

LIFE LINES

of

LORD OF LIFE LUTHERAN CHURCH

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Vol. 30, No. 5

Plano, Texas

May 2016

In the TV show, The X Files, a prominently displayed poster at the FBI office of the two leading characters depicts a flying saucer and the words, "I WANT TO BELIEVE." Throughout the series a balance exists between the two leads who believe and doubt many bizarre theories about their latest case. The more scientific of the two challenges her colleague, whose strong desire to find proof of alien existence, often leads him to jump to the most implausible or extreme explanation and miss the more obvious, conventional answer in front of him. As events unfold, frequently the unexpected or outlandish theory turns out to be the truth, but not every time. More often than not, the episode ends with the case unsolved and the audience is left with unanswered questions. This tension between the leading characters along with good acting and creative story lines, made the show a big success in the 1990's with two box office movies (one entitled: "The X-Files: I Want to Believe"). The show has even made a recent comeback earlier this year.



The reason I raise this, is to get you thinking about the statement: "I WANT TO BELIEVE" and consider the question: What is the relation between desire and belief? More importantly, how does knowledge of this relation help us in make the case for faith in Jesus Christ to those who do not believe?

What if your desire to believe, causes you to believe things that aren't true? In other words, what if your desire to believe overpowers the evidence for belief? Many of us who consider ourselves traditional conservative types probably recognize this desire to believe as a problem among people who are not like us. After all, we like to think we are perfectly rational, reasonable people who only believe things based on facts supported by the evidence. We are not gullible; we don't fall for superstitions or the latest conspiracies or wild theories that claim to uncover new ways of understanding the universe, the environment, health, or whatever. We know the way things are and we have seen challenges to conventional wisdom come and go before, so we aren't taken in by the latest passing fad.

On the other hand, what if new evidence is discovered? What if there is good reason to believe something new or different? Sometimes healthy skepticism and reliance on old dependable ways can turn into outright refusal to believe, which prevents people from seeing

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the obvious facts in front of them. This was the problem with both the Pharisees (traditional conservatives) and Sadducees (high church liberals) of Jesus' day. No matter what Jesus said or did, most of them would not listen and would not believe. It didn't matter that Jesus healed and helped people in miraculous ways and offered them forgiveness and life, they would not believe because they did not want to believe. Jesus, in John 8:43 says: "Why do you not understand what I say? It is because you cannot bear to hear my word." (Compare John 8:31 ff. and John 10:22-39) This same refusal to believe seems also to have been the problem with the disciple Thomas (John 20:19-31).

My point is, while many of us recognize the potential problems with saying "I want to believe," there are just as many problems, if not more, associated with saying, "I refuse to believe." And understanding this connection between belief and desire is important if we are going to think seriously about our evangelical task and how we can make a winsome case for believing in Jesus.

What got me thinking about all of this is an article by Tim Keller entitled "Deconstructing Defeater Beliefs: Leading the Secular to Christ." Keller, (a Presbyterian pastor in Manhattan and popular author of many books including a very good one on apologetics called *The Reason for God*), makes the point that until someone actually wants to believe, they will have no interest in hearing any arguments for the faith or looking at the evidence for Christ. To put it another way: the Gospel must precede apologetics. No matter how good your evidence or arguments, if someone refuses to believe, nothing you say will convince them or argue them to the truth. After all, not even the Son of God could win over people who were set against Him –not with miracles or profound teachings with authority- so why should we think as though we can win them?

While we cannot win people over purely with the power of our persuasive argument, people can be won over by the power of the Gospel. "I am not ashamed of the Gospel for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes..." (Rom. 1:16) and "Faith comes through hearing the Word of Christ." (Rom. 10:17)

