

# Trinity Te Deum

The official newsletter for Trinity Lutheran Church

Rev. Paul R. Harris – 512-453-3835 Church; 512-251-4204 Home  
Sunday School and Bible Study 9:15 AM – Divine Service 10:30 AM  
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## It Wasn't Just a Cartoon

Did you see the cartoon on the last page of the August/September newsletter? It shows church members in a meeting. The caption is: "I don't care who broke down the walls of Jericho! I move that we pay for it out of the general fund and charge it up to miscellaneous." It wasn't a joke.

Biblical illiteracy is rampant among us, and because I'm the pastor it's my fault. I test confirmation kids on their general Bible knowledge. They average around 50%. That's not passing even in the worst of public schools. I published that same test in the newsletter years ago in hopes of encouraging attendance in Bible class. Nothing happened: zip, nada, nothing.

To address the lack of basic Bible story knowledge among kids, I will be changing the Sunday School curriculum. When I came to Trinity thirteen years ago, I brought the program I had been using for the past eight years in Louisiana. It was the book *Advanced Bible History* published by our Synod in 1938. When I arrived at Trinity, the then Sunday School teachers didn't want just a book

of Bible stories, they wanted Sunday School material with teacher guides, crafts, pictures, etc. We for many years used Wisconsin Synod material, and then, when the LCMS started a better curriculum we switched to theirs. The weakness in my mind remains. Kids are not told and retold and told again the story. They are asked how they feel about it or to apply it. What they need is to remember it.

My old people Bible study have graciously agreed to be the guinea pigs for the new Sunday School curriculum. It's based on *One Hundred Bible Stories* published in 1998 by our Synod. I am going to go through this book with them.

Of course the elephant in the room is: where are the teachers going to come from? The Lord knows; I don't. Right now Jim Lesko has been faithfully teaching the high school class for over 5 years. My wife has taught the upper grades since we came here, and now my daughter teaches the lower grades. The only thing I've ever done to recruit teachers is to say five years ago that my wife had been teaching for 20 years and I would like her not to have to any longer. Only one person, an elder, offered to take over.

Why don't I try to recruit more teachers? I'll tell you

why. I'm tired of begging those standing around the marketplace to accept the privilege of working in the Lord's vineyard. (If you don't know the Biblical referent here, it proves my point above.) You didn't make me tired; my last congregation did. My sermon notes that have accumulated over the years sometimes have old bulletins. I noticed that over many years, during many times of the year at my Louisiana congregation I was begging for Sunday School teachers. I resolved not to do that here.

It's true that our Large Catechism says that parents are to teach their kids at home. (Since so few bring them here, putting the best construction on it, I assume you are teaching them yourself.) If they can't do that, they are to bring them to the Lord's House. It's true that since at the beginning virtually every LCMS church had a day school, we didn't have Sunday Schools, although I grew up going to both. It's true that the Sunday School concept came from the Baptist/Reformed side of Christianity. It's also true that an LCMS church without a Sunday School would be an anomaly.

Well the future of our Sunday School is in your hands. Should this be handled like the

Old Testament Church handled a body found in an open field? There's another Bible reference challenge.

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## **Why We Don't Commune Those Who Believe in Open Communion?**

This is first and foremost a matter of pastoral care. If I asked an LCMS Lutheran if they believed in infant Baptism and they answered "No," you know I could not commune them. Well those who believe Christians believing different doctrines should commune together at the same altar are saying not only the doctrine of infant Baptism doesn't matter, but neither does the doctrine of creation, the Real Presence, or any other biblical doctrine.

Second, this is a matter of confessing Jesus clearly. Did Jesus speak out of both sides of His mouth? Did Jesus say both babies are to be baptized and they are not? Did Jesus say women should be pastors and they should not; the world was both created in 6 twenty-four hour days and it evolved over 6 billion years; His Body and Blood are both present and absent on His altar? If we admit those who believe in open Communion to our altar we are saying the Jesus on our altar has said contradictory things. Fallen, sinful men can and do often contradict themselves. The sinless, holy, God in flesh and blood cannot.

