



In the last issue, I discussed the word “evangelical,” and noted that in Germany, the word “evangelical” commonly refers to generic Protestants.” In this issue, I would like to tackle the word “Protestant.”

It is common to divide western Christianity into two groups: Roman Catholics and Protestants. Anything that is not Roman Catholic is considered Protestant, and anything that is not Protestant is considered Roman Catholic. All the groups that broke away from the Roman Catholic Church during the Reformation of the 16th century are considered “Protestant.” Of course, this simple definition becomes more complicated when we encounter Eastern Orthodoxy, or the Coptic Church in Egypt, or the Arminian Church—all of which have their origins long before the Protestant Reformation and cannot be considered Roman Catholic or Protestant. And then there are the various reforming groups

Christian Buzzwords: “Protestant”

By Pastor Jensen

from the middle ages—the Waldensians, Hussites, Cathars, etc.—who in the meantime have largely been lumped into various Protestant denominations. And, of course, there are the various groups that have seemingly popped out of nowhere and can’t be considered Christian—such as the Mormons, Jehovah’s Witnesses, and Oneness Pentecostals—which ultimately do have their origins in some form of Protestantism (in fact, you could consider these heretical groups to be the final destiny of generic Protestantism). So what a Protestant actually *is* can be a bit slippery to define,

and to identify as a Protestant isn’t necessarily helpful anymore.

The term “Protestant,” of course, is etymologically related to the word “protest.” The origin of the word hits close to home for us here in Kaiserslautern. In the city of Speyer (about an hour east of here), the term “Protestant” was born at the second Imperial Diet in Speyer on April 19, 1529. After the Diet of Worms in 1521 (where Luther said “Here I stand” and refused to renounce his works), the Emperor outlawed Luther’s writings and teachings. At the first Diet of Speyer in 1526, the ban against Lutheran doctrine and practice was lifted, but reinstated in 1529. Six princes and fourteen Free Imperial Cities protested the action, and thus won for themselves the name “Protestant.” Since then, any group originating in the Reformation of the sixteenth century has been considered “Protestant.”

So, are Lutherans Protestant? According to the strict, historical definition outlined above, the answer is: yes. The Lutheran Church has its origins in the Reformation and sought to reform the abuses that had crept into the Roman Catholic Church. But already at the time of the Reformation, there were major disagreements between those in the Protestant camp. Many Protestant theologians later began teaching that Luther and the Lutherans did not go far enough in purging themselves of Roman Catholicism. They saw him as only one step towards a Reformed Church (which is where the Reformed come from, such as Ulrich Zwingli or John Calvin), that is, a church that had completely reformed itself of Roman Catholic abuses.

The issue, though, is that many Protestants discarded doctrines and practices simply because they looked or sounded Roman Catholic. Today's Protestantism hasn't been relieved of this allergy against all things Catholic. For example, Luther corrected the abuse of Transubstantiation, the Roman Catholic philosophy of the Lord's Supper that says bread and wine no longer remain, but only the body and blood of

Christ. Luther argued that in the Bible, it is clear the bread is Christ's body and the wine is Christ's blood. We deny neither the bread and the wine nor the body and blood. The Reformed, however, deny the body and blood of Christ and allow only the bread and wine to remain, in a symbolic or spiritual sense. Or with the doctrine of Election: medieval theologians believed in the freedom of the will quite strongly. The Lutherans allowed freedom of the will in lower matters, but a bondage of the will in things spiritual. The Reformed, at first, completely denied free will and taught a sovereignty of God that arbitrarily saves some and condemns others. Or in terms of liturgy: the Lutherans maintained all liturgical forms that did not contradict the clear teachings of Scripture, so the idea of the Mass as a sacrifice pleasing to God was discarded. Everything else was retained, including the vestments, the order of service, the readings, etc. The Reformed, on the other hand, generally had plain services, sometimes even without the singing of hymns not found in Scripture. From a Lutheran perspective, the Reformed "threw the baby out with the bath water."

