



The Reporter

June 2015

The Reporter

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“What Really Bothers Me?”

by Pastor Proeber

Last weekend I flew to Albany, New York, to attend the Confirmation of my god-son, and to visit with his family. The first part of the trip couldn't have been better. The weather was beautiful. The flight was smooth. The plane even landed ahead of schedule. All this was followed by a very pleasant visit with long time friends.

Sue and I have known Nancy and Alan since the early 1990's. The depth of our friendship was witnessed by their request to have us as the godparents for their three sons. I also had the privilege to baptize them. Although they have moved across the country, it has not diminished our friendship, nor does it hinder drop-in visits from time to time. So the weekend was filled with conversations, new experiences, as well as some exploration around Saratoga. There was also the Confirmation together with the opportunity to worship with the saints at Kings of Kings, Clifton Park (WELS).

The weekend came to a close much too quickly, and it was off to the air-

port with the hope the return trip would be as smooth as the arriving flight.

Unfortunately, Monday was cloudy and there were intermittent showers. A storm front had moved up the eastern seaboard and dropped almost three inches of rain. Still, there was no indication of any potential complications.

This changed when I checked the departure monitor in the airport. There the bright red letters caught my attention - cancelled. I immediately went to the ticket counter to investigate what happened.

The flight I should have boarded at 2:00 pm had been canceled because of the weather, however, there were two options to continue my return trip. One choice was to travel on Tuesday. The second was to rearrange my flights to go through Denver to LAX. I opted for the second one, because it would still get me back to Los Angeles and Santa Barbara on Monday.

The first flight to Baltimore was fine, after that everything changed. We

boarded the plane in Baltimore thinking we would be on our way to Denver on schedule. As we were waiting to leave the terminal, the plane's captain announced, we couldn't leave until we took on fuel. While it seemed simple enough, the refueling was undermined by a front which brought thunder, lightning, and a steady downpour. It was the thunder and lightning which resulted in a second announcement from the pilot. FAA regulations prohibited refueling during lightning. It wasn't a bother to deal with that, especially when you think about the potential consequences of jet fuel and lightning, or even a high level of static electricity which accompanies lightning.

As the storm lingered, I began to realize the window of opportunity to catch my connecting flight from Denver to Los Angeles was closing. Eventually that window closed and the sinking feeling set in—I may not get out of Baltimore. The sole light of hope was that the flight

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was only delayed and not canceled. After several hours the storm passed and we began the flight to Denver arriving at the terminal around 1:30 Tuesday morning. While not a horrible time to be up and around, the real complication was the next flight did not depart until 8:30 am. My only option was to find a comfortable chair and get some sleep. To make a long story short, I finally arrived in Santa Barbara around noon—tired and glad to be home.

I recount this story, not because my destination and travel plans were so exciting, but because there is a lesson for us. While I was dealing with the delays and complications of my trip, I witnessed people becoming really upset. The passengers were irritated. The pilot and crew were frustrated. In the end, the ticketing agents were overwhelmed. It was an interesting study in human nature. People became short with others. They raised their voices. Even their expectations became unrealistic demands. They wanted to get out of Baltimore any way they could, but they couldn't. The weather grounded every flight in and out of the airport.

I could understand why people were upset. There were plans, deadlines, and connecting flights which were compromised. While I was in the same boat, I shrugged off the whole experience and concluded I will get home eventually. So I didn't let this complicated affair bother me. It did, on the other hand, give me a moment to consider what does bother me, and that is a question which all of us need to ask.

As God's children and people who have been redeemed by Jesus Christ, we are witnesses of the good news of peace, life and forgiveness. So, our Lord's will becomes clear. He doesn't want us to be like Martha who was troubled and upset about many things. Yes, being bothered is a part of life, particularly with the uncertainties and emergencies which are always there. Still, should these situations be the most troubling or bothersome things in our life? Should our inconvenience send us spiraling out of control? What about the people who are facing eternal death and condemnation in hell? Does this bother us? It is a valid question, and it is one you and I need to ask ourselves regularly.

