriously.

Does a heartfelt and emotional “love” to save people overwhelm the truth of God, allowing lies to multiply in Christ’s name? It can, especially in an academic-revering and permissive culture. The tendency is to avoid conflict. So if there appears to be irreconcilable division, many want to allow the issue to be an open question, so as to not alienate anyone. But the truth is not academic; it demands submission, not Darwinian competition with alternative ideas. Struggling with the truth is good, but dumbing it down to avoid the struggle is unconscionable for a teacher of God’s Word. Those called to speak for Christ must answer to Him, not to what is respected in the world at this particular moment.

The two specific errors Jurchen advances, and claims are “the most significant implications in my experience teaching at an LCMS university” are the extent of the flood and the possibility of animal death before the fall into sin. Evolutionary assumptions cannot easily incorporate a universal flood after the existence of man. Jurchen, in his article, allows the rational possibility of only a local flood, showing how Scripture can be pigeon-holed into this demand of sinful reason. Then he asks: “Is animal death before the fall compatible with LCMS theology?” He answers, very unconvincingly: “The adopted resolutions [of the LCMS] have otherwise been silent with respect to animal death” (71-72). But Scripture clearly states sin is the cause of death—there is nothing natural about it: “Therefore, just as sin came into the world through one man, and death through sin, and so death spread to all men because all sinned” (Rom. 5:12). It is difficult to put a good construction on wanting the death, and therefore the propagation, of animals, before the fall of man. It is succumbing to the world and its lusts.

It is not an “LCMS theology,” the prestige of an educational institution, or the reputation of a professor that we answer to. Truth belongs to God and the Spirit of Truth who dwells in every believer. If truth is a matter of opinion, no certain and final answer can be given and error cannot be adequately dismissed. But when God speaks, we may only say “Amen.” Anything less than this is an equivocation. Are our professors prepared to die for their frivolous academic dabbling? Then, it is not the truth of Christ they promulgate. It is sinful to allow human words to be on the same level as God’s clear and simple written Word. Man’s word is never more truthful or clearer than God’s Word. No god

of science should be allowed to impede the import, authority, and implications of the divine Word.

Thankfully, people were riled up enough over Jurchen's article to involve synodical officials, specifically Nebraska District President Richard Snow. With his help, Jurchen retracted his article and stated in response: "I was in error to imply that the LCMS has acknowledged Day-Age theory as an acceptable exegesis of the Creation account of Genesis 1 & 2." That is a sign of repentance and I pray it causes a change of heart, because we must expect more from our teachers. Unfortunately, Concordia Seminary is beyond correction, it appears. They simply blanked out the pages online and refuse to deal with the statements they published and distributed in their seminary's (and the LCMS') name. Perhaps they have learned from the Kloha affair over Scripture that arrogantly and snobbishly arguing in the name of academic expertise will not deceive the simple people of God who demand solid biblical meat.

Both Jurchen's and Arand's articles are most disturbing in method. They seem to care more about paying lip service to the LCMS' Committee on Theology and Church Relations printed statements and official synodical resolutions than the Word of God. That is treading on human traditions, the mere word of man. The authority of Christ, however, cuts through all man-made complications and fallibilities: "By faith we understand that the universe was created by the word of God, so that what is seen was not made out of things that are visible" (Heb. 4:3). The God who spoke us and all creatures into being instantly continues to uphold this world by His Word. May those who love Christ never be ashamed of what He says or made. Vigilance by God's people is necessary until our Lord returns in glory to answer His critics. Amen.

How Schools Quietly Indoctrinate Your Kids On Abortion And Transgenderism

It's not always in exactly what teachers and curricula say as much as how they say it and what they assume. And far too many parents aren't paying attention.



By Matthew Cochran
MAY 3, 2018

A new study from the Public Religion Research Institute reveals just how badly social conservatives are losing the battle over marriage and sexuality. Not only do two-thirds of Americans polled support so-called gay marriage, but even among evangelicals, support is rapidly growing. The majority of evangelical youth now reject Christ's teaching on the subject.