What makes an unbeliever want to believe? The Good News about what Jesus has done for us! Of course, this does not mean merely spitting out Bible verses at someone or holding up a sign that says "John 3:16," but rather, presenting them with a thoughtful, relevant, specifically-tailored presentation of who Jesus is and what He has done for them. When we listen to our unbelieving friends and neighbors, we can get an idea about how to present the Gospel or which aspect of the Gospel, and then speak the Good News in terms for people today: Good news of forgiveness, compassion, restoration, community, being adopted as an heir, heavenly citizenship in the kingdom, God's unwavering faithfulness and keeping of promises, etc., etc. There are many different ways to speak about what God offers us in Christ. But the point is, the way we initially talk about Christ ought to lead the person you are talking to, to say to themselves, "I would love for that to be true." Or, "If what she says is right, it's the most beautiful message of hope I've ever heard." Again, before we get into defending the beliefs of Christians, we should talk about the hope and joy we have. We should share what Christ has done in such a way that it gets people to want to believe.

This is merely step one in reaching the lost. Once someone actually wants to believe, they may still have major obstacles to belief. This is where the work of apologetics (defending the faith) comes in. Offering answers to common objections to the faith and showing the evidence for belief is important –so I'll save that for Bible classes or another newsletter perhaps? And the work of making disciples is not finished with apologetics; it continues with a comprehensive and ongoing presentation of the Gospel and serious devotion to the Word of God. But again, we'll

leave those things for another time. Let's just understand this first part to evangelism: If someone does not want to believe, they likely are not going to believe no matter what you say to them. So, the first step to leading someone to faith in Jesus, is to get them *stop refusing* to believe and bring them to the point where they *want* to believe. –This involves presenting the Gospel in a relevant and targeted way, so that upon hearing the promises of Christ, they desire what He offers them: acceptance, forgiveness, life, peace, joy, hope, and so much more. Therefore, as we encounter our unbelieving friends and neighbors for whom the Lord shed His blood and died, let's consider what words we can share to bring them to a point where they say in their hearts, "I want to believe."

Music at Midday Concerts

The final Music at Midday concerts for the season will be on Wednesday May 4 and 11, at 1:05-1:45pm. These concerts will feature regular organ music of the season, whilst others will explore hymnody, hymn writers, and composers, using multimedia presentations. Please do join us for these brief musical interludes each Wednesday afternoon!

prepare for worship in may

1 May: Sixth Sunday of Easter

Texts: Acts 16: 9-15; Revelation 21: 9-14, 21-27;
John 16: 23-33

Hymn of the Day: "Dear Christians, One and All, Rejoice," 556

8 May: Seventh Sunday of Easter

Texts: Acts 1: 12-26; Revelation 22:1-6, 12-20;
John 17:20-26

Hymn of the Day: "A Hymn of Glory Let Us Sing," 498

15 May: Pentecost & Rite of Confirmation (10:45am)

Texts: Genesis 11:1-9; Acts 2:1-21; John 14:23-31

Hymn of the Day: "Come, Holy Ghost, Creator Blest," 498

22 May: Holy Trinity Sunday

Texts: Proverbs 8:1-4, 22-31; Acts 2:14a, 22-36;
John 8:48-59

Hymn of the Day: "I Bind Unto Myself Today," 604

29 May: (service at 9:30am then church picnic)

Texts: 1 Kings 8:22-24, 27-29, 41-43; Galatians 1:1-12; Luke 7:1-10

Hymn of the Day: "My Faith Looks Up to Thee," 702



Sunday May 29th

Hamburgers, hot dogs, sausages and drinks provided.

Please bring a side dish to share. Watch for more information and sign-up sheets.

Teen Times

“Confirmation or Graduation?”

On Sunday, May 15, the Rite of Confirmation will take place at the 10:45 worship service for some young men and women of Lord of Life allowing them to become communicant members of our church. It is also the Sunday which we celebrate Pentecost and the birth of the Christian Church. How cool is that to be recognizing both of these events on the same day, after all they can be considered closely related to one another. One question I like to raise with those teenagers being confirmed is “now what?” For many years, the Rite of Confirmation has been given a similar description that closely resembles a graduation. There is usually families and friends present, robes adorned to distinguish the confirmands, a processional into the sanctuary, special music is played, certificates are presented, congratulations are given, and a plethora of pictures are taken. Sounds like a graduation to me too. However, I will ask the question again, but not just to the confirmands. Parents, lay leaders, grandparents, peers, and all congregation members should address the question of “now what?”