In this second, broader sense, that Protestants are almost anti-Catholic, the Lutheran Church cannot be considered Protestant. That's why, when it comes to the Sacraments and the Liturgy, Lutherans feel more at home with the Roman Catholics than with the Protestants. The intention of Lutheranism was to *reform* the abuses of the Roman Catholic Church, not tear everything down and start over. Rather, we respect and cherish what has been passed onto us from our fathers in the faith at all times of Christian history. So if you need to emphasize the distinction between Lutheranism and the abuses of Roman Catholicism, then yes, Lutherans are Protestants. But if you need to emphasize perhaps the more pressing issues of the day, the distinction between Lutheranism and other groups with their origins in the Reformation, then no, Lutherans are not Protestants. This is not trying to say "yes" and "no" at the same time; it's taking the word in the two senses in which it is used to show that Lutheranism is neither Roman Catholic nor generic Protestant, but based on the Word of God and in continuity with the historic church of all times.



A Letter from the Mission Field Pastor Christian Tiews

Greetings from the LCMS Convention in Milwaukee!

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"Jethro was delighted to hear about all the good things the LORD had done for Israel in rescuing them from the hand of the Egyptians" (Ex 18:9). * About six months ago, Saman, his wife Parisa, and their two

young children (all Iranians who had just moved to Hamburg) contacted Zion Lutheran Church, where I work. Saman had been baptized several years before, whereas Parisa and the two children were still Muslim. Nevertheless, **both**

parents were eager to have their children baptized. Scripture teaches that people of all ages should be baptized, including children (Mt 19:14, Ac 2:38-39, Ac 16:13-15, etc.). A few weeks into our baptismal classes, Parisa said she wanted to be baptized as well. I had the great privilege of baptizing the children in early March. Parisa took another

month of classes and was received into the family of

Saman, Parisa and children.



our triune God on Easter Sunday. Throughout our classes, Saman shared that ever since becoming a Christian, he has wanted to be a pastor.

Fast forward: Last week, Saman was accepted into the pastoral formation program of Riga Luther Academy, the online Lutheran seminary at which I teach. Next month he will join seminarians and deaconess students from over a dozen countries across Eurasia and Africa as they begin their studies. This past Sunday, Saman assisted me in the Persian-language Divine Service. Excited about this opportunity, he told his whole family about it, including his Muslim parents. * Moses had shared with his father-in-law how the Lord was working in the lives of the Israelites and Jethro rejoiced with him, even though the old man did not believe in the Lord. Saman's Dad, who does not believe in Him either, reacted similarly when Saman shared his joy: "You were raised Muslim but have chosen this path for yourself and I am proud of you. Congratulations!" Even today, the Lord continues to work in families as He wills, gathering people into His fold one person at a time.

(Picture / story with Saman's permission).



Elder's Corner

Insights, thoughts, and inspirational messages

Spotlight Verse

The Lord is not slow to fulfill his promise as some count slowness, but is patient toward you, not wishing that any should perish, but that all should reach repentance.”

2 Peter 3:9

The title of this piece, “God’s mercy amidst the plagues” seems a bit incongruous, almost contradictory, but I kindly ask you to hear me out...

Most likely, in our bible teaching, and Sunday school experiences, we have been taught about the ten plagues that God visited upon hard hearted Pharaoh and the Egyptians. We learn how the water was turned to blood, about infestations of frogs, gnats, flies, and locusts. We hear about the death of the livestock, boils of the skin, a hailstorm, a darkness, and all culminating in the big finale of the death of the firstborn among the Egyptians. What is often missed, however, are God’s multiple, merciful, attempts to bring Pharaoh to acknowledge Him as Lord and call him to obedience.

Upon close examination of the plagues, you will find a pattern emerge. The first nine plagues come in groups of threes. In each of these three sets, the first two plagues come with a message to Pharaoh from God, delivered through Moses and Aaron, that declare who God is, His command, and the consequences for disobedience. For example, in Exodus 9:1-3 (ESV) we read: “Then the Lord said to Moses, “Go into Pharaoh and say to him, “Thus says the Lord, the God of the Hebrews, “Let my people go, that they may serve me. For if you refuse to let them go and still hold them, behold, the hand of the Lord will fall with a very severe plague upon your livestock...”. Preceding the first and second plagues in each set you will find similar language. The third plague in each set, however, comes without warning, in judgement.