Outcomes like this surprise too many of us because we underestimate both the power of rhetoric and the extent to which conservatives willingly submit ourselves and our children to it. Anyone who is competent in the art of rhetoric knows the value of "frame," deliberately using the unspoken assumptions that shape a discussion. The quintessential example, of course, is the loaded question, "Have you stopped beating your wife?"

The way the question is framed assumes a history of violence regardless of whether that's actually the case. It slips an assertion into the dialogue without having to make an argument in support of it, and when people fail to notice what happened, the assertion quickly becomes an assumption that changes the course of the discussion.

It's a powerful rhetorical tool that lends itself to deception, as can be seen in that failing debate over gay "marriage." The Left was quite adept in framing the discussion as whether we allow gay couples to get a government license. Of course, such talk of permission presupposes that a man could actually marry a man or a woman marry a woman in the first place—an assertion that flies in the face of natural law, human biology, and history.

Yet conservatives largely took the bait on that one, and as a result, public perception went from "unthinkable" to "of course" in a remarkably short period of time. After embracing, without argument, the dubious assumption that two men can actually get married, it's virtually impossible to

effectively argue that they shouldn't be *permitted* to marry.

This Framing Device Is a Pervasive Tactic

On this and other key issues, rhetorical devices of this kind hit far closer to home than conservatives like to admit. Too many of America's educators are happy to use this same kind of deception against the children entrusted to them, as a friend of mine recently discovered.

His granddaughter is attending a public middle school in Iowa, where all parents were recently given a typical notification about an upcoming class. They called the topic "personal development." Back when I was in school, it was called "health class." Putting aside the various euphemisms that have been adopted over the years, it's essentially sex education.

Upon learning that subject is coming up, wise and dedicated parents are going to investigate the curriculum to see what their child is going to be taught. That's exactly what this student's mother did. She asked the teacher for more details, and along with an assurance that the teacher's personal beliefs would not play a role, she was given a list of subtopics including puberty, reproductive systems, sexually transmitted diseases, abstinence, birth control, sexual orientation, and gender identity. She was also invited to take a look at the curriculum if she wanted greater detail—an offer she accepted.

As it turns out, the curriculum ("Rights, Respect, Responsibility: A K-12 Sexuality Education Curriculum") is being used throughout the district and was produced by the far-left political advocacy organization Advocates for Youth. It is a great (which is to say terrible) example of the way hyper-progressive political ideologues team up with public educators to weaponize our schools against our children and any parents who aren't on board with radical Left's agenda.

Hidden Indoctrination Is Real

Now, the list of subtopics the teacher gave certainly contained some red flags for Christians, conservatives, and others concerned with the West's moral decay. More interesting, however, were the items that weren't listed but showed up in the curriculum nonetheless—abortion, for example. In the lesson "Great Expectations: Signs and Symptoms of Pregnancy," consider what teachers are instructed by the curriculum to tell students regarding pregnancy:

Say to the students, 'Once a person confirms they are pregnant, they need to decide whether they are going to have the baby and become a parent, have the baby and let someone adopt it, or end the pregnancy (at its earliest stage). The second two options are available for a number of reasons, including that the pregnant person may not feel they would be able to take care of a baby because of their age or life circumstances.'

The statement doesn't explicitly argue in favor of abortion. The word itself doesn't even show up anywhere in the lesson. One might even claim it's neutral in that it offers both abortion and adoption as choices. Nevertheless, it frames the issue in a way that brings the entire pro-abortion mindset in through the backdoor—without argument, without evidence, and without even the acknowledgment that any controversy on the subject exists.

To say that a "pregnant person" (we'll get to that in a moment) has to decide whether "to have the baby and become a parent" presumes that an expectant mother is not already a parent, and that she does not already have a baby. It's a rhetorical sleight of hand meant to obscure the reality that abortion is a grisly decision mothers make regarding the baby they already have.

