

Luther then teaches that Jesus gave three exceptions regarding who ought to marry. Jesus used the term “eunuch” to refer to those who are purposefully unmarried.

In the third place, from this ordinance of creation God has himself exempted three categories of men, saying in Matthew 19:12, “There are eunuchs who have been so from birth, and there are eunuchs who have been made eunuchs by men, and there are eunuchs who have made themselves eunuchs for the sake of the kingdom of heaven.” Apart from these three groups, let no man presume to be without a spouse. And whoever does not fall within one of these three categories should not consider anything except the estate of marriage. Otherwise it is simply impossible for you to remain righteous. For the Word of God which created you and said, “Be fruitful and multiply,” abides and rules within you; you can by no means ignore it, or you will be bound to commit heinous sins without end. (18–19)

Luther explains these three categories: The first refers to those who have some bodily illness, deficiency, or weakness that prevents them from begetting, conceiving, or bringing forth children. The second refers to the evil practice of castrating healthy men. This category today includes both men and women who have been rendered infertile by sex-change mutilations of various sorts. The third category are what Luther calls “those spiritually rich and exalted persons, bridled by the grace of God” (21), who are otherwise healthy and able to marry but can choose to remain celibate without sinful desires or actions. These are very rare. Such persons choose the single life for the sake of the gospel and in order to beget or serve spiritual children.

Luther finishes out the first part of “The Estate of Marriage” by considering the 18 impediments to marriage that were named by the late Medieval Roman church. Although he rejected some impediments entirely and others in part, there are some impediments we also recognize today. It is forbidden to marry a blood relative within certain degrees. (This taboo has surfaced recently as some perverted persons advocate for incest and as more children of anonymous sperm donors come to marriageable age.) Certain relationships by marriage are forbidden (e.g. step-mother). And of course, it is an impediment if either the man or woman is unfit for marriage. Luther notes in passing that both son and daughter must observe “obedience to parental authority” (29) in obtaining consent to marry .

FUTURE DATES (see wylcms.org for information)
August 7–11: Wyoming Lutheran Youth Camp, Lander, WY

THE NEXT ROUNDUP

The next Roundup will be delivered to congregations around June 20 (July 2022 issue).



Wyoming District Round-Up

August 2022

District Website: www.wylcms.org

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

For **Rev. Ralph Jaeger** (emeritus, Laramie), health
For our active-duty chaplains, **Rev. Lynn Christensen (retiring at the end of July)**, and **Rev. Ryan Mills (Colorado)**
For **Rev. Neil Carlson (Zion, Chappell and Trinity, South Divide)** has been discharged from the rehabilitation hospital and will continue his recovery at home. Thanks be to God! Medical updates and donation information can be found linked from the wylcms.org home page.

PASTORS AND CONGREGATIONS

Rev. Travis Sherman (Grace, Gordon) is serving **Grace, Merri-**
man, NE (Nebraska District) while it considers its future.
Trinity, Gillette served by **Rev. John Christensen (emeritus, Ther-**
mopolis) called Rev. Clint Stark (Texas) on June 19, and he has returned the call.
Rev. Kenneth Mars (Immanuel, Burns and St. John’s, Kimball)
has accepted the call to **Christ the King, Cody**. His last Sunday at Immanuel and St. John’s will be August 14.
Prince of Peace, Buffalo (served by **Rev. Rene Castellero Imman-**
uel, Sheridan) held its first pre-call meeting June 15.
Bethel, Lander (served by **Rev. Gregory Sonnenschein, Wind Riv-**
er Lutheran Mission, Ft. Washakie and Mt. Calvary, Dubois) held its first
pre-call meeting June 12.
Our Savior’s, Chadron (served by **Rev. Dan Praeuner, emeritus)**
held its first pre-call meeting June 12.
Trinity, Riverton (Rev. Mark Mumme) called Rev. Jesse Krusemark
(Minnesota South) as Assistant Pastor and Head Teacher. Pastor Krusemark
returned the call. On July 24 Trinity called Rev. Anthony Dodgers (Iowa Dis-
trict East).

The Christian in Community: Restoration after the Flood

Communities have power that individuals do not have, power for good or power for evil. The Old Testament often read at Pentecost, Genesis 11:1–9, demonstrates the power of the post-flood community to do evil. They were united in language and purpose. “Come, let us build ourselves a city and a tower with its top in the heavens, and let us make a name for ourselves, lest we be dispersed over the face of the whole earth.” Thus they determined to

use their community power to rival God and rebel against His command to “be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth” (Genesis 9:1).

God acknowledged the power of community: “Behold, they are one people, and they have all one language, and this is only the beginning of what they will do. And nothing that they propose to do will now be impossible for them.” Although this community could not hurt or destroy God Himself, they could certainly reject Him in His Word and thereby defy His will upon the earth. So the Triune God proposed a defense against their collective evil: “Come, let us go down and there confuse their language, so that they may not understand one another’s speech.” By destroying their unity in language “the LORD dispersed them from there over the face of all the earth.”