Third, this is a matter of hypocrisy. If we commune those who believe in open Communion, we are making them and us hypocrites. That is they really believe Communion is to be open to all Christians, or all Lutherans, or all who believe in the Real Presence, but they are communing at an altar that publicly teaches the direct opposite. They believe one thing and do another, and if we commune them we are doing the same. Likewise, if you believe Communion is only to be shared by those who share the same faith, who believe the same things, then you can't commune at open Communion altars without becoming a hypocrite. You believe one thing about the doctrine of Communion and practice contrary to that belief.

Here are the three reasons we don't commune LCMS Lutherans who believe in open Communion: It is unfaithful pastoral care to do so. It makes it seem that the holy, Lord Jesus teaches contradictory things. It makes hypocrites out of us and them.

Finally, rather than feeling defensive for practicing closed Communion as the LCMS has since her beginnings 165 years ago, those people who profess to be members of the LCMS and yet believe in open Communion should be asked to defend their remaining in a church body that publicly denies what they believe.

Do you know the problem with the last paragraph? It was absolutely true until the 2004 Synodical convention. At that

convention, the Synodical president gave his report where he described open and closed Communion as only a difference in practice not doctrine. That report was accepted by the convention. Now you know one of the six reasons we have been in a State of Confession over against the LCMS since 2005.

### **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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## **Advent Begins Wednesday, November 28, 7:30 PM**

Advent as a season of preparation for the Nativity originated in France. Its observance was general by the time of the second Council of Tours, 567. In some places six or seven Sundays were included. When Rome adopted Advent, she limited the period to four Sundays as we now have. It was probably not until the 13th century that Advent was universally recognized as the beginning of the Church Year which up until that time had begun with the Festival of the Annunciation, March 25, or in some places at Christmas. While Advent never attained the extreme penitential character of Lent, it has always been regarded as a season of repentance and of solemn anticipation and preparation for the coming of Christ. [Adapted from Reed, *The Lutheran Liturgy*, 465-466.] Three comings of Christ are remembered in Advent: the first coming, the incarnation of the Second Person of the Trinity in the womb of the Virgin Mary; the Second Coming of Jesus at the end of the world to judge it; and His continual coming among us in Baptism, the Word, and Holy Communion. The Advent wreath is of relatively recent origin, the 19th century. Only

two candles have historically represented something specific, the pink one and the white one. Lit on the Third Sunday the pink one stands for joy. On this Sunday, the penitential theme is supposed to be lighter. Tinged with the white of the Christ candle, the purple of penitence shades to the pink of a joyous rose.

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## **Donate Food to Say Thanks**

As we do every year, we will be collecting food in the month of November for those in our own area who need help putting food on the table. This year we will be giving it to the Capital Area Food Bank of Austin. The donation boxes will go out Sunday November 4<sup>th</sup> and stay out till Thanksgiving Eve service November 21. Below is information provided by Capital Area Food Bank. This year because are food will be distributed to individuals smaller packaging is recommended.

### **What should I donate?**

- Healthy, non-perishable food
- Items with intact, unopened, consumer or commercial packaging
- Items with non-breakable packaging (no glass, please)
- Food within the expiration date on the packaging

### **What are the most-requested items?**

- Canned meats like tuna, stew and chili (pop-tops preferred)
  - Canned vegetables
  - Pasta & pasta sauce
  - Beans
  - Healthy cereals
  - Peanut butter
- 

## **Pastor Harris' Four Point Plan for Growth**

I'll bet you thought I didn't have one. I do. Here it is:

- Be on time.
- Be here every Sunday.
- Be in Bible class.
- Be having devotions at home.

I've announced this plan before. These have always been my goals for the sheep the Lord has entrusted to me. Let's go through them one by one.

