

# Reformation History #10:

## The Smalcald Articles by Pastor Glenn Huebel

Part of a year-long series on Reformation history and theology, from November 2016—October 2017, in commemoration of the 500th Anniversary of the Reformation.

FINALLY! After many years of steadfast resistance, the Pope agreed, in 1536, to call a Church Council with Lutheran participation. This was not actually the Pope's idea or desire. The Emperor, Charles V, was battling on so many fronts he was getting desperate for restoring unity in the old Holy Roman Empire. Though the Council was called, it never came to pass. Nevertheless, in January of 1537, Elector John Frederick requested the great Reformer to write a summary statement of the Lutheran confession in anticipation of and preparation for the Council. Though Luther knew, by this time, that peace with the Pope on any terms but his own was a hopeless dream, he was eager for the opportunity to confess the faith and submitted to the request. He was seriously ill when he wrote the document, and considered it his last will and testament.

Lutheran princes and theologians met in Smalcald, Germany in February, 1537 to consider these articles of Luther. Because of his illness Luther could not attend, but his assistant, Melanchthon, exercised his considerable influence to squelch acceptance of the articles as a proper document to present to a Church Council. In his mind they were far too caustic and polemical for diplomatic discussion. The Princes, however, urged Melanchthon to write an appendix to refute the Roman Catholic teaching of the papacy. He complied, writing a scholarly, carefully reasoned argument from history and theology that proved the institution of the papacy was a human invention, not a divine institution. Furthermore, he demonstrated that the history and marks of the papacy align perfectly with Scripture's teaching of the antichrist. The Princes and theologians at Smalcald did not approve Luther's articles, but did approve the appendix, now referred to as "The Power and Primacy of the Pope."



Lucas Cranach the Elder (1472-1553). *Portrait of Philipp Melanchthon*. 1537, oil on beechwood. Kunsthalle Karlsruhe, Germany.

Later, the entire Lutheran Church recognized the value of the Smalcald Articles and included them, together with Melanchthon's appendix, into the Book of Concord as one of our six confessional documents. The irony of all this is that it was not the fiery, plain spoken Luther, but the diplomatic, peace-loving Melanchthon who wrote what has become the most controversial statement of faith in our Confessions. Some truths just cannot be presented in a diplomatic manner.

In his preface, Luther states his desire to make his teaching and testimony clear before he dies (which he expected to happen soon). He was not only concerned about the Roman opponents, but about "false brothers who profess to be on our side." These teachers were actually citing his writings against him. Luther says that they knew they were not teaching his doctrine, but "want to dress up their poison with my labor. Under my name, they want to mislead the poor people. What

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*That you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in His name. —John 20:31*

will happen, dear God, when I am dead?"

Thus, we don't find anything new in the Smalcald articles. Luther vehemently underscores what he has always declared as his faith and teaching. He affirms clearly the doctrine of justification by grace through faith in Christ. He condemns the Roman Catholic doctrine of the Mass, the practice of Monasticism, the prohibition of marriage, the invocation of saints, and the claims of the papacy. He strongly reaffirms the orthodox

doctrine of sin, repentance, and the Gospel. He restates the doctrine of the sacraments in stronger language than is provided in the Augsburg Confession.

Luther commends the Smalcald Articles with the following prayer. We can understand the reluctance of those who thought reconciliation with Rome was still achievable. This is the tone that marks the entire work. The Lord gives many gifts to His Church, and there is a time for every one of them to be manifest. Thank God for people who confess boldly

without mincing words!

*O Lord Jesus Christ, may You Yourself hold a council. Deliver Your servants by Your glorious return! The pope and his followers are done for. They will have none of You. Help us who are poor and needy, who sigh to You, and who pray to You earnestly, according to the grace You have given us through Your Holy Spirit, who lives and reigns with You and the Father, blessed forever. Amen. (Martin Luther)*

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## **Care Board:** Caring for our church family... by Pamela Buhler

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As an outreach effort, Messiah will continue to care for our church family and display cards & care

boxes for anyone to participate. Simply take a card or box, fill it with love, stamp, and mail. It's that simple. Over the next few months we will be concentrating on the following members:

### **College/Seminary Students**

We would like to show our college members we care. Whether they are far away or still attend Messiah, let's send them a care package and pray for them throughout the year!

(Local students can receive care packages at MLC mailbox.)

