

**Understanding
The
CRISIS
HAPPENING
IN THE**

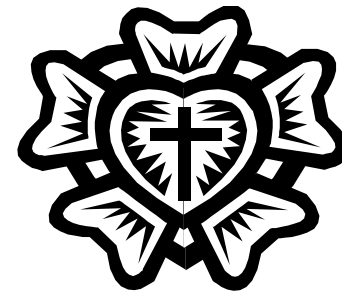
**Find out more by visiting the
Epiphany District website at
www.epiphanydistrict.com
(507-227-9832)**

or

**Lutheran Congregations in Mission
for Christ
website at
www.wsullivan@ameritech.net
(toll free at 866-720-5262)**

Copyright by the Epiphany District, Pastor Lee R. Harder
Permission granted to reproduce this material March 2002
For more information call 507-227-9832

Lutheran



MARTIN LUTHER'S COAT OF ARM

Church

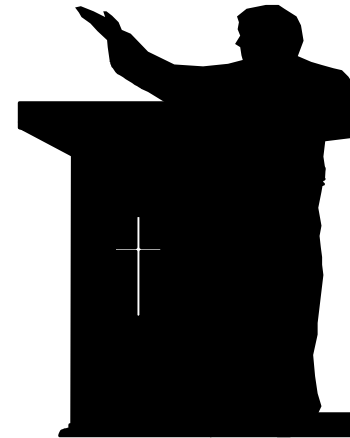
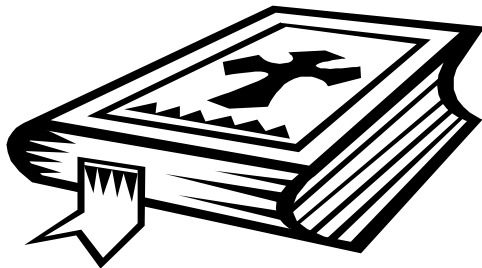


The Martin Luther of the Reformation and the church that bears his name has changed a lot in 500 years.

Some changes are good, some not.

That's Normal

However, some of today's changes are attacking the very heart of our Lutheran Confessions and The Authority of God's Word in the BIBLE



And where's our preaching and worship today?

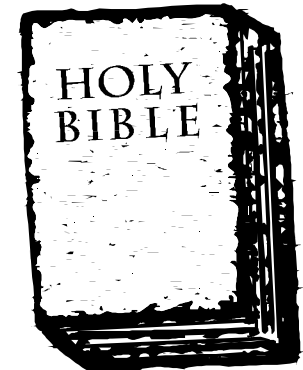
Well, when asked about such pressing issues as homosexuality and abortion a bishop responded with words of "openness to understanding" and "not

using the Bible to beat anyone up" without once saying the word SIN says something about where we are.

Our preaching stresses messages of love and inclusivity again and again, but fail to declare the dire consequences of our sinful conduct before God. True, we are not to judge others, but **we will be judged by GOD !**

Our church is suffering from a sickness that will rot us from within.

Isn't it time we start using the medicine that will cure us ?



The Word of God

We've got problems in education too!

Over the last decades, we have seen the educational materials of our church move in the direction of secular correctness and cultural inoffensiveness at the cost of biblical truths and God's absolutes for living.

Sunday school courses that leave our children not knowing the basic stories and lessons of Scripture that provide a foundation for life and our relationship with God.



VBS programs that are more interested in entertaining with journeys into space, the outback, survival, or the arctic than through the pages of the Bible.

Confirmation materials that fail to even touch on the principles of our faith as Christians and especially as Lutherans such as justification by faith alone, the real presence, or the authority of Scripture, but offer the worldly substitutes of niceness and complete religious passivity where all people are saved and sin doesn't matter.

How do we know
this is
HAPPENING ?



Well . . .

How do you know
That you are
Suffering
From a
Cold or the flu ?

FEVER

HEADACHE

**Body
Aches**



**Runny
Nose**

COUGH

These are called SYMPTOMS !

**What's all this stuff about
homosexuality ?**



At the August 2001 meeting of the General Assembly of the ELCA, our church was directed to begin a study on sexuality that would result in the “implementation” of practices of ordaining homosexuals in sexual relationships and the blessing of same sex unions.