The following excerpts are from an article written by Dr. Marvin Bergman in the LCMS News, Reporter (Reporter Online) that appeared on September 1, 2010 which provides an excellent response to this question. The title is *Commentary: Confirmation – more than ‘graduation’*

Dr. Marvin M. Bergman of Seward is an emeritus faculty member of Concordia University Nebraska and lay ministry coordinator for the LCMS Nebraska District. A 1959 graduate of Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, he earned doctorates from Columbia University and the University of Nebraska–Lincoln. He taught confirmation classes for 26 years.

Why is confirmation important?

In my survey of 1,015 participants, confirmands reflected many of the benefits of the instruction and nurture of parents, confirmation leaders, teachers, and congregations. Some of the survey results revealed that:

- *Ninety-three percent of youth described confirmation as being very important or important.*
- *Three of four youth named growing in faith and living as a Christian as the number-one reason for being in confirmation.*
- *Ninety-eight percent of confirmands said that their faith in Jesus Christ helps them to know what is right and wrong.*
- *Ninety-eight percent of the parents said that confirmation is very important or important in the lives of their daughters and sons.*

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However,

The survey found that more than nine of 10 leaders identified a “confirmation is graduation” view in their congregations.

When a schooling model is the structure for a confirmation ministry that includes grade levels, robes and diplomas, it is not surprising that the purpose of confirmation is seen as graduation. Leaders responding to the survey indicated that 41 percent of those who confirmed their faith in the rite of confirmation were active as high school seniors.

OR ROUGHLY ONLY 4 OUT OF 10!

Confirmation should be considered as a major mile marker of a marathon, not the finish line. We are prepared beforehand through Bible lessons and simple teaching in our childhood prior to confirmation classes, and are encouraged to nurture the catechism instruction afterwards through the Word, the Sacraments and participation in ministry for the rest of our lives.

This is where parents, called church workers, lay teachers, grandparents, peers and congregations can make a huge difference. As a team, we can help young people develop a Law-Gospel view of God’s character as a seeking and sending God, be clear about their identity as disciples of Jesus Christ, be grasped by the power of the Gospel, stand on the solid foundation of the Scriptures and the Lutheran Confessions, have a vision of one’s role in the mission of Christ’s church and live daily in the light of one’s Baptism.

Being a new person in Christ happens through nurture and instruction based on Word and Sacraments. When confirmation contributes to this aim, isn’t this a blessing to celebrate?

To the confirmation class of 2016 at Lord of Life and their parents; this is not a graduation, it is an inauguration! A formal ceremony to open or mark the beginning of something!

You can read the article from Lutheran News in its entirety at:

<https://blogs.lcms.org/2010/commentary-confirmation-more-than-a-graduation>

Until next time, God bless.

Scott Peters

Director of Youth Ministry



John 15:5

June 24-26, 2016: LWML Texas District Convention in Lubbock - "I am the Vine, You are the Branches."

For more information and registration - www.lwmltxdist.org



Save the Date!
Take me out to the ballgame!

Frisco Rough Riders Game

Wednesday June 15th, 7:05pm game, \$20 per ticket includes premium seating, all you can eat hotdogs, brats, peanuts, chips and Dr. Pepper products, Rough Rider souvenir, \$10 concession stand voucher. Parking is not included--\$5-10 depending upon where you park. Stay tuned.

THE LORD'S PRAYER

Fruit of the Spirit

Vacation Bible School



August 1-5, 2016
9:00 am - Noon

Register online at planolutheran.com/VBS

MISSIONARIES

MUSIC FROM
AROUND THE WORLD

LOL CARE GROUPS

CAREERS IN CHRIST

- † For info contact Heidi Pittson at (214) 315-0302 or Carrie Sanford (903) 388-3081

COLLEGE CONNECTIONS

- † For info contact Pastor Shaltanis at PastorShaltanis@yahoo.com
 † Usually meet Sundays after the late service

