

For the

LIFE of the WORLD

January 2006. Volume Ten, Number One



Living the Christian Life in Our Vocations - p.4

Joy in Service! - p.7

Leading a Christian Life - p.10

What Does This Mean - p.13




CONCORDIA
THEOLOGICAL
SEMINARY
P R E S S

CONTENTS

page 4



page 10



page 7



page 15



page 25



FEATURES

4 Living the Christian Life in Our Vocations By Dr. Gene Edward Veith, Director of the Cranach Institute at Concordia Theological Seminary, Fort Wayne, Indiana

Luther said that vocations are “masks of God.” He is hidden in the people who build our houses, fix our cars, teach us how to do things, and create beauty for us to enjoy. Vocation is part of how God governs the universe.

7 Joy in Service! By Mrs. Beverly A. England, Director of Public Relations for the Lutheran Women’s Missionary League, Tulsa, Oklahoma

What a joy it has been! Serving the Lord in His church and being in a leadership position in an organization that has 250,000 members and does mission work by serving the needs of people near and far are so very fulfilling. Joy beyond words, yes!

10 Leading a Christian Life By Dr. and Mrs. Dennis Ross, Wichita, Kansas

When asked to write an article on living a Christ-centered life, Dennis and Ann Ross were first honored and then perplexed. To them there seemed little that should make their life an example to others, for they know it is only through the Holy Spirit’s power that we are able to submit to God’s will for our lives.

13 What Does This Mean?

For the LIFE of the WORLD

PRESIDENT
Rev. Dr. Dean O. Wenthe

PUBLISHER
Rev. Scott Klemsz

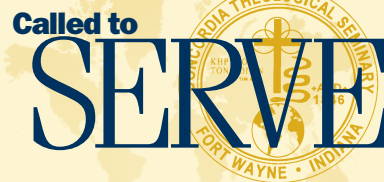
EDITOR
Rev. John T. Pless

ASSOCIATE EDITOR
Jayne Sheaffer

COPY EDITOR
Trudy Behning

ART DIRECTOR
Steve Blakey

For the Life of the World is published quarterly by Concordia Theological Seminary Press, 6600 North Clinton Street, Fort Wayne, Indiana 46825. No portion of this publication may be reproduced without the written consent of the publisher of *For the Life of the World*. Copyright 2006. Printed in the United States. Postage paid at Huntington, Indiana. To be added to our mailing list please call 260-452-2150 or e-mail Rev. Scott Klemsz at klemszsc@ctsfw.edu. *For the Life of the World* is mailed to all pastors and congregations of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod in the United States and Canada and to anyone interested in the work of Concordia Theological Seminary, Fort Wayne, Indiana.



- Continuing a Family Tradition** p. 14
- Growth in the Heartland** p. 16
- Continuing Education Benefits You and Your Congregation** p. 19
- Dr. Wenthe Reappointed as President of CTS** p. 20
- Dr. David Scaer’s Discourses in Matthew Receives Recognition** p. 22
- Student Families Appreciate Donation Day** p. 25

Living the Christian Our Voca

In Luther's day, those who wanted to serve God to the utmost would become monks, nuns, or priests. Doing so meant taking a vow not to marry, own property, or exercise worldly authority. Such things the laity had to be concerned with, of course, but spiritual people were thought to have a higher calling.

This notion is still prevalent today, even among non-Catholics who assume that church activities—if not full-time church work, then evangelism, prayer, and Bible study—are the best way to please God.

Luther certainly prized full-time church work, as well as evangelism, prayer, and Bible study. But he showed that what the monastics condemned as worldly—marriage, parenthood, making a living, and civil government—are also arenas for Christian service. And laypeople too, no less than pastors and other church-workers, are engaged in spiritually significant labor.

Today we use the word “vocation” as just another word for “job.” But “vocation” is derived from the Latin meaning “calling.” And it is God who does the calling. We understand that God calls pastors into the ministry. Luther taught that God also calls all of us into various offices and tasks.

Luther's doctrine of vocation has to do with the way God works through human beings. God proclaims His Word, distributes His Sacraments, and bestows the forgiveness of sins through pastors, the “called and ordained servants of the Word.” By the same token, God gives us our daily bread by means of farmers, bakers, tractor manufacturers, the lady at the checkout counter, and all the other cogs in the wheel of our economy. God protects us through the vocation of police officers, firemen, lawmakers, and our military. God gives His gifts of healing through the callings of doctors, nurses, pharmacists, and others in the medical vocations.