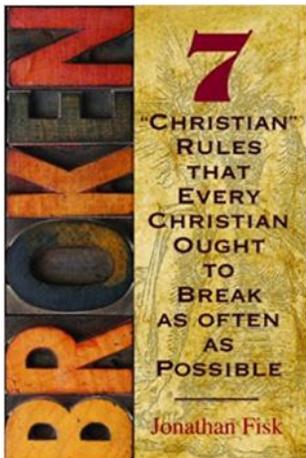
### **Members Serving in our Military**

Let's care for our servicemen and women and bless them with gifts and prayers by sending them something to say, "Thank you!" See Deaconess Intern Pamela Buhler for more information or call her at 972-342-7697

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## ***New! Wednesday Night Youth Group Beginning in September***

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### **Wednesday Nights 6:30-8pm**

All youth, 6<sup>th</sup> grade and up, are invited to meet in Messiah's Activity Center for Wednesday Night Youth Group. We will begin meeting on Wednesday, September 13, and run through May 2018 with the exception of Wednesday night Church services (Advent, Lent, etc.).

Here is what a night will look like:

1. Opening with "Bummers and Blessings," each youth will take a turn sharing something good and bad that happened to them that week.

2. Next, a Bible study, book study, video study, or Bible trivia game will be conducted.
3. Finally, youth will be free to play in the youth rooms till 8pm; this will include ping pong, darts, air hockey, and board games.

These activities will be co-led by Michelle Pickett and Pamela Buhler.

Our first study will be on the book *BROKEN* by Pastor Jonathan Fisk. If you own a copy bring it along!



Many of us have been touched, even if indirectly, but the recent hurricane and flooding that have ravaged the southern parts of Texas. Surely many prayers have been offered for the welfare of loved ones, friends and strangers in the affected areas. The property damage is unimaginable. Thankfully the casualties haven't been higher, though some have even lost their life to this disaster. In the days to come, as the picture of the damages becomes clearer, and the particular needs are communicated, I'm sure many of us will want to lend support in various ways to help toward restoration and recovery. And this is all well and good.

But it raises a question for the Christian, when we see such natural disasters affecting the world around us. Where is God in all of this? Why does he let such things happen? How do we respond, and how do we best respond to the needs that we will learn about in the coming weeks and months?

## **The Theology of the Cross**

Lutherans are not surprised to see suffering, nor does it cause all sorts of tension for our faith. We recognize that Christ is often hidden in suffering, rather than the glory and success of the world. Just as God worked through the suffering of Christ himself to bring about the salvation of the world, so does he often work in the things of this world that "are not" and are lowly and shameful and counter to the world's expectations. While God didn't bring sin into the world, or cause its fall, he does work through the chaos and

troubles that sin brings – for his own good purposes. Indeed, "we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him..." (Romans 8:28). And that includes, even, suffering.

## **Care for the Whole Person**

When our neighbor suffers, it is an opportunity for us as Christians to show love and care. And that love and care ought to be for the whole person. We can share the Gospel, but if we don't address the needs of the body – we aren't very credible. And if we only care for the outward needs, but don't also share Jesus where we can – then what good is ultimately done? We best care for our neighbor who is suffering disaster by helping in all his needs, body and soul. This is what our Lutheran relief agencies and charities bring to the table that the Red Cross or FEMA cannot, and will not. Not that it's bad to simply offer a meal or a warm blanket, but how much better to offer that and also offer the loving words of Christ?



## **A Ministry of Presence**

Often times, there is little that we can do, physically, in the face of disaster. The church responds from afar by sending its representatives, pastors and other workers, as boots on the ground to bring comfort to those suffering. And so we pray also for those who minister to the victims, that they might listen and respond effectively to the needs they see. The time may come when volunteers arrive in person to help with the cleanup and recovery. These personal, in-the-flesh visitations can also go a long way toward healing the distressed. It's

one thing to know many have given money to help you, but it's another to see a kind face and be reminded of God's ever-present mercy.

## **A Helpful List:**

LCMS Disaster Relief has a helpful list of "Ways to Help Neighboring and Distant Communities" who suffer a disaster. I simply share these:

1. Financial contributions are often the best kind of donation
2. Used clothing is rarely a useful item to collect for disaster relief
3. Confirm the need before beginning a collection of donated goods
4. Donate through an organization
5. Transportation must be planned in advance
6. Donated goods must be well-packed and labeled
7. Volunteers are encouraged to affiliate with an agency involved in disaster response and recovery

We want to help our neighbors who suffer, but we want to be smart about how we do so. At Messiah, we've suggested donations either directly to LCMS World Relief and Human Care, or to the Texas District, LCMS. There may be other ways to help that you'll find on your own, or that we'll make known through the congregation in the days to come. We'll let you know as we become aware.