It is easy to think, hope, and even pray that people will find out about the Lord. Possibly someone may tell them. Maybe the Lord will open their eyes and hearts in some special way. This "pipe dream" only allows you and me to go on our way without letting their lack of knowledge and faith bother us. You and I need to repent of this lack of concern. When the souls of the lost no longer bother us, we need to look inside our own hearts. Maybe, just maybe, the fire of our faith needs to be rekindled.

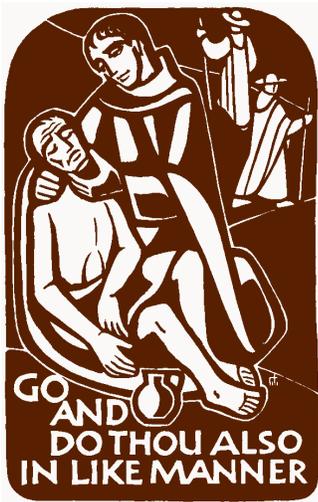
How blessed we are that the Lord does forgive us. He removes our guilt and replaces it with his peace. He also reinvigorates us and our love for the lost by strengthening and encouraging us with a God-pleasing example.

Because of firsthand experience, we know our Savior and his love for the lost. In love he sought us when we sought him not, and saved us even when we rejected him and his rescue. It is this love we want to have for others. We want to reach out to others, even when it may seem to be a bother. We also want to rely on the same motivation Paul did. Remember how he put it, "I am compelled to preach the Gospel." This is the attitude you and I need to have. We want to seize every opportunity. We want to tell people about Jesus. We want to be the instruments through which the Holy Spirit brings people to the knowledge of the truth and their salvation.

Our own rescue should lead us to be bothered when others do not know the same joy and blessing God has shared with us. In addition, we should quickly adopt the attitude we have when something bothers us enough so that we do something about it. So, if you are going to let something bother you, let it be the people you know who are lost in the darkness of unbelief and trapped in the devil's deadly control. Then, do something about it, go out of your way to tell them about their Savior and his gift of eternal life.

Go and Do Likewise?

By Carl Schueler



Jesus told him, “Go and do likewise.” *Luke 10:37*

That brief instruction was to an “expert in the law” who “stood up” to test Jesus with the question, “What must I do to inherit eternal life?” Jesus asked the expert “What is written in the Law?” The expert quoted from the Ten Commandments, noting especially “Love your neighbor as yourself.” Jesus said he answered correctly, and told him “Do this and you will live.”

As this interchange was in front of an audience, the expert in the law was embarrassed that he asked a question – “to test Jesus” – with an answer any would know. Luke tells us that to “justify himself,” the expert further asked “Who is my neighbor?” He asked this follow-up question to “save face,” as the Old Testament does not specify to whom the word “neighbor” applies.

Then Jesus related the parable of the Good Samaritan, and asked the expert which of the three men he described “was a neighbor to the man who fell into the hands of robbers.” The expert correctly identified the Samaritan who “had mercy,” not the priest or Levite who passed by. Jesus replied, “Go and do likewise.”

This parable has been used to exhort kindness. Many conclude we must each be that Good Samaritan: Support the homeless shelter. Give to the poor. Give to the United Way. Give to the Red Cross. Give to victims of Katrina. Give to victims of the Indonesian Tsunami. Give to the Wounded Warrior Project. Give to victims of the Nepalese earthquake. The panhandler exhorts us: “Give to me!” If you don’t, you aren’t a “Good Samaritan!” If you want to be “right with God,” GIVE!

Note the Truth! And what is the Truth? Jesus! The early Christian church identified the Good Samaritan (People’s Bible commentary on Luke, Victor Prange, 1988, Northwestern Publishing House, p. 126). The Good Samaritan is Jesus Christ, and the “man who fell into the hands of robbers” is everyone else, including the expert in the law, you and me.

