



Jesus Alive Today

Empowered by the Spirit to experience and express the Living Jesus so many come to know Him

Newsletter of Renewal In Missouri (RIM), November 2004, Issue #58



Are You Pressing On With Jesus?

As I move ever closer to my 70's, I remember Bible teacher Bob Mumford saying, "I don't want to end up a grumpy old man sitting in a rocking chair on my front porch." Well, neither do I. As a senior citizen, St. Paul had a lot to say about "pressing on with Jesus" even though he could have "retired." Listen to the urgency of the great apostle!

"Not that I have already obtained this or am already perfect, but I press on . . . one thing I do, forgetting what lies behind and straining forward to what lies ahead, I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus" (Phil. 3:12-13).

Previously Paul laid the foundation that he knew Jesus as his Lord by faith not works. It

is too easy to "rest on our laurels" and lose our zeal to live for Jesus and the salvation of lost people. This *pressing on* contains "urgency," much like that of a runner straining to win the race. We must not compare ourselves to "slow runners" or count our spirituality as superior or be content that we are just "in the race."

We are not running in *A* race but in *THE* race. We are not saved **by** running the race but **to** run the race. What is the essence of this race?

Paul didn't "press on" just to build spiritual racing muscles; no, Paul "pressed on" so that he could reach sinners in a demonstration of the Holy Spirit and power so that they might "know" Jesus also. His number one motivation was to "get others into the race by grace." He pressed on to lift up Jesus for the whole world to see and be saved . . . that's the purpose of the race.



You see, those who crucified Jesus did a great deed after they nailed him to the cross – they lifted up that cross for all to see. Jesus said, *"If I be lifted up, I will draw all men unto me."*

It is time to press forward (not look back) and see Jesus in our future along the race and at the "finish line." He is not waving "bye, bye," but he is beckoning us on to run with him. Jesus is alive today in your present and in your future. Be expectant for him to use you as you "lift up Jesus for all to see!"

This is the urgent message and ministry of RIM. Hallelujah! Pray for it; be a part of it!

Del Rossin

The Secret of the Early Church *The power at work in Acts*

Author J. B. Phillips, after spending 14 years translating the New Testament, sat back and reflected on his most lasting impressions. He kept returning to the book of *Acts* and its portrait of an infant church. *"The sick are not merely prayed about,"* said Phillips; *"they are healed, often suddenly and dramatically . . . Human nature is changed. The fresh air of Heaven blows gustily through these pages. The early church lived dangerously, but never before has such a handful of people exerted such widespread influence . . . To put it shortly, the lasting excitement which follows the reading of Acts is this: the thing works!"*

Who was behind the success?

Why did it work? *Acts* points decisively to the power of the Holy Spirit. Luke carefully notes that every major decision of the young church was made under his guidance. Indeed, some have suggested *Acts* should really be titled *Acts of the Holy Spirit* because of his dominant role. Luke mentions the Holy Spirit 57 times in *Acts*. In each case the Spirit is actively guiding and empowering the new believers.

For their good and the salvation of others

As the church grew, the disciples gradually began to understand what Jesus had meant when he said, *"It is for your good that I am going away. Unless I go away, the Counselor will not come to you; but if I go, I will send him to you"* (John 16:7). Although Jesus himself departed, God became present in each one of them, making his saving activity in the world more wide-spread than ever before.

The Holy Spirit personally directed each major advance of the church. As presented in *Acts*, the Spirit was no vague mist nor only a doctrine. He was a living person who spoke, guided decision making, empowered miracles and fueled the church with the energy of faith that brought salvation to multitudes.

Question? Do you eagerly desire the Holy Spirit to be that active in your life?

Holy Spirit, help us overflow with vibrant faith, bold witness, dynamic worship and fervent prayer !