**Be on time.** Please note unlike some pastors and churches I don't make a big issue of those people who come in late. I don't direct the ushers to make them wait in the narthex until a hymn is being sung. I don't stop the liturgy as they sneak in. I teach punctuality by being on time. I try to start every Bible class, every meeting, every Divine Service on time. Sometimes I fail. Sometimes you will fail but faithfulness in big things, says Jesus, starts with faithfulness in small.

### **Be here every Sunday.**

When I've asked people about their poor attendance, people have responded. "I won't (or can't) promise you I will be there every Sunday." I wonder do such people have any understanding what a Commandment of God is. Do they think they can say, "I won't promise you I won't ever murder someone?" Or it's okay to say, "I can't promise I will always be faithful to my spouse." Besides whenever they were confirmed, every Sunday attendance is exactly what they promised. You are not an every Sunday attendee if you have to decide each week whether or not to come to church.

### **Be in Bible class.**

Welcome to the next level. When you call a pastor, you make him promise to preach and teach faithfully God's Word, and you promise to be there when he does. Most of you who have no health issues are breaking this promise when it comes to any sort of Bible study. If you actually think, a 15 minute sermon once a week, which is not in-depth Bible study, actually out-fits you, prepares you, arms you, with the Word of God, you are sorely mistaken. If you actually think a 15 minute sermon once a week offsets the hours of teaching the devil, the world, and your flesh are doing, you are gravely misguided. If you will not sit at my feet and learn, then you start praying today that the Lord send you a shepherd you will learn from.

**Be having devotions at home.** The concept of the family altar has all but been lost among us. At one time, most LCMS Lutherans would have had one. But don't try this at home till you have passed through the first three levels. You don't want to end up substituting your private devotions for public worship. If you do this apart from age or illness, I guarantee you that you will end up a church of one. You will be a denomination unto yourself with your own creed, your own faith, your own religion, and it won't be a one faithful to Scriptures or the Catechism you were taught.

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## **Hanging on His Words**

*And when he drew near and saw the city, he wept over it, saying, "Would that you, even you, had known on this day the things that make for peace! But now they are hidden from your eyes. For the days will come upon you, when your enemies will set up a barricade around you and surround you and hem you in on every side and tear you down to the ground, you and your children within you. And they will not leave one stone upon another in you, because you did not know the time of your visitation." And he entered the temple and began to drive out those who sold, saying to them, "It is written, 'My house shall be a house of prayer,' but you have made it a den of robbers." And he was teach-*

*ing daily in the temple. The chief priests and the scribes and the principal men of the people were seeking to destroy him, but they did not find anything they could do, for all the people were hanging on his words. Luke 19:41-48 ESV*

In the Gospel reading for the 10<sup>th</sup> Sunday after Trinity we read the familiar account of Jesus weeping over Jerusalem and then cleansing the temple. Almost lost in this reading is the last verse. The chief priests and scribes and "principle men of the people" wanted to destroy Jesus, but they couldn't do it. Why? All the people were hanging on His words.

What words are you hanging on to? The Olympics have just ended. Record numbers hung on the words each night of the prime time telecast. School is set to begin all across our country. Students will be hanging on the words of their teachers and professors in order to learn and earn a good grade. Political races are heating up and we hang on the words of the ads and debates while politicians hang on the words of the pollsters and the "undecided." Fall sports are gearing up. We hang on the words of the sportscasters, the players hang on the words of the coaches and the coaches hang on the words of the Administration and Alumni.

But this is no mere seasonal activity. As a drought ravages much of the Midwest, people are hanging on to the words of the daily forecast, hoping for rain and relief from the oppres-

sive heat. When winter arrives, students will hang on the words of the weatherman, hoping and praying for a snow day. As prices of everything from groceries to utilities to gas at the pump fluctuate, we hang on the latest news as we plan to make ends meet. The new graduate hangs on the words of the one who might offer a job while people in a relationship hang on words of love and commitment. We hang on words all the time; but what words do we hang on to?