God’s action at the Tower of Babel demonstrates that He will sometimes divide communities in order to limit their capacity to do evil. We can apply this insight to the divisions we see in national, state, and local communities, to division in our families, and even to division in the church (see 1 Corinthians 11:19). Jesus teaches this truth, “Every kingdom divided against itself is laid waste, and no city or house divided against itself will stand” (Matthew 12:25).

We also learn here that God’s gift of language is His instrument to unify man in communities, or to break them apart, diminish their power to do evil, and punish their rebellion against Him. At Pentecost (Acts 2), the division of languages continued, but the unity of God’s pure Word was preached in their various languages. By this Gospel the Holy Spirit created one, holy, Christian (or Universal), and apostolic church. Therefore, we maintain the church’s unity by keeping and obeying God’s Word. In our schools we give our greatest attention to the teaching of language and Holy Scriptures.

We read the history of Babel at Pentecost to teach us these lessons and to point us to the Holy Spirit’s renewal of humanity at Pentecost. It begins with the Work of Christ, for “we were reconciled to God by the death of His Son” (Romans 5:10). God has now “entrusted to us the message of reconciliation” (2 Corinthians 5:19), the message which He commands pastors to preach and teach, and which all Christians confess and live out in their lives. The purity of God’s Word is the restoration of a common language, the language by which the Spirit unites the Church of Jesus Christ. The church of this pure Word and Sacraments is the reunited community, with God’s power and mandate to do good, to God’s glory and the salvation of man.

REFORMATION 500

Germany in 1522 was more like America in 2022 than we realize, particularly in regard to marriage. Although their perversions were more subtle than ours, marriage was systematically mocked and treated with contempt by the prevailing papal order. Luther’s August 1522 treatise, *The Estate of Marriage* (AE 45.17–49), is a beautiful and basic treatment of the whole marriage estate (which includes marriage, family, medicine, economics, and education).

The Estate of Marriage has three parts: 1) which persons may marry another, 2) which persons God permits to divorce, and 3) how to live a pious Christian life in the marriage estate. Because the treatise has so much applicable instruction for us today, I will summarize only the first part of it this month and take up the other two parts in the following months.

In the first part, Luther lays out the Biblical foundation for marriage. His description is remarkably apt for our nation’s moral and theological chaos. He begins:

In order to proceed aright let us direct our attention to Genesis 1:27, “So God created man . . . male and female he created them.” From this passage we may be assured that God divided mankind into two classes, namely, male and female, or a he and a she. This was so pleasing to him that he himself called it a good creation [Gen. 1:31]. Therefore, each one of us must have the kind of body God has created for us. I cannot make myself a woman, nor can you make yourself a man; we do not have that power. But we are exactly as he created us: I a man and you a woman. Moreover, he wills to have his excellent handiwork honored as his divine creation, and not despised. The man is not to despise or scoff at the woman or her body, nor the woman the man. But each should honor the other’s image and body as a divine and good creation that is well-pleasing unto God himself. (17–18)

Luther teaches that all issues of identity, gender, or sex have their origin and reality in the fact that God created each one of us. This is now counter-cultural in the extreme. Today’s society generally follows some version of Rene Descartes (1596–1650), who set the stage for the last 4 centuries with the Latin dictum *cogito ergo sum*, “I think; therefore I am.” Later influences from Darwin (evolution), Marx (communism), Freud (sexual psychology), and others have entered in. But all these false teachers have one thing in common: man’s existence and identity is believed to be self-referential—I determine my own existence or identity; my existence and autonomy are rooted in my own thoughts, my emotions, my will, my actions, etc. But God reveals this to be the lie. God created me. He gave me my existence, my identity, my sex and gender, my life. I am nothing apart from Him; without Him, I do not exist. Because He created me, “it is my duty to thank and praise, serve and obey Him” (Small Catechism).

So the whole “woke” agenda of sexual, racial, economic, and class identity warfare is revealed to be a fraud, a prideful denial of the only, one, and true God. Rather, God created me as I am, body and soul, with divine intention and purpose. Luther continues,

In the second place, after God had made man and woman he blessed them and said to them, “Be fruitful and multiply” [Gen. 1:28]. From this passage we may be assured that man and woman should and must come together in order to multiply. . . . For this word which God speaks, “Be fruitful and multiply,” is not a command. It is more than a command, namely, a divine *work* which it is not our prerogative to hinder or ignore. (18)

Later in the treatise and in other writings, Luther observes the compelling nature of God’s Word and work in Genesis 1:28. We see here the basis for defending the right and good of marriage and for rejecting so-called same-sex “marriage” and other related perversions.