From The Editor

Delbert Rossin

Welcome to this 58th edition of the RIM Newsletter, now renamed *Jesus Alive Today*. Thank you for your prayers as our Leadership Team met in July to plan RIM's future. See the next page for our **forward** plans. Please share this issue with your friends. If you would like to be part of our e-mail *Prayer Partners*, please mark the form on p. 7. I encourage you to obtain the new *Renewal Resources* in the next column . . . they have richly blessed my walk with Jesus.

You will notice that besides giving our newsletter a new title, it also has a fresh up-to-date look. We are always open to your ideas how to make this newsletter better.

We want to feature testimonies of God's grace and power in people's lives today. Do you have such a story of your own or that of a relative or friend? Please send it to us so that it might be an encouragement to others. RIM's message is about a living Christ, who is so alive in people, that others will come to know Him as Savior and Lord also.

RIM's contributions have decreased these past months. Please pray about sending in a special gift or increasing your usual amount (use the form on page 7). Above all, please pray for our finances and for the Holy Spirit to continue to lead our ministry.

Soon it will be Thanksgiving and then the Advent and Christmas seasons. It is difficult to be thankful in our troubled world (Iraq, etc.), but **"in everything [we are to] give thanks."** Primarily we are to be thankful for Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith. Also, permit me to be one of the first to wish you a blessed Christmas. *"Joy to the world, the Lord has come"* and is coming into our lives daily and soon will come to take us home.



Merry Christmas



Renewal Resources

Order the three books from your Christian bookstore

These books have greatly impacted my life in recent months. - Del Rossin

A Conversation With Jesus by Stephen Seamands

Written especially for pastors, he relates to many today who are enduring the daily grind of church work, not expecting anything positive to happen. This book will let Jesus' words be spoken anew just for you. (Victor Books, 1994)

An unSTOPPABLE force (*daring to become the church God had in mind*)

by Erwin R. McManus In a diagnosis that startles and unsettles, he shows what went wrong with the church and how we can again catch the momentum of the Holy Spirit. This book invites us to join a revolution. (Group Publishing, 2001)

Church Quake! by C. Peter Wagner

This book explains the extraordinary work of God taking place in the Church that is changing the shape of Christianity around the world. He identifies and examines the core philosophy of the present-day apostolic church movement – one of the fastest growing segments of the church. A timely and accurate assessment that is weighty in research, yet inspirational in scope. (Regal, 1999)

"Especially For Pastors" by Paul Anderson (sample article on page 5)

A monthly newsletter filled with practical and inspirational wisdom that will encourage today's pastors. (\$10 for e-mail or \$20 for hard copy) Order from Lutheran Renewal, 2701 Rice St., Roseville, MN 55113 (651-490-1517) or <ilrc@aol.com>

To order the following, please use the blank on page 7.

"Breaking Strongholds"

Paul Anderson identifies key strongholds of bondage in our lives and how we can break free through the power of the Spirit. (\$2.00)

"Healing A Father Wound"

A message bringing emotional and spiritual healing to those who carry wounds from the past. By Paul Anderson. (\$2.00)

"What About Baptism?"

Larry Christenson's 17 page booklet discusses Infant Baptism, immersion Baptism, Rebaptism and Baptism with the Holy Spirit. (\$2.50)

"Lutheran Charismatic Catechism"

Dr. Ted Jungkuntz answers renewal questions from both Holy Scripture and the Lutheran Confessions. (\$2.50 each; 5 or more, \$2.00)

"Pray For The Power Of The Spirit"

Tract by Rev. Del Rossin is a Biblical study on releasing the power of the Holy Spirit in us. (6 for \$1.00 or 100 for \$15.00)

"The Gift Of Tongues"

24 page booklet by Larry Christenson is a Biblical study of this spiritual gift. (\$2.50)

Power For Warfare

100 page book by Rev. Phil Gehlhar will help Christians use the Word of God to do the work of God in defeating God's enemies. (\$7.95)

Prayer Power

How prayer works for ourselves and others. 8.5 x 11, 88 pages. By Phil Gehlhar. (\$6.95)

Healing from Cancer and Diseases

Devotional studies by Phil Gehlhar on Psalm 130 to release God's healing power. (\$9.95)

"Fanning The Flame"

"What does Baptism in the Holy Spirit have to do with the Sacrament of Baptism?" Many references to early Church Fathers describing manifestations of spiritual gifts. (\$3.00)

Booklets by Paul Anderson (\$2.00 ea.)