In the Lutheran Church we confess that the Word of God is important, so important in fact, that we promise to base all of our teaching and practice on that Word. It is the nature of sin to say one thing and do another. How easy it is to confess the importance of the God's Words while at the same time hanging on the words of culture or popularity instead. We have all set up false idols and pretended that they can somehow speak words of life and contentment. We have spurned the words of forgiveness and salvation while hanging on the words of the devil, the world, and our own sinful flesh.

This is precisely why the Word became flesh and made His dwelling among us. Into this world of false words and bogus promises entered Jesus, the very Word of Life. He endured mocking and insults as He walked the way of sorrow and suffering that only He could walk, speaking at the perfect time and remaining silent at the perfect time. People thought the

Word was silenced forever on Good Friday as He bled and died our death, but three days later Christ Jesus rose victorious over sin and the grave. It is finished! He is risen!

All the benefits of Good Friday and Easter have been poured out to us in the Baptismal font. The Word attached to simple water gives us new life in Christ. The Word attached to bread and wine gives us strength for life's journey as we feast on His body and blood. The Word reveals His will to us in the Holy Bible, the inspired, inerrant, infallible Word of God.

When problems arise in our lives, what words do we hang on to? Words that give a quick fix or words of the latest fad, or the Words of God? When problems arise in our beloved Synod, what words do we hang on to? Words of temporary unity or even words of constitution and bylaws, or the Words of God?

God's Word calls all of us to repentance. God's Word calls all of us to examine what and why we are hanging on words that offer no forgiveness and nothing of lasting value, at the expense of the words of Christ. God's Word calls us to be honest about the problems and divisions among us and to let God's Word have its way with us. It can be a frightening thing to relinquish personal pride and power and control and hang on the Words of God. Frightening but freeing!

*So Jesus said to the Jews*

*who had believed him, "If you abide in my word, you are truly my disciples, and you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free." They answered him, "We are offspring of Abraham and have never been enslaved to anyone. How is it that you say, 'You will become free'?" Jesus answered them, "Truly, truly, I say to you, everyone who practices sin is a slave to sin. The slave does not remain in the house forever; the son remains forever. So if the Son sets you free, you will be free indeed. John 8:31-36 ESV*

It is my prayer that we in the LCMS would be united in Christ and truly hanging on His words.

In Christ,  
Rev. Clint K. Poppe  
Chairman, [ACELC](#)

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## Ministers in Skirts

By Douglas Jones

Believers very rarely fight strategic battles. When provoked, they sometimes fight effectively and well in tactical skirmishes, but do not do well outside their tactical radius. When some outrage can no longer be ignored, battle may be joined and the outrage attacked. But scarcely any believers see a pattern in the general mayhem. Very few generals can stand on a hill and consider all the movements of all the troops.

In our cultural wars, this is why the issue of women in the pulpit, or on the elder board, has

been handled the way it has been—which is to say, ineffectively. Many good folks have dedicated themselves to fighting this thing as though it were a tactical issue. But it is not. In the current climate of unbelief, the proper exegesis of the Pauline teaching on the role of women in the Church will never settle anything.

The words seem plain enough. "Let the woman learn in silence with all subjection. But I suffer not a woman to teach, nor to usurp authority over the man, but to be in silence. For Adam was first formed, then Eve. And Adam was not deceived, but the woman being deceived was in the transgression. Notwithstanding she shall be saved in childbearing, if they continue in faith and charity and holiness with sobriety" (1 Tim. 2:11-15). But here is the catch: the words are plain only to those who are willing for them to be plain. For those reckoned among the unwilling, the passage is full of mysteries.

Because woman is the glory of man, a wife should go to the local congregation with a covering of hair, a humble woman's glory. And why is this? "For the man is not of the woman; but the woman of the man. Neither was the man created for the woman; but the woman for the man" (1 Cor. 11:8-9). It may fill all us moderns with regret, but such teaching cannot in any way be reconciled with feminism of any kind. But for those in the Church who want to conduct some kind of dialogue with

feminism, the words present an exegetical obstacle course. How can we keep this wording, and thus remain evangelical, and at the same time get around what it says, and thus be theologically trendy? We need to look at the original Greek!