Luther said that vocations are “masks of God.” He is hidden in the people who build our houses, fix our cars, teach us how to do things, and create beauty for us to enjoy. Vocation is part of how God governs the universe. Though He can and sometimes does work without means—providing manna in



Life in vocations

By Dr. Gene Edward Veith

Today we use the word “vocation” as just another word for “job.” But “vocation” is derived from the Latin meaning “calling.” And it is God who does the calling. We understand that God calls pastors into the ministry. Luther taught that God also calls all of us into various offices and tasks.

the wilderness without farmers and healing the sick with miracles—He has chosen, as the general rule, to give His gifts through the means of ordinary people. When people serve us, we should appreciate that God Himself is serving us through them.

And that means God is also working through us in whatever tasks He has put before us. The purpose of vocation, according to Luther, is to love and serve our neighbors, not loving and serving *God*, directly; loving and serving the people whom God has set right before our eyes.

God does not need our good works, said Luther, but our neighbor does. Our relationship to God is based solely on His work for us in Jesus Christ. But having redeemed us and grafted us into Christ through His Word and Sacraments in the Church, God then sends us back into the world for our faith to bear fruit in acts of love for our neighbor.

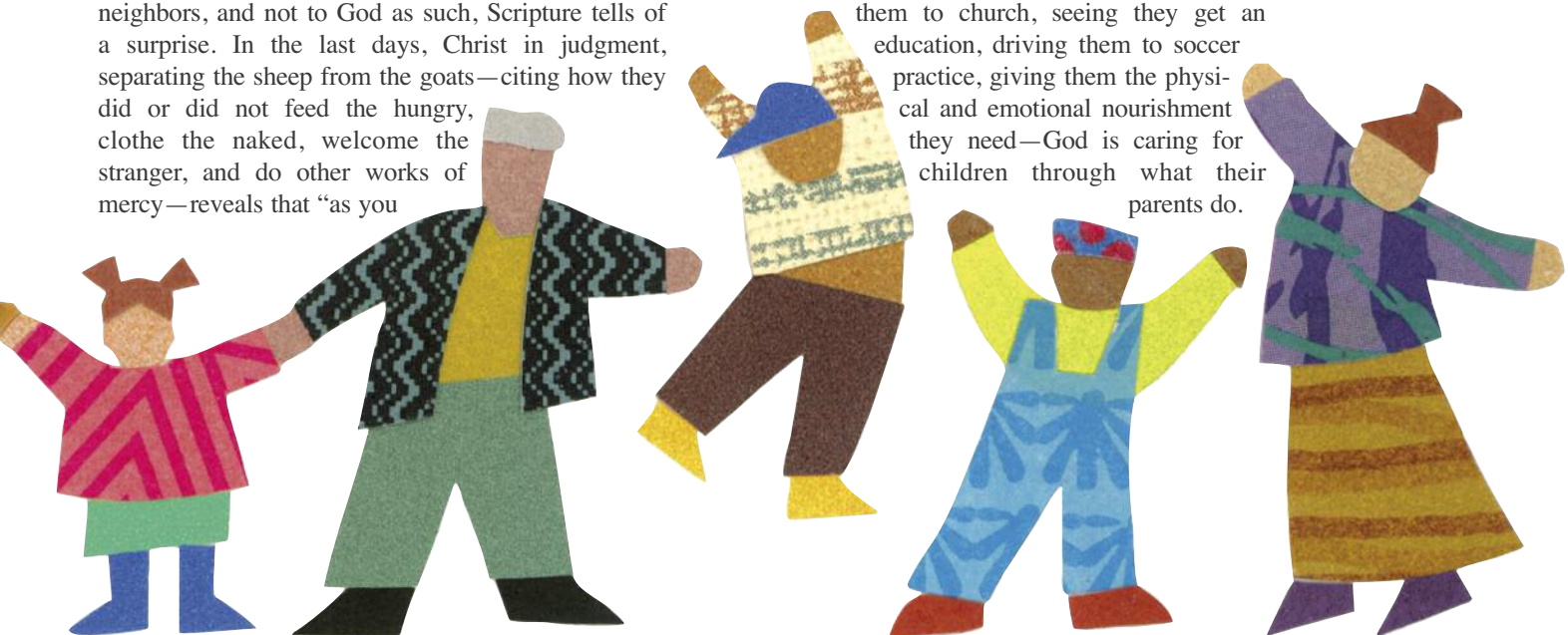
Although our works should be directed to our neighbors, and not to God as such, Scripture tells of a surprise. In the last days, Christ in judgment, separating the sheep from the goats—citing how they did or did not feed the hungry, clothe the naked, welcome the stranger, and do other works of mercy—reveals that “as you