- "What About Healing?"
- "What About Demons?"
- "What About Holiness?"
- "What About Repentance?"
- "What About Heaven and Hell?"
- "Guidelines for Prayer Ministry"

Special: all six for \$10.00

Be All Thy Graces Now Outpoured

Former LCMS pastor Rod Lensch tells his story and appeals to the church to receive the power of the Holy Spirit. (209 pp.) (**was \$12, now \$9.00**)

Confirmation and the Charismata

117 page book by Dr. Jungkuntz explores moving beyond a mere ritual to what the Holy Spirit would do in our lives. (\$14.50)

Resources to use for further study. Contents are the author's view, not necessarily that of RIM.

RIM Moves Forward ...

At July's Leadership Team meeting, we believe the Lord led us to be more proactive and on the offensive with a kingdom-harvest emphasis. RIM's message is: *"The living Christ, who is alive in people whose testimony causes others to say, 'truly He is the Son of God!'"* We thus move forward with the following:

1. Pastors and wives prayer/fellowship gatherings

There is a tremendous (often unmet) need of ministering to them today. Bev and I currently are part of one that meets bi-monthly. It is a precious time where sanctification is not just a doctrine but a living reality in a "safe" place for pastors and wives to worship, pray, eat, and bless one another – a real "oasis in the desert!" Is anyone else helping pastors and wives to pray for one another for healing, laying on of hands, etc.? Our plan is to raise up 2-3 new groups by Feb. '05 and to keep expanding to new groups beyond that date.

2. New church starts

Actually we're looking at a new model of "church" (*outside the box*) with no buildings, boards, committees, etc. – just people relating together in worship, the Word and sacraments, care, and especially outreach to the community so that new people come to know Christ. We have been doing this in central Wisconsin for six years, and it has been some of the most fulfilling ministry I have ever known. It is *"doing the stuff"* without all the pressure of parish life as we have known it. It is an ideal way for "retired" pastors to continue to serve the Lord in the "main thing." (Lay people, could also do it.) Our plan is to identify three new sites and leaders by Jan. '05, and then continuing to add more.

3. Foreign missions

RIM will work through *United Evangelical Mission International* (UEMI), led by indigenous missionary John Peter Kirubagaran in India and Don Miles here in the States. John Peter grew up in the *India Evangelical Lutheran Church* (IELC), is a Spirit-filled believer, and is working with the IELC to establish a new vision and structure for their participation in the great harvest now taking place in India. We want to involve our RIM people in prayer, financial support, and personal trips as we challenge others about the tremendous work God is doing through this ministry. For example, since its founding UEMI evangelists have given a personal Gospel testimony in 2,500,000 homes and planted over 400 churches with 17,000 new converts. Over 2,000 have received literacy training, multiple income generating projects have been developed, and 450 orphans are cared for in four orphanages. The principle we want to support: *"move where God is moving."* Soon RIM will be tithing its income to UEMI. Many LCMS leaders now recognize the anointing of the Holy Spirit on UEMI's planting of many new churches with many converts. You can become a part by joining UEMI and being a supporter of this ever expanding ministry. You may even go to India for a short term mission. To become a UEMI member, contact Don Miles: secondmile@aol.com.

The Newsletter will be renamed *Jesus Alive Today* and will have a fresh look with an encouraging tone and a new boldness. We will continue the *Congregation Prayer Network* and *Prayer Letter*. We will also continue to assist pastors and congregations as we encourage being filled with the Spirit and his gifts. We will actively share current resources with leaders (see page 2). But all of this has the goal that, together, we might lead more people to a saving faith in Jesus Christ.