But the existence of debate within the Church tells us far more about the muddiness of our hearts than it does about the obscurity of any text. Those Christians who *do* see what these passages say will frequently be sucked into a tactical debate because they foolishly believe that their opponents have accepted the authority of the text. But this is not the case at all. Evangelical feminists have not accepted the (patriarchal) authority of the text; they are simply at that early stage of subversion where open defiance would be counterproductive of their purposes.

So what is our strategic position? How has this debate gotten a foothold? Why is there such an interest, in evangelical circles, to admit women into the leadership of the church? The answer is that we do not want feminine leadership; we want *more* feminine leadership. The men in our pulpits for many years have been simply jury-rigged women; when the request comes to bring in the real thing, on what principle will the request be denied? We cannot say that we must have masculinity in the pulpit because we do not have that now.

For well over a century in the American church, the norms of spirituality have been the

standards set by a saccharine Victorian feminism. In the early part of the nineteenth century, like two mobs converging on a quiet crossroads, two revolutions merged to produce this effect, and we have not yet recovered any understanding of what life in the Church was like before this happened to us.<sup>1</sup>

The first was the rise of a sentimental and domestic feminism. Prior to the industrial revolution, the role of women in America was at the center of the economy. Women managed the home, manufactured the cloth, processed the food, fed the entire family, *etc.* But with the rise of industrialized wealth, the role of women shifted from producing to consuming. The women were, in effect, disestablished and became decorative. Middle class women became a new leisure class, with money to spend, and time to fill. And one of the things they began to do was to write and read sappy novels.

The second factor was the sentimental revolt of ministers against the strictures of theological Calvinism. The older Calvinist establishment was perceived as austere and harsh (and in the Yankee culture of New England, it frequently was). This revolt had manifestations on both the right-wing and the left-wing. The left-wing anti-Calvinists were the Unitarians, who captured Harvard in 1805. The right-wing anti-Calvinists were the revivalists, typified by leaders such as Charles Finney, who were greatly swelled with a humanistic, democratic spirit

which they all thought was the Holy Ghost.

All this occurred while the churches of New England were in the process of being disestablished, no longer receiving funding from tax revenues. More important than the loss of tax money, however, was the fact that these Congregational clergymen, long accustomed to their role as a central part of the Establishment, found themselves outsiders, now having to compete for parishioners, just like the lowly Baptists and frontier Methodists.

The women with time on their hands provided a ready audience for these ministers, and the anti-Calvinist ministers provided a suitably sentimental gospel for the women accustomed to their feminized literary entertainment. So an alliance was formed between the clergymen and the women, and a new spiritual norm was established within the Church.

All these developments, centered largely in New England, were not followed for the most part by the more conservative and agrarian South. But the new regime of feminization came to the Southern church as well. The War Between the States decimated the strong masculine leadership of the South for all intents and purposes. The men were no longer leading because the men were dead. Since that time (exaggerating only slightly) southern churches have been run by three women and the pastor.

The literature of the nineteenth century was not reticent in propagating this new sentimental view of the gospel. In these stories, we see an iron regime of domesticity-feminine tastes and values are set up as *the* standard of godliness and as a genuine regenerative influence. The unregenerate man in the stories was of course worldly wise, and something of a rake, unless he is converted to . . . what? Until he was converted to see it her way, and came around to bask in the gospel of the feminine aura.

We are so besotted that current "traditional values" Christians are actually reprinting and circulating this nineteenth-century treacle as though it represented a biblical view of the world. But Elsie Dinsmore represents nothing of the kind. She simply stands for an early form of feminism, and conservatives who hail her piety are revealing that they do not know what has happened to the Church. Another example is the ancestor of our moronic WWJD bracelet—that book entitled *In His Steps*. The book was in many ways typical of the genre; the divine influence is mediated through a woman. Men can be converted by listening to a pretty voice. It reminds me of a time in boot camp when we were all entertained at chapel by a visiting singing group of lovely women. When the altar call was given, one poor sailor, thoroughly revived, went forward over the tops of the pews.