did it to the least of these My brothers, you did it to Me” (Matt. 25:40). That is to say, Christ is hidden in the neighbor in need. So when we love and serve our neighbor, we love and serve Christ after all.

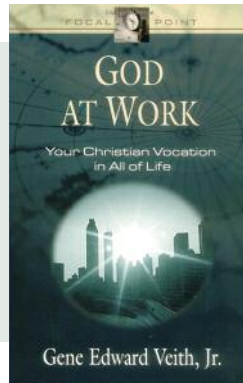
And though we may encounter neighbors in need as the Good Samaritan did on the road to Jericho, the primary place where we love and serve our neighbors is in our vocations.

Our vocations are multiple. God established the family. Being a husband or a wife is a calling. In the vocation of marriage, we have only one neighbor whom we are to love and serve. Wives love and serve their husbands by submitting themselves as to Christ. Husbands are to love and serve their wives by giving themselves up, as Christ did for the Church (Eph. 5:22-33). (Notice how Christ is hidden in the vocation of marriage.)

Being a mother or a father is also a vocation, which entails loving and serving one’s children. Taking them to church, seeing they get an education, driving them to soccer practice, giving them the physical and emotional nourishment they need—God is caring for children through what their parents do.



If you are interested in reading more of Dr. Veith's writings on vocation we suggest *God at Work: Your Christian Vocation in All of Life* (Wheaton, Ill.: Crossway Books, 2002) which may be purchased from the CTS Bookstore by phoning 260-452-3108, or online at www.ctsfw.edu, click on Bookstore.



Vocation is part of how God governs the universe. Though He can and sometimes does work without means—providing manna in the wilderness without farmers and healing the sick with miracles—He has chosen, as the general rule, to give His gifts through the means of ordinary people.

And what we do to make a living for ourselves and our family is also a vocation. Our God-given talents and opportunities open up specific avenues of service. No business could stay in operation unless it provides a good or a service that fulfills someone's need. Yes, it is economics, but our labor—when done in faith—can also be an expression of love and service to our neighbors: our customers, our fellow workers, the people who benefit from what we do.

God also established the state, restraining human sin so as to make societies possible (Romans 13). Our citizenship is a calling. Rulers are to love and serve their subjects and vice versa. We are to love and serve our fellow citizens in our political involvement, the policies we support for the good of all, and our involvement in our culture.

And God established the Church. Pastors love and serve their neighbors who constitute their congregations through faithful ministry of Word and Sacrament. We laypeople love and serve each other when someone with musical gifts blesses the rest of us by playing the organ or singing in the choir. All of the other tasks in the church—serving on committees, making the coffee, passing out bulletins—whether large or small,

are ways the members love and serve each other.

Of course, we fail to love and serve our neighbors as we ought. When the Catechism addresses “confession,” we are told to consider our stations—that is, our callings—according to the Ten Commandments. We bring the sins we have done in our vocations to church, where we receive from the hands and the voice of the “called” pastor Christ’s forgiveness. Refreshed and built up in our faith, we are sent back to our different callings.

All of this can seem rather mundane. But ordinary life—which non-believers often assume is meaningless—is actually filled with purpose (to love and serve your neighbor) and charged with spiritual significance (God Himself, hidden in vocation and in the neighbor).

Dr. Gene Edward Veith is the Director of the Cranach Institute, which is a research and educational arm of Concordia Theological Seminary, devoted to working out the implications of the Lutheran doctrine of vocation and engaging contemporary culture with the truths of the Lutheran Confessions. For more information on the Cranach Institute and Dr. Veith's writings, please visit www.Cranach.org.