The second deception is that the curriculum frames the lifecycle of a pregnancy as though abortion were just one of the natural outcomes. Entirely missing are any of the factual details on exactly how abortion ends a pregnancy—by deliberately killing a helpless and innocent human being. It's like teaching that death is just a natural part of life when you're talking about assassination.

Sure, like pregnancy, human lives "end," but glossing over the moral weight that comes with deliberately choosing to end lives is fundamentally dishonest. Presenting the existence of another human being as some kind of innocuous consumer choice—"You can click 'okay' to proceed or 'cancel' to end your pregnancy"—is reprehensible. But then, while the teacher might have excluded her own views, Advocates for Youth are happy to force their radical ideas on vulnerable students at taxpayer expense.

'Inclusive of All Genders and Gender Identities'

The third deception, of course, is found in all the really awkward language that occurs whenever you would expect to see gendered speech.

Both biology and uniform human experience show that women are the only humans who get pregnant, leaving only activists and fake news to tell us to ignore our lying eyes. Yet the curriculum on pregnancy is filled with grammatically odd phrases all meant to avoid acknowledging the concrete fact that maternity belongs exclusively to women. This is a deliberate choice, for the curriculum explains:

Language is really important and we've intentionally been very careful about our language throughout this curriculum. You may notice language throughout the curriculum that seems less familiar – using the pronoun 'they' instead of 'her' or 'him', using gender neutral names in scenarios and role-plays and referring to 'someone with a vulva' vs. a girl or woman. This is intended to make the curriculum inclusive of all genders and gender identities. You will need to determine for yourself how much and how often you can do this in your own school and classroom and should make adjustments accordingly.

So not only is the curriculum also laying the groundwork for trans advocacy, it's also instructing the teachers to promote it this way as much as they can get away with—another hallmark of deliberate dishonesty. All without argument, in the shadows of deceptive rhetoric designed to promote the new proliferation of meaningless genders as an unquestioned assumption.

It even goes further than that. Any suspicions a parent might have upon learning his or her child's school is teaching about gender identity are confirmed by examining the curriculum. In the lesson "Blue is for Boys, Pink is for Girls... Or Are They?," the class is instructed to compile a list of stereotypes for boys and girls. Next, they're told to come up with exceptions to those stereotypes that they've seen and discuss them, noting how the treatment of exceptions can make people feel.

From there, the teacher tells them "There are also people who don't identify as boys or girls, but rather as transgender or gender queer. The[sic] means that even if they were called a boy or a girl at birth and may have body parts that are typically associated with being a boy or a girl, on the inside, they feel differently." The rhetorical impression this is supposed to give is quite clear: Penises are merely "typically associated with" boys just as "be[ing] the one to ask the girl out" is typically associated with boys.

A boy who likes ballet is "called a punk" just as a baby born with a penis was "called a boy at birth." Stereotypes are, of course, naturally fluid, as are a person's feelings about those stereotypes. Biological sex, however, is not. Conflating the two in this way is an intellectually dishonest way of proselytizing students who attend school to be educated.

This Mom Was the Only One to Review the Curricula

After a handful of forms, emails, and meetings, my friend's granddaughter was exempted from this portion of the class through her parents' diligence. The rest of the class was not. When the mother reviewed the curriculum in person, she was the only parent at the school who had even come in to look at it. Their vigilance is, unfortunately, all too rare, even among conservatives who know there's a big problem in our schools, and most parents stay in the dark.

This particular kind of abuse of public education for political advocacy is not the sort of thing that parents would even find out about without examining the curriculum themselves. A typical middle school student who is presented this material isn't going to come home at the end of the day and tell her parents her teacher was advocating abortion, even though that's exactly what this curriculum does. A typical middle school student is likely to come away from these lessons very confused about gender, but not likely to realize she or he has just been preached to.

We want our children to learn critical thinking when they go to school—not to already need it to protect themselves from indoctrination at the hands of their teachers. In public education, no matter where individual school, faculty, and staff may stand—and yes, good people work within it—the overarching system is the enemy of your child's moral development.