So where is the mercy in all this? Hang

tight, we’re getting there.

God told Moses well ahead of time, back in Exodus 3:19-20 “..I know the king of Egypt will not let you go unless compelled by a mighty hand. So I will stretch out my hand and strike Egypt with all the wonders that I will do in it; after that he will let you go.” Even though God undoubtedly foreknew the way Pharaoh was to respond to His strong promptings, He still offered Pharaoh several opportunities to turn to Him, acknowledge Him as Lord, and respond in obedience. While Pharaoh did not relent and accept God’s grace and mercy, think of the message this example set for those at the time, and for us today.

In 2 Peter 3:9 we are told “The Lord is not slow to fulfill his promise as some count slowness, but is patient toward you, not wishing that any should perish, but that all should reach repentance.” Knowing this, we can confidently believe that God did not want Pharaoh to perish, and mercifully gave him ample opportunity to change his heart. God could have rightfully just slapped all the plagues on Pharaoh and Egypt without warning, but he didn’t. In mercy, he gave opportunities to repent. If God, fully knowing that Pharaoh was not going to respond to hard lessons, and yet still pursued him, how much should it mean to us to know that God is pursuing us too, just as much, perhaps even more? I take comfort in knowing this, the fallen sinner I am and ever in need of a Savior, that God still pursues me, pursues all of us, and gives us all opportunity time and again to turn back to him, acknowledge him, repent, and attempt to live as obediently as we can.



Please join us in praying for the important work of the Kaiserslautern Military Resiliency Center in Landstuhl, Germany.

CONFESSIONS STUDY



On Thursday nights
at
St. Michael's

LOOK FOR US ON FACEBOOK & MESSENGER

Kaiserslautern
Evangelical Lutheran
Church (KELC)

For news, worship sign-ups
and fellowship events.

KELC Volunteer Schedule

8/6/23: 1st Sunday

Usher: Mason Westphal
Greeter/Elder: Rob Tuttle
Altar Guild: Christina Peterson
Acolyte: Jonathan Ponziano

8/13/23: 2nd Sunday

Usher: Jared Anderson
Greeter/Elder: Stephen Guzik
Altar Guild: Emily & Eloise Ponziano
Acolyte: Jonathan Ponziano

8/20/23: 3rd Sunday

Usher: Stephen Guzik
Greeter/Elder: Jeff Peterson
Altar Guild: Lorraine Hester
Acolyte: Mark Hester

8/27/23: 4th Sunday

Usher: Jeff Peterson
Greeter/Elder: Paul Hester
Altar Guild: Christina Peterson
Acolyte: Dylan Worley



Thank you to all who came out and helped with the Lutheran Potluck dinner at Rhema on July 28th. Nobody went hungry!

Please join us again at the end of August. Date and Signup Genius coming soon.



August Birthdays



1 Marla Arrington
1 Anneliese Ayers
6 Camille Ayers
11 Leah Young
12 Brandy Holmes
15 Ashley Young
22 Charlotte Blank
25 Jacob Ponziano
27 Stephen Young
29 Elizabeth Anglin
30 Ryan Young

Sundays at KELC

Divine Service

Sunday Mornings 8:30-9:30 AM

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Fellowship Time

Sunday Mornings 9:30-10:15 AM

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Sunday School & Bible Study

at Kirche Mittendrïn 10:15-11:15 AM

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Catechesis

St. Michael's Basement
11:30 AM-12:30 PM

August Wedding Anniversaries

Happy 32nd Anniversary to
Jeff & Christina Peterson on the 11th.

Happy 28th Anniversary to
James Anglin & Shanley Allen
on the 19th



Happy 36th Anniversary to
Rob and Penny Tuttle
on the 29th.