The Good News is we are not commanded to “do likewise” to “inherit eternal life.” Only in Jesus – the only Good Samaritan there is, was or will be eternal life and the willing ability to “Love your neighbor as yourself.” Through Jesus - only through Jesus - can we “do likewise.” Next time you feel “guilty” for a cause, remember should you not participate, you haven’t forfeited your Christian faith and eternal life. If you knew how often I’ve neglected “doing good,” perhaps you’d be appalled. What does that mean?

It means I’m no Good Samaritan! I’m a sinner who hasn’t kept the commandment to “Love my neighbor as myself.” The Good News is: Jesus has! His perfect life and innocent death fulfilled the Law on my behalf, justifying me in spite of my inability to be a Good Samaritan. That and the ability to believe it (i.e., faith - also his gift through the Holy Spirit) saves me. Praise the Lord! Go and Tell!

2015 Christian Leadership Conference: Part 4 of 4

by Al Todd



In the January **Reporter**, I presented background concerning the 2015 Christian Leadership Experience. This is the fourth and final article of a series on sessions I attended at that conference.

Utilizing Community Resources for Outreach

This topic was presented by Pastor Dan Schmidt (WELS), who has practical experience reaching out to people living in inner city communities. He has used government/secular funds and other non-WELS resources to augment biblical stewardship. His presentation provided some "lessons learned" and the biblical rationale for using those funds and existing community resources.

Pastor Schmidt began by noting that the so-called policy of *Separation of Church and State* is a myth. The first amendment to the United States Constitution simply forbids establishment of an official State religion. It does not require "separation" of religion or religious persons from public affairs of state. Further, there are many examples in the Bible (Ezra 1: 1-8 and 6:3-5; Nehemiah 2:7-9; and Esther to name just a few) of Believers using government funds.

God has, however, called us to love Him above everything and every person and to be discerning and obey Him (first table of the law). So, if a program established by the government, secular agency, or religious organization demands that we disobey God or restricts us from talking about Jesus, then we are conscious bound to obey God. In all of Pastor Schmidt's interactions with various community resources, one of the first questions he asks is "Will we be prohibited from talking about Christ?" If the answer is yes, then he does not participate in that organization.

There was quite a bit of talk about the need to embrace the culture of the community one is called to serve. This often means that WELS should avoid the tendency to become a "cookie cutter" church. Outreach and service programs that work in a northern Wisconsin community may not succeed in southern Louisiana, much less in Japanese culture, for example.

Some community resources noted by Pastor Schmidt include United Way's 211 Information and Referral System (information on non-profit organizations), community websites, town directories, chamber of commerce lists of businesses, and physical or virtual bulletin boards.

Many communities welcome any help they can get to provide services and support using government resources already available. We don't have to start from scratch. As long as we are not prohibited from talking about Jesus while we serve others, this could be a very effective outreach opportunity.



“The Buddy in Me”

By Barbara Grunewald



A furry paw scratched beneath the bathroom door, pulling to open it. Buddy, our orange and white Tabby was letting me know once again that it was time for his breakfast. Earlier he had disturbed my sleep at 5:00 a.m. by chewing on a gift bag in the closet. That got me out of bed, but not fast enough to suit his needs. He was persistent as always, finding noisy trouble everywhere to get his way – a big bowl of crunchy cat food.

Although this nine pound cat doesn't have a will like ours, he is certainly driven to get results when he wants something. Whether it's scratching at the doors, furniture, or bags, his commotion leads to a reward. If all else fails, he looks up at me with those pathetic green eyes and I give in. Who wouldn't?