As a result of all these factors, a standard of feminine piety has been accepted as norma-

tive in the Church as the standard for all the saints, both men and women. Clergymen, trying to live up to their reputation as the third sex, have labored mightily to be what they need to be in order to maintain this standard. But try as they might, men are no good at being women. However hard they try, their attempts ring hollow. The pressure is therefore on to make room for those who *can* be feminine in leadership more convincingly: women. When the standards of Christian leadership are all feminine, the individuals most obviously qualified to be Christian leaders will be women. This poses a dilemma—why should we exclude women from leadership when they are so obviously qualified for what we call leadership? At that point we divide, with some calling for them to be included, with other reluctant conservatives admitting that women *could* do as good a job, or better, but still, we have to submit to this arbitrary pronouncement of Paul. For now.

When the background is understood, it explains many things about the contemporary Church. It explains why Promise Keepers, a masculine renewal movement, was so easily diverted into a maudlin and weepy sentimentality. It explains why ministers cannot teach on certain subjects from the pulpit. It explains why Christians cannot articulate why women in combat is an abomination. It explains why the masculine virtues of courage, initiative, responsibility, and strength are in such short supply. We

cannot resist the demand to let pretty women lead us for the simple reason that we are currently being led by pretty men.

So a skirmish here or there about women's role in the Church will never settle anything. This is why this particular debate, or that particular controversy, will always end, once again, in a stalemate, with the cause of the feminists slightly advanced. The pattern will repeat itself, again and again, until the conservatives finally cave in. They must cave because the feminist opposition is consistently able to appeal to shared assumptions and presuppositions. Until *that* changes, nothing significant will change. And when it changes, we will see a strategic battle joined.

We have not failed because our exegetical skills are rusty. We have failed because we have forgotten what masculine piety even looks like. When it occasionally appears among us, we are entirely flumoxed by it. But God gave the pattern of feminine piety to complement, not to rule. Headship has been given to men. When such headship is challenged, everything is out of joint, and nothing but repentance can put things right.

For a final example, in more ways than one, consider last year's evangelical attempts to sandpaper the Bible to a finer and more delicate texture. The reader may recall the situation was an attempt by the folks responsible for the NIV to alter the language of Scripture-fixing some of those pesky and trou-

blesome gender spots. When the plan became public, there was a dust-up and howls of protest from all over. And the tactical skirmish was won by the good guys . . . for the present.

But with regard to the underlying issues, *nothing changed*. With regard to the contributing cultural pressures, nothing changed. With regard to the state of the Church, nothing changed. So when we consider all this, and the condition of the modern Church, there is really no reason to object to any such modifications in the NIV. There is really no reason to object to women in the pulpit of evangelical churches.

This is because modern evangelicalism has been covenantally castrated for well over a hundred years. It is high time they got some ministers, and a Bible, to match their effeminate condition.  
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## Road Map for the Emergent Church

Posted on [July 31, 2012](#) by [Rev. Paul R. Harris](#)

The title should read “Insurgent Church” for that is what is among us and has been ever since they first went out from us ( [I John 2:19](#)).

“All the major religions of the western world went through massive internal upheavals dur-

*ing the last century [the 20<sup>th</sup> in the book], designed by the various church higher-ups to make the churches more appealing to the masses. But the result was exactly the opposite. Church attendance went on falling, so did vocations. Only in smaller or more affluent communities were there any gains that may have lasted. Now they blame education of the masses, they blame increased prosperity of the masses, they blame television, they blame slackened morals – you name it, they blame it. There’s a bit of truth in it all. But the chief blame lies within the churches themselves, for failing to be flexible, for changing outwardly while refusing to change inwardly, or for changing too late. Many people had gained an awareness of their own intrinsic goodness, and maybe that came out of education, out of a broadening world. People didn’t want to hear any more how evil they were, nor were their lives so grindingly poor that the prospect of living in paradise in the next life was all that kept them going in this one. They had more, they wanted more, they felt entitled to more. In this life! Yet everyone betrayed them. Their churches, by not even trying to understand what they needed. Their governments, by curtailing their liberties, curbing their spending power, and subjecting them to all the nightmares of nuclear war threats. That, incidentally, is where you’ll find if you dig, the only upsurges in church attendance – when the possibility*

