

leads us out of captivity. Thus we escape a terrified and despondent conscience, and we get a good and sure conscience. That is the twofold work and performance of Christ in us: He kills us, and He resurrects us; He humbles us, and He exalts us; each in His good season." (7-8)

Verse 7, "O God, when Thou didst go forth before Thy people, when Thou didst march through the wilderness." The prayer here reveals that Christ was the God who led His people through the wilderness. "O Christ, at the time when Thou didst go before the Israelites in their exodus from Egypt, Thou didst presage [foreshadow] and symbolize Thy resurrection, by means of which Thou didst really precede Thy people out of the Egypt of this world to Thy Father. Thus by Thine example and Thy Word Thou dost now also lead them through the desert of faith after Thee to the Father. And if the earth trembled and the heavens rained before Thee at the time, which merely presaged Thy resurrection, how much more should the earth tremble and the heavens pour down now in the true exodus!" (8)

Verse 12, "The kings of the hosts will be friendly toward one another, and the adornment of the house will divide the spoil." Luther writes, "A house devoid of wife and child is no home. This is especially pertinent with reference to holy Mother Church. She is a true house-mother and the bride of Christ. Through the Gospel she magnificently adorns Christ's home with many children. That is what the prophet means when he says that the women at home divide the spoil." (14)

Finally, verse 18, "Thou hast ascended on high, Thou hast plundered the plunder, Thou hast received gifts among men. Nevertheless, some are still rebellious against the fact that the Lord dwells here." Luther comments, "This is the cardinal verse of the entire psalm. St. Paul quotes it in Ephesians 4:8. The psalmist here refers to the festivals of Ascension and Pentecost. This is the import of his words: 'All the miracles foretold here of the Gospel and Christendom are traceable to Thine ascent into heaven. For there Thou didst receive all power and didst send the Holy Spirit to the earth with His gifts, by means of which the Gospel was proclaimed, the world converted, and all that was predicted fulfilled.'" (20)

FUTURE DATES (see wylcms.org for information)

August 8-12: Wyoming Lutheran Youth Camp, Lander

THE NEXT ROUNDUP

The next Roundup will be delivered to congregations around August 20 (September 2021 issue).



Wyoming District Round-Up

August 2021

District Website: www.wylcms.org

"Here I Stand" on the Word in My Community

"...REMEMBERING YOU IN MY PRAYERS..." (Eph. 1:16)

For **Rev. Ralph Jaeger** (emeritus, Laramie), health

For **Rev. Michael and Jennifer Wittrock** (emeritus) with health needs.

For our active-duty chaplains, **Rev. Lynn Christensen (Louisiana)**, **Rev. Ryan Mills (Florida)**, **Rev. Scott Shields (Alaska)**; and national guard chaplain **Rev. Gerald Heinecke (Prince of Peace, Buffalo)**.

PASTORS AND CONGREGATIONS

St. Paul's, Sidney is being served by **Rev. Allen Strawn (St. Paul's, Bridgeport)** during the vacancy.

Rev. Travis Sherman (Grace, Gordon) is serving **Grace, Merri-man, NE (Nebraska District)** while it considers its future.

Here I Stand: Against Marxist Heresy

When the Iron Curtain fell in 1991, it appeared that Communism, or its ideology—Marxism, had died the death it deserved. But it is far from dead, and Christians must take note and understand its virulent anti-Christian doctrine. In fact, we Christians are presently witnessing our civil government, schools, and the media bewitched by this anti-Christian doctrine and "philosophy and vain deceit" (Colossians 2:8). Marxist doctrine not only opposes our nation's cultural, legal, economic, and social norms, but more importantly, it is an open and bold attack upon Christ's doctrine, moral life, and church.

There are, of course, many evil forces at work to bring sin, error, and evil into our midst. Marxist ideology is but one of these many. Yet here are some instances where it is bringing real evil into our communities and nation. Critical Race Theory (CRT) and the Black Lives Matter Corporation are openly Marxist and have declared opposition to God's gift of marriage and family. The unrestrained rioting ("burn it all down") we have seen in the past year likewise prepares the way for Marxist doctrine by destabilizing law and order in our communities. Other actions contribute to the efforts to impose the theology and philosophy behind Communism upon our Christian people: open censorship of Christian morality; a materialist view of the body that undergirds LGBTQ moral aims and the

legalized coercion to promote them; the legal persecution of businesses and organizations that seek to do their work according to the dictates of God's Word and conscience; and more.