Like any cat or human being for that matter, Buddy has needs, and obviously knows how to get them fulfilled. It reminds me of my own perceived needs and my daily struggles to follow God's will instead of my own defiant will. I truly want to do what is right in the eyes of the Lord but my desires get in the way. When the opportunity arises to speak out about my faith, I flounder and fail. When I hear a friend defile the name of Jesus, I am silent. By not putting God first in my life, I give in to sin and fall. Paul said it best, “For what I want to do I do not do, but what I hate I do. And if I do what I do not want to do, I agree that the law is good. As it is, it is no longer I myself who do it, but it is sin living in me. I know that nothing good lives in me, that is, in my sinful nature. For I have the desire to do what is good, but I can not carry it out. For what I do is not the good I want to do; no, the evil I do not want to do – this I keep on doing.” (Romans 7: 15-19)

It's too easy to keep on doing what is wrong. The Lord has given us the Ten Commandments and His words of instruction throughout the Bible so that we always know what is pleasing in His eyes and what is sinful. Yet we think evil thoughts and do evil deeds, as we continue to place our desires first and foremost. I'm like Buddy when his scratching at the door says I want something right now and nothing else matters. Often I see the Buddy in me, at least his impatience and instant need for gratification. For instance, I want to study the Word daily, but my favorite TV show is coming on or I'm just too tired to open my Bible and read. Everything else is too important and I then leave out what is unequivocally the most important.

Near the end of Paul's *Struggling With Sin* lesson in Romans Chapter 7, he writes, “What a wretched man I am! Who will rescue me from this body of death? Thanks be to God – through Jesus Christ our Lord!” (Romans 7: 24-25) Isn't that the most beautiful solution to our sinful human condition? We are forgiven and saved through the sacrifice of our loving Savior. Our sins are pardoned because of God's unfathomable love for us. Therefore, as Christians we do not fear death but rather welcome the knowledge that we will be united with our loving Father in heaven.

Our story of life on earth, a life of sin and wretchedness, has the most perfect ending – eternal salvation and a place secured in heaven. Like Paul, we give thanks to God who rescues us from suffering and death. Our blessings are immeasurable and our mission is simple – to share God's message with the world so that all may be saved.

Outreach Opportunities

The Outreach Committee continues to sponsor events to provide opportunities for members to invite friends and relatives to Our Redeemer. Some events are conducted outside the formal worship service. There are also special worship services with food and fellowship afterwards. We hope these events will encourage you to invite people you know to learn more about our church and to hear the message of Grace we proclaim. Plan to participate, and to serve!

The next Outreach meeting is Tuesday, June 30th at 7:00 pm



Upcoming Events

We will have an Ice Cream Social this Friday evening, June 12th at 7:00 pm. Please bring along your favorite ice cream, toppings, cookies, etc. There will also be a few games for those who would like to participate.

Independence Day celebration with a movie, barbeque and fireworks will be Saturday, July 4th at 4:00 pm.

Beach, Bike and Barbeque will be August 30th at Goleta Beach. We will meet at Noon at our usual location. Those who bike will start from the church around 11:30 am.

Festival of Friendship will be held on September 20th. Remember this service starts at 10:30 and is followed by a tri-tip lunch. Begin talking to your friends and neighbors about attending this service.

Forward in Christ Subscription

For the 2014 budget year we had asked those interested to indicate their desire to receive the "Forward in Christ," and to pay for the "congregational subscription charge." Many took advantage of this arrangement last year. In July the subscription will come due, and the council has decided to follow the same course of action for 2015/6.

In the next few weeks, the subscription sheet will be placed out. Please indicate your interest to receive the Forward in Christ. Then, submit the cost of your subscription to the church (*Note that it is for the Forward in Christ*). The cost for the year will be \$12.00 which includes delivery to your home. If you have any questions, please speak to Al Todd. Thank You!



June Birthdays

We rejoice in the many blessings God has given the members of our family of faith. May the Lord continue to bless them richly.

9th - Sue P.
 12th - Lori K.
 18th - Julie S.
 20th - Roger J.
 21st - Dave V.
 24th - Christina F.
 30th - Hilary S.

Notes & News

**Handbell Choir**

After nine months of regular practices and performances during the festival part of the “church year,” the hand bell choir has earned some well-deserved time off.

We are grateful for the dedicated service of our ringers, as well as Debbie Aitkins for directing the choir and preparing the music.

In September the bells will begin again. If you are interested in ringing, please speak to Debbie, and watch for the practices to begin. It is a rewarding way to serve, and beautifies our worship.