*of nuclear war increased. But people shouldn't have to turn to God out of fear! They should turn to God as naturally as a child turns to his mother'" (95-96)*

*"I sat down with the poor wretch, and I talked. I talked and I talked and I talked. Trying to help him find the truth in understanding, and a God he could accept'" (168).*

*"We agreed that we couldn't put a religious [person] in this role [of new Messiah] because of two factors. The first, that a brand of religion prejudices all those who don't share that particular brand against the religious [person]. The second, that we are in the midst of a terminal failure of existing religions to grasp and hold the feelings and the minds of the people'" (172).*

*"Most people are not convinced they're wicked and won't be convinced they're wicked. They live largely decent lives, and they've come to expect credit for that'" (174).*

*"Organized churches are human institutions, and the best evidence for that is the fact that each and every one of them claims to be the only true*

*church, the only God-guided church. But the people for whom they exist these days are skeptical, and if they accept a church at all, it tends to be on their terms rather than the church's'" (174).*

*"If this man can offer the people a hope of divine purpose without railroading them into a formal religious persuasion they apparently don't want, I can't see the harm in it'" (266).*

*"Find solace in God, though not necessarily in any formal religion'" (53).*

The above quotes come from a novel by Colleen McCullough entitled *A Creed for the Third Millennium*. If you recognize the author, it's because she wrote *The Thorn Birds*: A popular novel of the 70s and a miniseries of the 80s by that name. *A Creed* was written in 1985. It's a dystopian novel about the millennium we have recently begun. It is prescient in that it saw the development of the outward church in 21<sup>st</sup> America. It is prophesy after the fact in that dating, cohabitating, marrying the spirit of an age has always been the way of those who would redeem the times using the wisdom of men.

Go to any emergent churches website and you will find the spirit expressed in these quotes. Institutional religion has wronged the people. Doctrine divides; deeds unite. We have to start from scratch. Come to our church to talk about religion, God, Jesus, salvation, etc. You're opinion is as valid and as good as ours.

The sky isn't falling; the church is and it's time to panic, to try anything to get people into the pew, to pay the bills, to become successful. They are "thinking outside the box" long, long after that expression had become cliché.

If our Lord remains the truth, and He does, if His Word remains sharp and living, and it does, then Matthew 9:36 is still true: there are still sheep out there harassed and helpless because they have no true shepherd. The harvest is still plentiful and the labors are still few. Rather than adopt the meliorist's point of view adopt that of Matthew's and pray the Lord of the harvest to send forth laborers.

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SUN	MON 1	TUE 2	WED 3	THURS 4	FRI 5	SAT 6
	5 PM JR. Confirmation		<b>PASTOR</b>	<b>ON</b>	<b>VACATION</b>	
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
			10 AM Bible Stories 7:15 Revelation II			
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
	5 PM JR. Confirmation	6:30 PM Budget Meeting	10 AM Bible Stories 7:15 Revelation II			
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
	5 PM JR. Confirmation		10 AM Bible Stories 7:15 Revelation II			
28	29	30	31			
Reformation Dinner	5 PM JR. Confirmation		10 AM Bible Stories NO Revelation II			

### November 2012

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THURS 1	FRI 2	SAT 3
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
	5 PM JR. Confirmation	6:30 PM Elders Meeting	10 AM Bible Stories 7:15 Revelation II			
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
	5 PM JR. Confirmation		10 AM Bible Stories 7:15 Revelation II			
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
	NO JR. Confirmation	7 PM Voters Meeting	7:30 PM Thanksgiving Eve Commu- ion Service			
25	26	27	28	29	30	
Church Decorating	5 PM JR. Confirmation		Advent Vespers 7:30 PM			