The evil works of Communism, past and present, in places like the Soviet Union and Communist China, have been clearly documented. Marxists relentlessly persecute faithful Christians and destroy churches that are not under their control. They deny individual human rights and impose the collective will of the Communist Party on their people. They destroy the natural bonds of marriage and childbearing in order to bind their citizen-slaves more closely to the State. They take over the education of our children in order to shape their lives and convictions according to their own utopian religion. They outlaw private property, and even when it is permitted (as in China today), they still retain the power to confiscate and reappropriate it. They censor and punish all opposition and utterly reject freedom of speech and freedom of conscience.

Marxism is an anti-Christian religion. It proposes a total worldview contrary to Scriptures and demands total adherence. At the foundation of Marxist theology is the doctrine of Dialectical (or Historical) Materialism. This doctrine denies that anything exists beyond what can be touched and experienced: no God, no soul, no eternal law or universal morality (i.e., no Natural Law), and no permanent (created!) nature or essence of anything, including man. Although Marxism asserts the autonomy ("self-law") of the individual, in reality, individual human rights must give way to the control of Marxist elites in government and cultural institutions. Because they have rejected the doctrine of our created nature or essence, they believe that mankind can collectively be remade in the image of a utopian manhood of their own devising. In fact, they believe that collective man is himself God: self-made, the creator of his own laws, having total authority, loyal only to himself, with a perfect destiny of his own making. These religious doctrines—heresies—now define Progressivism, Critical (Race) Theory, LGBTQ ideology, and the institutions that embody them.

The pastors of the Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod have long preached and taught openly against these theological, moral, and civil evils. For example, our first Synod president, C. F. W. Walther, dedicated four evenings of lectures (Bible Studies!) to his congregation to teach them God's Word on this matter.

In "Communism and Socialism" (CPH, 1879 English translation of the lectures), Walther demonstrated the pastoral duty to address all issues of doctrine and life, even ones that involve politics and civil morality. He warned his congregation because the Communists had begun printing a newspaper in St. Louis for laborers and because they were forming local "Labor-Unions" which were designed to advance communism among these laborers. This lengthy Bible Class on Communism and Socialism

addressed three main topics: 1) Natural Law arguments contradicting Communism and Socialism; 2) Scriptural teaching that corrected the Marxist misuse of Scripture and that taught the doctrines that rejected Marxist heresies; and 3) the defense of Christendom's care for the poor and needy.

We stand against the Marxist heresy and the evils that it promotes. God defend us and our children from these evils. We confess the one true God, who created us and all creatures and who cares and provides for us in a world groaning under the corruption and futility of our sin (Romans 8:18–28). In abiding hope and joy we look to Christ for redemption from all sin and evil. Good Lord, deliver us!

REFORMATION 500

One of the first things Luther wrote upon his arrival at the Wartburg during Eastertide 1521 was a simple, brief commentary on the great Psalm we still use in the liturgy for Ascension and Pentecost: "Psalm 68: About Easter, Ascension, and Pentecost" (AE 13.3–37). Luther recognized, as we do in our use of the psalm, that Psalm 68 is a beautiful prophecy and hymn about Christ, the ministry, the Holy Spirit, and the Church. Here are few select samples of psalm verse and commentary.

Verse 1 reads: "Let God arise, let His enemies be scattered; let those who hate Him flee before Him!" Luther comments: "When Christ died, God feigned sleep and pretended that He did not see the raging Jews. He permitted them to rally and gather strength, whereas the poor disciples fled and scattered. And now, when the Jews assumed that they had carried the day and that Christ had been laid low, God woke up again and raised Christ from the dead. Then things took an entirely different turn, and the disciples were gathered together. . . [The prophet/psalmist] was indignant over the way the Jews were exulting because of Christ's death and the disciples' flight, and he cried: 'Let the rejoicings of God's enemies come to an end! Let God arise and effect a change! Let Him raise Christ from the dead!'" (3)

Verse 6, in Luther's translation of the Hebrew, reads, "He is the God who gives the desolate a home to dwell in; He leads out the prisoners at the right time. But the obstinate dwell in a parched land." He then writes, "First of all, however, it is imperative that man be taken captive by the Law and placed into the bondage of sin, that is, in terror of his conscience. He who feels no sin will not be impelled to seek grace; he will pay no attention either to the Gospel or to faith. Therefore the Law is conscience' jailer, chains, fetters, and prison. The Law points to sin and exposes it, and thus it takes conscience captive (Rom. 4:15; 7:7, 8). God does not deliver us from these bonds whenever we deem it necessary, but He permits us to be humbled and tormented in them until we thirst for grace. Now He comes and gives us His Word, to which we cling, and