Please pray for us and support us financially if you are able.

Do This:

1. *People are unreasonable, illogical, self-centered – love them anyway.*
2. *If you do good, people will accuse you of selfish ulterior motives – do good anyway.*
3. *If you are successful, you will win false friends and true enemies – succeed anyway.*
4. *The good you do today will be forgotten tomorrow – do good anyway.*
5. *Honesty and frankness make you vulnerable – be honest and frank anyway.*
6. *The biggest people with the biggest ideas can be shot down by the smallest people with the smallest minds – think big anyway.*
7. *What you spend years building may be destroyed overnight – build anyway.*
8. *People really need help but may attack you if you help them – help people anyway.*
9. *Give the world the best you've got and you'll get kicked in the teeth – give the world the best you've got anyway.*

Ithiel Clemens
Pentecostal Bishop

Jesus Alive Today (formerly "RIM Report") is published three times a year in March, July, and November. Authors welcome your comments; their names and addresses are included for your convenience.

"Keep the Faith, Baby!"

The miraculous healing of Clarence Slais

My husband, Clarence, is a 78 year-old senior citizen. When things get a little "topsy-turvy," he puts up his thumb and says, "Keep the faith, baby." During Easter week this year he had to apply that to his own life. He would become known as the "Easter Miracle."

This journey started a week before Palm Sunday. He came down with the flu and dehydrated rapidly. I came home from church, and as he greeted me, he passed out cold. I called 911 and an ambulance took him to the hospital emergency room. He eventually felt better and ended up going home. We were told to bring him back Tuesday if he did not feel better.

Tuesday morning he complained of having chest and stomach pains, so back to Urgent Care we went. As we arrived and checked in, our roller coaster ride began. Test after test was done. He had many tubes and bottles hooked up into his arms and nose. After six hours in the emergency room, I was informed they were going to move him to the critical ward.

Then the surgeon arrived, and she asked me to step into the hall. Very apologetic, she said, "**Doris, I cannot save him.**" I asked what she meant, and she said that Clarence was going to die. In shock, I asked what happened. She said that his heart had gone out of rhythm and had thrown a blood clot which hit the liver, small intestine and bowel. She could not do surgery; it was too late. I asked her how long he had to live, and she said a matter of hours or at the most two days. He only had one percent chance of survival. There would be a lot of pain. Needless to say, it was the shock of my life.

I asked the doctor to please go with me while my husband was told that he was going to die. I felt he might need to ask some questions. Clarence never faltered. He said that if that was how it was supposed to be, he was ready. The surgeon told me to call the family home immediately.

After the doctor left, I was fighting the tears. Clarence put up his thumb and said, "*We have to keep the faith baby. We have had 57 years of marriage. We have known each other for 73 years. We have three sons, eight grandchildren, four great-grandchildren and two more on the way. Herm* (his nickname

for me is Herman), *we have had a good life.*" He was amazing.

The hospital staff was great. They opened up a phone line for me to call our family. They called the Red Cross for me so that I could get in contact with our grandson who is stationed in Alaska.

I decided this roller coaster ride was going to be rough, and I had to hang on tight. The first person he wanted to see was Pastor Del Rossin. He came, prayed and anointed Clarence with oil for healing. Pastor put our desperate situation on the prayer chain, and prayers for him began in many families.



Clarence and Doris Slais

Then the family arrived from near and far. The hospital put him in a hospitality room, so his friends and family could spend time with him. Soon the story of our plight spread like wildfire across the country. People promised to put Clarence on their prayer chains also. In the room there was praying, eating, talk of old times and crying. My husband had the chance to say his goodbyes and thank yous to family and friends – most people don't get that chance.