Choir

Like its instrumental counterpart, the choir will take a break following this Sunday. It has been an interesting year combining songs from the past with new arrangements. The highlight was a “Caribbean” arrangement, “Halle, Halle, Halle.” It was also one of the more challenging songs of the year.

Practices will start in the Fall, and we are always looking for new voices to sing. If you are interested, please speak with Pastor Proeber regarding time and schedule.

Wednesday Evening Bible Class

Bible Class will continue through the month of June. During that time we will consider the topic, “What Do I Say About the Bible?”

While the answer may appear to be simple, there are some complexities to address, especially if the person to whom you are speaking does not believe the Bible is God’s Word.

Come and learn more about God’s Word, how it was collected and collated, and how it has been preserved from the 2nd Century until now.

The Wednesday evening class begins at 7:00 pm.

Sunday Morning Bible Class

Throughout the course of the summer we will continue with our Sunday morning class. Currently, we are studying a DVD series on the life of Noah. Topics have addressed, the man, the ark, and the flood. Currently we are considering the aftermath of the flood.

Although it may seem distant or even unfamiliar, it is a study with wide-ranging and timely applications for today.

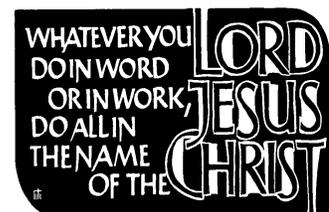
Sunday School

The regularly scheduled Sunday morning classes will come to a close on Sunday, June 21st. July and August will be off months, but some informal lessons may be offered.

In the Fall, the new quarter will start. Remember Sunday School meets on the first and third Sundays of the month during the worship service.

If you have any questions, please speak with any member of the Board of Education—Joel Degner, John Favuzzi, or Carl Schueler.

Also, if you are interested in becoming involved in teaching next Fall, please speak with Sue Proeber regarding what is necessary,

**Other Opportunities**

We are always looking for new opportunities for service, outreach, study and encouragement. Please share your ideas with a Board member or with Pastor Proeber.

Serve the Lord with Gladness

Reporters Wanted

Book review? Personal Story of Faith?
Event report? Potluck-gathering? Party? Field Trip?

Half-page to three pages
Reviewed for scriptural consistency
Due by 25th of month to appear in next issue

Hard-copy to Carl Schueler, or email to Carl Schueler (cfs_home@hotmail.com)
or Pastor Proeber (pastor@orlcsb.net)

A simple and rewarding way to serve!

Thanks to Barbara Grunewald, Alan Todd, and Carl Schueler for their articles this month. There is always a standing invitation to provide material for the *Reporter*. Throughout the past volumes, articles authored by members have really made every issue more interesting.

We pray that every member will provide an article for 2015. If you have an idea, and you are not sure whether to act on it, please don't hesitate to speak to Pastor Proeber or Carl Schueler for advice. Thanks!

Meetings for June

Church Council	Tuesday June 9 at 7:00 pm
Committees	Tuesday June 9 at 8:00 pm
Outreach Committee	Tuesday June 30 at 7:00 pm

If you have a question regarding a specific area of ministry, please contact a member of the appropriate Board. He will be happy to help.

Congregational Meeting is July 12th following the worship service.

Take Note...

July Reminders

Not to rush things, but July usually has a tendency to sneak up on people. There are family vacations, quick get-aways, and household projects to complete.

This is why the following information has been included—so you can plan ahead.

Our 4th of July cele-

bration will be Saturday beginning at 4:00 pm. The afternoon will start with a DVD on our Western National Parks. It covers the parks of the “grand circle” in Arizona, Utah, and Nevada. At 5:30 we will have our traditional tri-tip barbecue with pot-luck side dishes. The evening ends

with fireworks at Girsch Park and desserts at Debbie's home in Goleta.

As mentioned previously, our mid-year congregational meeting will be Sunday, July 12th following the worship service. In addition, there are the regular worship services along with the Lord's Supper.

Devotional Corner

“God Loves Me!”