In some cases, it really is just a matter of perverted teachers. My own high school sex ed teacher told the class he and his wife used our anonymous questions for sexual inspiration and particularly enjoyed someone's question about anal sex. The larger danger, however, is that so much of our public education system has been co-opted for political purposes.

Even a good teacher is pretty limited when he or she has to keep personal views separated from

a mandated curriculum like this. Whether it's a well-known area of concern like sex education or just random lessons on things like radical environmentalism and open borders, too many educators are more concerned with social engineering than with educating.

In 2018, all competent parents know they need to be vigilant—to read the notifications from the school, meet with their child's teachers, familiarize themselves with the curriculum, help the kids with their homework, and so forth. Even in the best of times, we should do these things simply to be involved in their education.

But the politically and morally stilted nature of our schools creates a greater urgency. It raises a deeper question that too few parents ask: If you have to police your school to this extent just to make sure they're not teaching your sons and daughters a toxic amorality, should you really be entrusting your children to them in the first place?

<http://thefederalist.com/2018/05/03/schools-quietly-indoctrinate-kids-abortion-transgenderism/>

What's all this fuss about Self-Identifying?

Posted on January 15, 2018 by Rev. Paul R. Harris

I think the fuss started when the leader of the Spokane chapter of the NAACP stepped down after self-identifying as a black person. You can, indeed, should and must, self-identify your gender, and a pox on your house if you are only binary in this regard. You have to accept the full scope of identity captured in the acronym, while new to me as little as 3 years ago now rolls off the tongue, LGBTQ. And why is there such a fuss over this? Pastors have been dealing with this for centuries.

People who never go to church, don't belong to a church, avoid them like the plague, self-identify as Christians. It happened to Augustine. A Roman nobleman said he really was a Christian, and Augustine replied that he would never believe that unless he saw him in church.

Not me. I've let stand on my rolls the names of those who have never darkened the doors of the church since I have been the pastor. But they self-identify as members, and they are golden.

I am just so cotton-pickin' flexible in this regard. People – usually visitors or family members

of my members – say to me, “I go to” – or even “I am a member of” – such and such church, but I am a Lutheran at heart.” Here's your sign. You have self-identified as Lutheran; ergo, you are one.

I'm convinced the rise of self-identifying in our society has to do with the selfie and by extension the technology that lets each of us be the god of our domain. We have a Facebook page complete with our wall. We have individual email addresses. We have self-designed screen names and identities.

Yes, the rise of the self-identifying craze, which is a descendant of finding your thing, or “bag” of the 70s which in-turn came from the identity crisis of the 60s, is certainly multiplied by technology, but this apple hasn't fallen far from the Tree of the unknown fruit.

At the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil, Eve and then Adam decided they could self-identify as gods. The very act of daring to self-identify as anything is to behave as God. For only He can say, “I am that I am.” He must tell us who we are.

Unless He calls us saints we remain damned sinners. Unless He calls us sheep we remain goats. Unless He calls us “mine” we remain the Devil's.

He calls us either male or female by virtue of creation. To be sure, in a fallen world there are some, very, very few, who have male and female parts. This is a medical problem not a self-identifying problem. Using a rare medical condition to shape our thinking and our society is as wise as using dwarfism or gigantism to do so.

Back to the real topic at hand. What's all the fuss with self-identifying? It has been going on since the Fall. But you know what type of self-identifying the Lord reserves special woe for? Those who self-identify as prophets when He has not called them as such.

The Eww Factor Isn't it

Posted on May 7, 2018 by Rev. Paul R. Harris

Joe Dallas, former homosexual activist, now married, father, and family advocate calls it the “Ick Factor” (*Speaking of Homosexuality*, 32). “Eww” is what comes to my mine. Choose whatever exclamation you will, Christians need to recognize that when it comes to homosexuality the

Christian will probably have “an exaggerated emotional aversion” (Ibid.). Dallas points out, “Some distaste at the image or concept of homosexual sex is to be expected and doesn’t constitute homophobia but, instead, a natural aversion to unnatural behavior” (Ibid.). That describes what the Eww Factor is. I want to tell you what it isn’t.