What happened in room 271 in the next six days was unbelievable. Everyone was amazed at how well he was handling this. There were many setbacks and many people that encouraged him to keep going on. For example, one of our sons made a cross and gave it to his father amid many tears.

One night Clarence was thirsty for a beer. The doctor said we could give him what he wanted. Everything going into his stomach was immediately being pumped out anyway. The boys went out and got a few cans of beer – everyone got a few ounces in a

plastic cup. His sons toasted their father, and Clarence toasted his sons. It was very moving.

Another evening the room was full of people and we all grabbed hands and prayed the Lord's Prayer together. The line stretched out into the hall and back. Each day medical staff would come into his room astonished that he was still alive. They said, "**No one survives such a condition.**" On Saturday, after almost a whole week of being told he would die any day, I asked the doctors what the circumstances were, for the family had to get back to their jobs.

They said that if Clarence were still alive, they would run another CAT scan on Sunday morning. We were to all meet in Clarence's room at noon, and they would give us the results. On Palm Sunday, at 10:00 am, the CAT scan was run. At that same moment our family was in church where fervent prayers were offered for him.

We were all in Clarence's room when the doctors came into the room with the new CAT scans – with smiles on their faces. The slides showed the amazing difference between the previous Tuesday's test and that morning's test. The earlier slide showed his organs looking like swiss cheese, and the one from that morning showed the intestines and liver perfect. The doctors said it was a miracle, that people just don't live with such damage to vital organs. In fact, they said they were going to write up his case in the medical journal.

The room erupted in thanksgiving and praise. Everyone in our family found out how important prayer and a strong family can be. They all returned to their jobs having learned a lesson of God's healing grace they will never forget. Good Friday Clarence was allowed to come home as the nurses gave their "Easter miracle" a nice send-off.

We are grateful to all our friends, neighbors and church members for their prayers. Jesus does heal today; we will never forget his answer to the prayers for Clarence. Remember, when that black cloud appears, "Keep the faith, baby."

Doris Slais
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Preaching with Passion

Spurgeon once said, “If God calls you to be a preacher, never step down to be a king.” He didn’t. He was a prophetic preacher before we knew about the gift of prophecy. He had strong and pinpoint-accurate words for people. He was a mega-church pastor before mega-churches. And he impacted all of London with his preaching. Would that we could influence our cities in the same way.

We’ve got some work to do to get there. Here are some thoughts gleaned from my years of being both in the pulpit as well as in the pew.

Common problems in preaching

Preaching with an edge. Those who have unfinished business reveal it in their preaching without knowing it. They blast away at someone or some thing, exposing not only their brokenness but also their unresolved conflicts. Preachers with an edge get angry at the wrong people at the wrong time. It appears to them as righteous passion; in fact, their flesh is showing.

No authority. The Pharisees had a level of truth in what they said, but it was not backed up by a life of integrity; this discrepancy deprived them of authority. People saw the contrast with Jesus, who spoke and ministered with authority. Jesus said, “*Do what they say, but not what they do, because they preach but they don’t practice.*”

Pride. Those who are more impressed with their speaking gifts than with the Word of God may get what they desire—accolades from admirers. They won’t get a vote of affirmation from heaven, however, nor will their message impact their listeners to change.

Someone once said:

“You’ll never be able to convey at the same time how wonderful Christ is and how clever you are.”

Not calling for a response. It takes courage to call for change. Some don’t preach with that expectation. Those who do will get it. The Word of God has power to adjust the way people live.

Comfort without challenge. Most preachers are nice. They know how to comfort and console—far better than they know how to challenge. Coaches who cannot challenge will have a losing team and a team of losers—who need more comfort. The law alone is brutal, but the gospel alone is sentimental. The bad news makes the good news all the more appealing. Someone once told me, “*Say ‘we’ when speaking the law and ‘you’ when speaking the gospel.*” Not bad advice. It keeps us from getting religious.