EMPTY NESTERS' CARE GROUP

- † For info contact Mike and Sandra Paradise at (972) 424-2951 or itsparadise.inplano@verizon.net
 † Will meet on a Sat., May 21 at 7:00 PM

GOOD NEWS CARE GROUP

- † For info contact Chris Oltmann at (972) 727-6330 or Mike Kunschke at (847) 951-6974
 † Usually meet the 2nd Sat. of each month at 6:30 PM for Bible study

MIXED BLESSINGS

- † For info contact Fred and Ruth Bernhardt at (972) 398-0771
 † Usually meet the 3rd Sat. of each month at 6:30 PM

MOMS' GROUP

- † For info contact Kris Crabtree at (214) 705-0710 or crabtreefive@sbcglobal.net



Rix Scarth: 5-31-15



- 2 Ambrose Shaltanis
 3 James Hawkins
 3 Gene & Pat Montalbo (21)
 6 Fred Bernhardt
 6 Gideon Selvaraj & Annie Joseph (24)
 8 Mike & Cheryl Scaglione (23)
 12 Pat Greer
 12 Dave Senter
 13 Carrie Sanford
 15 Alyson Wood
 16 David Messinger
 17 Max Tyler
 18 Marcus Peters
 20 Charis Bennett
 20 Vickie Krehmeyer
 20 Aaron Raj
 22 Elise Crabtree
 22 Nicholas Moudy
 22 John & Jennifer Chappelle (7)
 22 Jon & Tammi Chumbley (23)
 23 Greg & Audrey Kostrzewa (29)
 24 Al McVicker
 25 Ashley Moudy
 25 Tom & Georgianna Womack (52)
 26 Dominic & Jennifer Cinquepalmi (26)
 26 Greg & Beverly Moudy (19)
 27 Trent Barnes
 27 Jason Beckemeier
 27 Audrey Kostrzewa
 27 Robert & Sharon Adcox (16)
 28 Kyle Beaudreau
 28 June Edelman
 28 Dave & Gail Senter (39)
 29 Cindy Carter
 31 Charlie Abbott
 31 Duffy Carter
 31 Vickie Frinsko

Serving in Worship in May

	May 1		May 8		May 15		May 22		May 29
	8:00 AM	10:45 AM	8:00 AM	10:45 AM	8:00 AM	10:45 AM	8:00 AM	10:45 AM	9:30 AM
Elder	Kunschke		Acker		Lutek		Womack		Kunschke
Common Cup	Peters	Hite			Womack	Hite	Peters	Hite	Carper/Lutek
Altar	Bette Martin and Nelda Schrank								
Alcolyte	Adcox	C Loewe ke	Messinger	E Ziegelbein	Carter	W Gibson	Adcox	S Loewecke	Crabtree
Crucifer	M Shaltanis	N Ziegelbein			Payne		G Hacker	N Ziegelbein	
Greeter	Vess	Manning	Schrank	Abbott/McVicker	Sparks	Dorak	Martin	Manning	McVicker
Sound	Botello	Selveraj	Wilkerson	Pittson	Botello	Hite	Wolf	Raj	Wilkerson
Usher	Parrent Martin Scarth	Ziegelbein Loewecke Kostrazewa	Paradise Read Frinsko	Cruz Moudy Dolginoff	Cinquepalmi Hawkins	McVicker Oltmann Berger	Hacker Kun Schrank	Short Crabtree Bucmeier	Kostrazewa Ziegelbein Scarth Parrent

FINANCIAL REPORT January- March, 2016

		ACTUAL	BUDGET	VARIANCE
RECEIPTS:	Regular Offerings	\$183,246	\$170,041	\$13,205
	Other	\$1,299	\$1,005	\$294
	TOTAL RECEIPTS	\$184,545	\$171,046	\$13,499
	TOTAL EXPENSES	\$183,766	\$169,948	\$13,818
	RECEIPTS OVER EXPENSES	\$779	\$1,098	(\$319)

OTHER INFORMATION

1. General Operating Fund Balance	\$83,485
2. Dedicated Funds Balance	\$230,526
3. Building Note Balance	\$665,204