“For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son that whoever believes in him will not perish, but have eternal life.”
John 3:16

There are many familiar Bible passages, but this one is probably the most familiar. Countless people have found hope and solace in the assurance God loved the world. Unfortunately, just as many people have rejected God and his love because it didn't measure up to their expectations. So, what do I believe?

It may be easy to conclude God loves me when everything is going well in my life. My health is excellent. My job is stable. My family is loving and considerate. On the other hand, what is my conclusion when my life is in turmoil? My health is poor. My prospects for employment evaporate. My family is dysfunctional. Does this mean God doesn't love me? I need to understand how God does show his love to me.

The proper understanding of God's love is actually found in the word the Bible uses for love. This is not to be understood as a feeling or an emotion. It is a special love which displays an unselfish resolve. In love, God knew what I desperately needed. In love, God responded purposefully and without reservation. In love, God came to seek me even when I didn't seek him.

God showed his love by sending his one and only Son to rescue me from eternal death. This love required Jesus to take on my flesh and blood to become my substitute. As that substitute he lived a sin-free life to purify me from my disobedience. He died a guiltless death to pay the debt of sin I accrued. He even rose victorious from the grave to release me from the sentence of death. Jesus did everything God the Father prescribed. In the end, when I put my trust in Jesus I will have what he earned. I will also know the true joy and blessing of God's love.

So, does God love me? Absolutely! But I should never measure his love by how much or little I have in my life. God's love is seen and measured in what his Son Jesus has done for me. Through him I have everything - forgiveness, peace, joy and eternal life.

Prayer

O dearest Jesus, thank you for coming to this earth to reveal your Father's love. Help me trust in that love, live in that love, and rejoice in that love always. Amen.

Daily devotions can be accessed through www.whataboutjesus.com or www.wels.net. Please follow the instructions to view daily devotions and to subscribe to them. They are also available as “podcasts.”

Devotional Corner

"The Lord's Sabbath"

Then he [Jesus] said to them, "The Sabbath was made for man, not man for the Sabbath. So the Son of Man is Lord even of the Sabbath." Mark 2:28

There are two dangers concerning which I need to be on my guard. Both have to do with the Sabbath. The word Sabbath in Hebrew means rest. It was a special day set apart by the Lord (Genesis 2:2-3). The purpose was to signal the completion of his creating activity, and to allow Adam and Eve the opportunity to savor his gracious goodness.

When the people of Israel camped below Mount Sinai following their rescue from Egypt, the Lord codified the Sabbath. In the Third Commandment he said, "Remember the Sabbath Day by keeping it holy" (Exodus 20:8). God wanted his people to free themselves from the burden of their daily routine to remember the rich blessing of his love.

The commandment remained unchanged for generations. It wasn't until the arrival of the Pharisees that changes began to appear. Because a multitude of rules and rituals were added, the Sabbath eventually became a burden for people. It was against this perversion Jesus said, "The Sabbath was made for man, not man for the Sabbath."

This alerts me to the first danger. Many have manipulated the Sabbath and have subjected it to countless regulations. These must be kept in order to be assured of the Lord's blessing. The second danger is that I need to be aware of taking my own personal liberties with the Sabbath. When Jesus said, the Sabbath was made for me, it did not give me license to do with it what I want.

This is why I need to remember it is the Lord's Sabbath. It is a day given to me by the Lord. On this day I can consider all the blessings the Lord has given me in love. I can also rejoice in the Lord's gracious good will for my life. Even more important, I can come to know the special rest provided by my Savior. That rest comes through the forgiveness of sins Jesus secured for me, along with freedom from death and the devil. It is a rest which comforts my troubled conscience. A rest which heals my sin-sick soul. A rest which relieves my burdened heart.

While there may be many who claim they know what the Sabbath should be, I only need to look to my Lord and Savior for the truth. It is his Sabbath, and through the Lord's Sabbath I find rest.

Prayer

O dearest Jesus, Lord of the Sabbath, thank you for giving me the rest I need through the forgiveness of sins, and through all the gracious good things you do for me. Amen.

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