Setting the bar too low. Jesus called people without apology to die. He was building life-long disciples, not converts. We often aim too low in our expectations—and we’re not disappointed.

Not getting their attention first.

No preacher can assume a connection with the audience. It must be made through creative communication. Chuck Swindoll once said in an interview, “*I almost dare my audience not to listen to me.*”

Irrelevancy. It is a sin to bore people with the powerful Word of God, and some of us are guilty. To preach boring messages says nothing about the Scriptures and much about the preacher. Does the sermon touch people where they are living? Does it deal with things they stay up late at night worry about?

Educating without equipping. Some pastors preach to inform rather than to form, so there is little expectation of change. Those with the goal of training people when they preach understand that we are at war, not just preparing for it.

Trying to say too much. Those who isolate a manageable point preach with energy. Those who try to include everything end up saying nothing. Less is more. If you can’t put your sermon into one concise sentence, don’t preach it.

Quotes

(Feel free to use these in your ministry)

“God uses setbacks to move us forward.”

“A faith that costs nothing is good for nothing.”

“The human spirit fails us unless the Holy Spirit fills us.”

“Safety is not the absence of danger, but the presence of God.”

“God’s love can look harsh until we view it with hindsight.”

“This is not the time to hang on but to move on.”

“In praying, if you aim at nothing you are bound to hit it.”

“Your next opportunity may be your last opportunity.”

“When we forget about ourselves, we will usually start doing things that others will remember.”

Some strengths in preaching

Creativity. Am I locked into preaching only one way, or am I open to the Spirit to give me new approaches to show how alive the Word of God is? Creative people can combine ancient truths with contemporary methods.

Solid exegesis. Many preachers try to apply a text before they have dug sufficiently to understand the main point. They are not “rightly dividing the word of truth,” and they are not Biblical preachers. They are too lazy to mine for the jewels. Good preachers dig—and God rewards them. Biblical preaching will compel people to open the Book. Equipping people to be doers of the Word does not mean a superficial grocery list of ten how-to’s or “Five Easy Steps to Maturity.” St. Paul’s exhortations flow out of solid theology.

(continued on page 7)



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What Hinders LCMS Renewal? (concluded)

Why is it so difficult for many of us in our Synod to be more open to the supernatural work of God the Holy Spirit, especially his gifts listed in 1 Cor. 12? After years of contact with our Synod's leaders, pastors, and congregations, I have observed six hindrances to this aspect of renewal. The first two were in the July issue, the rest follow:

3. *Sola Scriptura* misunderstanding

Is it a proper hermeneutic (principle of Bible interpretation) to insist that one find a specific verse in Scripture promising specific gifts for today before one can teach their value for building up the Church and sharing one's experience with them? When Scripture encourages us to desire spiritual gifts (1 Cor. 14:1) and gives numerous examples of their value and use in the Church, what do we do with our people who on the basis of that "word" claim to experience them?

There is also no specific verse in Scripture which commands us to forbid women to seek ordination as pastors today. Even so this IS a Biblical teaching because of the "analogy of faith" principle of interpretation. That same principle can lead a Lutheran to conclude that the 1 Corinthians 12 gifts are for today. Would there be the same "chapter and verse" argument if we were discussing whether the gifts of mercy and giving (Rom. 12:8) were for the Church today? A foundational issue is the application of the *sola scriptura* principle.

Francis Pieper (*Christian Dogmatics*, vol. III, pp 462-469) does not insist nor do the Lutheran Confessions that there must be a specific verse in the Bible naming the Pope before one could teach that the Pope is the Antichrist. The descriptions of the antichrist in Scripture were sufficient for the reformers and Pieper to be "*divinely sure*."

Perhaps this hindrance to renewal is closely tied to an abstracted and isolated insistence on correct doctrine. (I am fully committed to pure doctrine.) Could it be that some are close to idolizing the Bible and doctrine in and of themselves? Sometimes a personal relationship with Jesus Christ and the obedience of faith resulting from saving grace can get lost in an "enthusiastic" quest for pure doctrine.

