

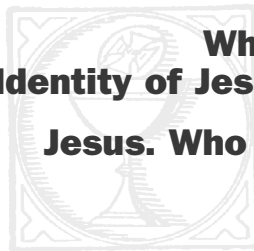
For the

LIFE of the WORLD

October 2004. Volume Seven, Number Four



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FEATURES

4 “Who Do You Say that I Am?” The Identity of Jesus in the New Testament

By the Rev. Dr. Charles A. Gieschen, Chairman of the Exegetical Department and Associate Professor of Exegetical Theology, Concordia Theological Seminary, Fort Wayne, Indiana

In contrast to the befuddled understanding of Jesus’ identity often presented by modern media, the New Testament presents a clear and uncompromising confession of Jesus as God incarnate for the salvation of the world.

7 Jesus. Who is this Jesus? Jesus is...

By the Rev. Randall L. Golter, President, Rocky Mountain District, The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod (LCMS)

Jesus, the Christ, true God and true man, the only-begotten Son of the Father, is the source of all spirituality. His blood erases and guarantees our sin-debt (Heb. 10:12-14), draws us near to God (Eph. 2:13), and brings holiness to the unholy (1 John 1:7b; John 17:17).

10 Everybody Loves Jesus. The Culture Cherishes a Counterfeit Christ

By the Rev. Todd A. Wilken, St. Louis, Missouri, is the host of the nationally syndicated radio program, *Issues, Etc.*

Why does Jesus make the cover of *Time*, *Newsweek*, *U.S. News & World Report*, and even *Popular Mechanics*? Why is He the subject of best-selling fiction and blockbuster movies? ... Everybody claims to know who Jesus was and what He would do. Everybody loves Jesus.

13 What Does This Mean?

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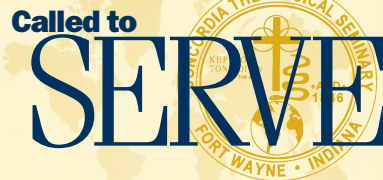
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For the Life of the World is published quarterly by Concordia Theological Seminary Press, 6600 North Clinton Street, Fort Wayne, Indiana 46825. No portion of this publication may be reproduced without the written consent of the publisher of *For the Life of the World*. Copyright 2004. 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@mail.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.



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What Does This MEAN

Jesus: Brother and Lord

The simple New Testament assertion that “Jesus is Lord” (Rom. 10:9; 1 Cor. 12:3) and similar apostolic statements such as “Jesus Christ is Lord” (John 20:28; Phil. 2:1; 2 Cor. 4:5; Col. 2:6) are at the heart and center of every genuine Christian confession. In fact, Hermann Sasse says that these New Testament confessional statements “are genuine confessions of faith and prototypes of all later confessions of the church” (*We Confess Jesus Christ*, CPH, 11). The ecumenical creeds and the Lutheran Confessions are necessary expositions that unpack this fundamental claim. The liturgy echoes this confession of Jesus in the *Gloria in Excelsis*: “O Lord, the only-

(LC II:26, 31, Kolb/Wengert, 434).

The word “Lord” identifies Mary’s Son with God’s proper name. Some American evangelicals like to ask the question: “You have Jesus as your Savior, do you also have Him as your Lord?” This is not the way of the New Testament. Jesus being our Savior is not a prelude to His being Lord over us. Jesus is the Lord who saves not by a raw act of His sovereign power, but by humbling Himself to death on the cross. His lordship is not a tyranny or dictatorship but suffering for us. Luther’s hymn, “Dear Christians, One and All Rejoice” (353 *Lutheran Worship*), is a doxological commentary on the Second Article. Especially note stanza 6:

“The Son obeyed his Father’s will,
Was born of virgin mother;
And God’s good pleasure to fulfill,
He came to be my brother.
His royal pow’r disguised he bore,
A servant’s form, like mine, he wore
To lead the devil captive.”

God comes to us in Jesus, the baby of Bethlehem and the man of Calvary, to be our Lord. He is not a God who terrifies us with His majesty but comes to us in our sin and weakness, in our living and dying. Such a Lord, Luther would argue against Erasmus, is with us even in the sewer! That is the extent to which Christ goes to be the Lord who justifies the ungodly. We live in the confidence of Jesus’ lordship and so we confess with Luther: “There was no counsel, no help, no comfort for us until this only and eternal Son of God, in his unfathomable goodness, had mercy on us because of our misery and distress and came from heaven to help us. Those tyrants and jailers have now been routed, and their place taken by Jesus Christ, the Lord of life, righteousness, and every good and blessing. He has snatched us, poor lost creatures, from the jaws of hell, won us, made us free, and restored us to the Father’s favor and grace. As his own possession he has taken us under his protection and shelter, in order that he may rule us by his righteousness, wisdom, power, life, and blessedness” (LC II:29-30, Kolb/Wengert, 434).

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has brought us back from the devil to God, from death to life, from sin to righteousness, and keeps us there”