## **Signs of the Times**

Jesus warned us in the New Testament (cf. Matthew 24) that not only false teachers and wars, but also natural disasters would serve as signs of the times in the days before his return. Paul speaks of the creation itself in a turmoil, like labor pains, groaning for the day of Christ's appearing (Romans 8:22-24). When we see these things happen, the Christian is driven to repentance, but also to faith in the God who provides for his people. Troubles will come, but in the end all

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## Messiah Lutheran Church & School

The Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod

1308 Whitley Rd. Keller, TX 76248

Church Office: (817) 431-2345

Academy Office: (817) 431-5486

Sunday Worship: 8:00 a.m. & 10:45 a.m.

Sunday School & Adult Bible Class: 9:30 a.m.

Rev. Glenn Huebel, Senior Pastor

Rev. Thomas Chryst, Associate Pastor

[www.messiahkeller.org](http://www.messiahkeller.org)

## Disaster Response, cont.

pain and suffering are put away, as God wipes the tears from our eyes for eternity.

### Finally, a prayer...

*Almighty God, merciful Father, Your thoughts are not our thoughts and Your ways are not our ways. In Your wisdom you have permitted this disastrous hurricane and flooding to befall many in*

*our state. Keep them, and all of us from despair and do not let our faith fail us but sustain and comfort us. Direct all efforts to attend the injured, console the bereaved and protect the helpless. Deliver any who are still in danger and bring hope and healing, relief and restoration. Through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.*

## Greetings From the Principal's Desk

by Mrs. Betsy Kirk

I cannot begin to impart to you, in words, how exciting the beginning of the MLCA school year has been! As with every year, school faculty and staff vote on a yearly Bible verse. The verse serves as our school theme and so much of what we do revolves around this Bible passage. This year's verse is Joshua 1:9:

*"Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous. Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged, for the Lord your God will be with you wherever you go."*

I cannot think of a better message to instill in the hearts and minds of our precious students. It is a blessing to work in a school where the very methodology, our educational philosophy, arms every child that roams our halls with the armor of God. Our students are reminded DAILY that God is with them. We are blessed to be in partnership with our

families, working hand-in-hand to educate their young minds and spread the Gospel. MLCA is building a strong foundation in each child. We are unapologetically Lutheran and decidedly Classical. We have adopted the term "delightfully rigorous", which communicates to the world our desire to teach in a developmentally appropriate way that capitalizes on the way that God designed us. Our aim is to instill in young minds a love of learning that continues well after the school day is done.

At MLCA, we seek to build *character*, not self-esteem. We teach students to think, in a world of chaos and uncertainty. The Classical Method teaches young minds to look at all of the facts and discern, reason it out, ask questions, and form their own opinion. We are not isolating the students: protecting them from the worldly wishy-wash, or building a

moat around them. We are inoculating them with logic, reason and Godly wisdom. As Frederick Douglass once said, "It is easier to build strong children than to repair broken men." An education at Messiah Lutheran Classical Academy builds a strong foundation on which a child's life can be built. WHAT A LEGACY!

Does this sound like something you desire for your child or grandchild? We would love to give you a tour! Please give us a call at 817-431-5486 and check out our website at [www.mlcatexas.org](http://www.mlcatexas.org). Want to see more? Follow us on Facebook, Instagram and Twitter: just look for our username: MLCATexas.



## Lutheran Braille Workers

Would you join with Lutheran Braille Workers (LBW) and its mission?

First, would you include LBW on your daily prayers?

Second, would you consider spreading the word of Christ by volunteering just one hour per month in a packaging or printing workshop?

Third, would you consider making a one time or an ongoing gift to this ministry that touches so many lives with the Gospel?

- Youth Braille group meets the second Sunday of the month after the second service
- Parents' Braille group will meet for

the first time on September 19, and every third Tuesday of the month from 7 to 8 p.m. Come while your kids are in confirmation class!

Please contact Erasmo or Barbara Pinero at [bpinero@frontier.com](mailto:bpinero@frontier.com) or 682.552.3622