4. Cautions, Warnings, and Stereotypes

Most of what has been written through Synod on these subjects has been of the warning and caution nature. Now I grant that much of this is necessary, but to not also give the encouraging and descriptive words of Scripture (e.g., "*Earnestly desire the spiritual gifts...*" 1 Cor 14:1) seems to go against the *sola scriptura* principle.

Scripture is filled with positive examples of great blessings to and through the Church as the Spirit moved powerfully. Let's balance the warnings with encouragement to desire, seek, and use what Scripture encourages and describes.

Pentecostal stereotypes still dominate the minds of our leaders when they deal with renewal. The beliefs and practices that are attributed to Lutherans in renewal are often "straw men" which bear little resemblance to reality in the churches of those involved. I think that negative experiences with renewal, especially during its early formative and undisciplined days, have caused many in our Synod to have a stereotype that is difficult to remove.

5. Bias Against Certain Gifts

Some of our leaders and publications have used terms like "special, spectacular, and extraordinary" when referring to such spiritual gifts as healing, miracles, tongues, etc. But Scripture does not use such terms when referring to the spiritual gifts in the New Testament. Such terminology could betray a bias against certain gifts. Let's do away with such unscriptural terminology! It really is puzzling that we can be so desirous of some gifts (giving, leadership, etc.) and at the same time ignore or put in "special" categories other gifts which are equally desirable according to Scripture.

Should we really have such difficulty accepting the "supernatural?" I've always looked at the Sacraments of Baptism and Holy Communion as the "biggies" when it comes to the supernatural workings of the Spirit in the Church. Thus the Lutheran Church is a church of the supernatural. Why should we have difficulty accepting the "lesser biggies" – spiritual gifts?

6. Incomplete World-View

I wonder how much the "epistemology" (how we know) of naturalism becomes the rule of thumb for our practical ministry, even in the LCMS where the miraculous events in Scripture are staunchly upheld? Have we struck a pact with naturalism when it comes to any divine action other than conversion and faith? Since such phenomena as visions, prophetic inspirations, etc. are beyond measurement in the conventional sense, the end result is that all manifestations of supernatural experiences do not fit our materialistic world-view. Yet when one looks at Scripture, one sees a book filled with the supernatural from cover to cover; in fact, one whole book, Revelation, is a vision. The Bible has a different "world-view" than many in the Church today.

Scripture affirms a supernatural realm (angels, demons, etc.) that coexists and interacts with the material world .

Is it any wonder that the Christian Church is expanding most rapidly today in the "Third World" which has a world-view more akin to that of Scripture? Often signs and wonders are accompanying the preached Gospel and the lost "see" and "hear" like on Pentecost. Granted, signs and wonders never save anyone, but they sure can get your attention to listen to the Gospel of a Savior who is more powerful than the gods of animism, witchcraft, Islam, etc.

No one would contest that the forces of evil are being unloosed in the world today like never before. Nor would one debate that the "fields are ripe unto harvest" for the souls of men like never before. Would God leave his Church in such a critical time with less power (Luke 24:49, Acts 1:8, Hebrews 2:4) than the "the old evil foe" possesses? A correct world view that lines up with Scripture's world-view is essential if we are to reach the lost for Christ!

In conclusion, I urge all of us in Synod to pray to be free from the above hindrances and that the Holy Spirit will powerfully equip us for the years ahead with a ministry "*with every grace endued*."

Del Rossin, editor

I want to assist RIM's ministry:

Here is my gift of \$ _____

Tax-deductible checks to:
**Renewal In Missouri, c/o Bethlehem Lutheran,
1065 Kings Way, Nekoosa, WI 54457**

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State _____ Zip _____ Tel. () _____

I desire to be a "RIM Prayer Partner" via e-mail at this e-mail address: _____

Please send the RIM Report to the following:

Please send: details on page 2, prices include postage & handling.