This ignores the Word of God in the Bible that condemns homosexuality as sin.

This ignores the God who created the union and partnership of marriage between a man and a woman as divinely ordered.

This ignores the recent study of human sexuality which rejected such notions when 80%+ of the congregations of the ELCA voted in strong opposition.



It means bishops and/or pastors with the “Special Grace” must be the only ones to preside over the Sacrament of Holy Communion because they are the ones who “CONFECT” or **make Jesus’ body and blood present in the bread and wine.**

This denies the “priesthood of all believers” by not allowing lay people to conduct communion.

It also declares that only the empowered clergy can make Christ present in communion which make them more important than Christ Himself.

Apparently, Christ’s power is not sufficient to make His presence known in the bread and wine.

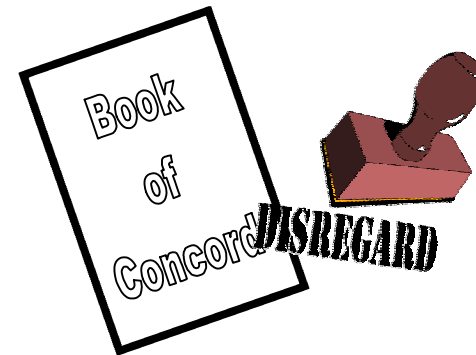
There are more “impacts” from
Called to common mission
On our Lutheran church which go against
Scripture and the Lutheran Confessions

But you get the idea!!!

Well, the ELCA has a
Disease too!
It’s turning its back on
The Word of God



And ignoring our
Lutheran confessions

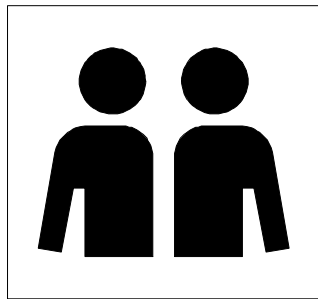




How do we know this is happening ?



The passage of Called to Common Mission an ecumenical agreement between the ELCA and the Episcopal Church USA



A sexual study that will implement the ordination of practicing homosexuals as pastors and the blessing and conducting of same sex, gay and lesbian, unions like marriages

It means bishops must become a part of a line of succession going back to Peter. It makes bishops necessary for the unity of the Church and creates an “ontological change” in them. Simply, it declares that they have a “Special Grace” which they then pass on to other bishops and priests.



This creates a false division between clergy and lay based upon a power that does not exist or have any basis in Scripture. More importantly, this understanding implies that we NOW do not need Christ alone (and Him crucified) to be saved. We need bishops TOO.

We must adopt an historic episcopate which requires (DEMANDS) certain changes be made in our Lutheran practices and beliefs.



It creates three levels of clergy

bishops

priests

deacons

all of whom have greater power and responsibility before God than the lay people of the church.

This goes against the Lutheran understanding of a “priesthood of all believers” which Luther stressed because it affirms that all Christians, clergy and lay, are ministers of the Word, blessed with different talents and gifts, but ALL ARE EQUAL in God’s eyes.

Because of the Symptoms!



The use of educational materials for Sunday school, Vacation Bible School, confirmation, and more that places emphasis on a gospel of social change over the Gospel of Jesus Christ

Preaching and worship that proclaims LOVE and INCLUSIVITY to the elimination of CHRISTIAN ACCOUNTABILITY and SIN with its dreadful consequences for our living as God’s children

Let's take a look
at some of these
SYMPTOMS
in our
Lutheran Church
ELCA



and see how they are
effecting us today
and
what they will do to us
in the

FUTURE



On January 1, 2001
our ELCA entered into an
agreement for
“Full communion”
(worship, sacramental and
administrative cooperation)
with the Episcopal Church, USA
in a document known as
Called to common mission

Ecumenical agreements of cooperation
between churches happen all the time and can
be a wonderful opportunity for those involved
BUT not this one.

WHY?



Because it requires us
as Lutherans to accept,
adopt, and practice
specific Episcopal beliefs
and understandings —
IF WE ARE TO GET
ALONG.