The Eww Factor is not the sin of homosexuality. In the early 80s, some conservative pastors took this approach. They spoke literally and graphically of the sin of homosexuality. They had statistics about number of partners, disease rates, and of course details of the acts themselves. They would preach this from the pulpit. They achieved their goal of getting people to say, “Eww!” But having brought people to a sense of “eww” you have not brought them to the sin of homosexuality. This they could have and should have learned from the Pro-Life movement.

The movement to use the Eww Factor for the Pro-Life cause probably peaked in the 90’s when the body of an aborted unborn baby was held up at a Pro-Life rally. What led up to this was graphic pictures of aborted babies and videos of abortions in progress. You really can’t look at these and not go “Eww!” However, disgust with the process or even the result of abortion doesn’t mean you see the sin of abortion.

What happened in the case of abortion? Pro-Life people showed graphic, bloody pictures. Anti-Life people showed hermetic clinics, caring doctors and nurses. And now with the abortion pill, the Eww Factor is substantially reduced. The sin is not, but if you have equated the Eww Factor with the Sin it will be for you.

This is what happened with the gay movement. They hammered relentlessly against the Eww Factor. The Eww activists painted a picture of promiscuity the gay activists pictured long term relationships. The Eww activists showed violent, quick trysts; the gay activists pictured romance. And with the entertainment industry solidly in their corner there was no way the Eww enthusiast could paint pictures as fast as Hollywood and Reality TV did. Watch *13 Reasons Why*. If there is a hero in this portrayal of teen angst it’s the gay guy. Watching pre-teen movies and mainstream sit-coms from the 80s through the aughts, you saw the gay character go from the weird one you sympathized with to the all-wise Yoda character who had it all together. Now LGBT has flowered and fruited (really no pun intended) into Q. Now the gay character is portrayed in all his or her queerness – think of drag queens – but still having the status, the gravitas, the *savoir faire* of the original mainstream gay character.

The Eww Factor has completely been eradicated from all things LGBTQ, but Scripture doesn’t condemn homosexuality in all its flavors and abortion in all its forms because they were disgusting but because they were sins against God’s holy will as expressed in the 6th and 5th Commandments respectively.

If we tie any sin to an Eww Factor rather than to God’s rejection, we tie the acceptance or rejection, the rightness or wrongness of it to how men feel rather than to what God wills. What men feel can change, does change, but God’s will does not.

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Trinity Te Deum is published bi-monthly. **Deadline for all articles is the 15th of the odd months.**
All articles must be approved by Rev. Paul R. Harris. Articles with no author are written by him.

August 2018

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THURS	FRI	SAT
JULY 29	JULY 30	July 31	1	2	3	4
MID SUMMERS MEAL 12:00 PM						
5	PASTOR	AT	HIGHER	THINGS	TACOMA	
	6	7	8	9	10	11
SERT MEETING			Romans RESUMES! 7:15 PM			
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
			Romans 7:15 PM			
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
FIRESIDE CHAT 9:15-10:10 AM			Romans 7:15 PM			
26	27	28	29	30	31	
			Romans 7:15 PM			

September 2018

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THURS	FRI	SAT
						1
2	3	4	5	6	7	8
		VOTERS 7PM	Romans 7:15 PM			
9	10	11	12	13	14	15
PARENT'S ORIENTATION TO JR CONFIRMATION 12:00 PM	JR CONFIRMATION 5 PM	Elders Meeting 6:30 PM	Romans 7:15 PM			
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
	JR CONFIRMATION 5 PM		Romans 7:15 PM			
23	24	25	26	27	28	29
	JR CONFIRMATION 5 PM		Romans 7:15 PM			
30						