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- _____ *Luth.Charismatic Catechism* (\$2.50; 5 or more, \$2.00)
- Healing From Cancer* (\$9.95)
- Prayer Power* (\$6.95)
- Fanning The Flame* (\$3.00)
- Be All Thy Graces Now Outpoured* (special, \$9.00)
- The Gift of Tongues* (\$2.50)

- What About Healing?* (\$2.00)
- What About Demons?* (\$2.00)
- What About Holiness?* (\$2.00)
- What About Repentance?* (\$2.00)
- What About Heaven & Hell?* (\$2.00)
- Prayer Ministry Guidelines* (\$2.00)
- All six of the above for \$10.00**
- Power for Warfare* (\$7.95)
- Breaking Strongholds* (\$2.00)
- Healing A Father Wound* (\$2.00)
- Confirmation & Charismata* (\$14.50)

Total enclosed for merchandise: \$ _____

11-2004

(Preaching with Passion ... cont. from p. 5)

Simplicity. Smart people can make the complex simple. "Wanna be" theologians may make the simple complex. Sermons should challenge people to the core but not confuse them.

Conviction. Do I want someone to say, "Nice sermon, pastor," or "That made me a little uncomfortable?" Am I simply exegeting a good text, or am I communicating a strong conviction? Can I say, "Woe to me if I preach not this message!?" The word should be rising up within me so that, like Jeremiah, I cannot keep silent.

Transparency. Learn from the apostle Paul to be honest, vulnerable, and personal. After studying Second Corinthians, where Paul bares his heart, I joined his "6F" club. I saw that he spoke in that letter about his frailty, feelings, frustrations, failures, fears, and fights.

Love. The warmth of Christ should fill our words and compel people to follow Him. People should love God more because they sense our love for him—and for them.

Questions To Ask

1. How has this message changed my life? Can I tell them why it is important for them to listen to me?
2. Have I digested the passage, or is it a "once over lightly" approach?
3. What do I expect it to do for them? Is my goal clearly in mind?
4. What do I want them to leave with?
5. Do I want them to know something or to do something? What?
6. Is there a balance between law and gospel? Between the good news and the bad news? Where is the law? Where is the gospel? Where is Jesus?
7. What need am I satisfying in their lives?
8. Could I call my message a Biblical sermon? Preaching, after all, is the proclamation of the truth.

Editor's Note:

The preceding article was written by Paul Anderson, Director of Lutheran Renewal, in a monthly publication, "Especially For Pastors." Only part of this timely article is reprinted here. There are an additional "16 tips to follow in preaching." To secure the entire article as well as to be put on the mailing list to receive Paul's practical writings, see *Renewal Resources* on page 2.

Thank you, Paul, for granting us permission to share this article. We pray that many will subscribe to "Especially for Pastors."

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Merry Christmas



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Answer

*I have been beaten, and I have been kicked,
at times every muscle I had was bruised.
For I was run over, so beyond being sick,
sure in life's game, that I was destined to lose.*

*Why was I so punished, what were my crimes?
I was sure that this pain would never end.
Life had become a horror, unlivable at times,
knowing that my back could no longer bend.*

*Then at my lowest, the rim's edge was unseen,
I called to the heavens, in such unbelievable pain.
Then you brought to life, what once was unclean,
You renewed me your Spirit, just like a spring rain.*

*Now I was weeping in Joy, for your saving grace.
You wiped away my tears, and healed my scars,
now I was chosen, never to be left out of place.
No matter what would come, you'd never be far.*

*I give praise to you, Lord, unable to even explain,
how can you love this way, a broken man?
How did you do it, what did your purpose gain?
Then you spoke these words so I'd understand.*

*For you I was beaten, and for you I was kicked,
there were times every muscle in me did ache.
Then I was run over, I went way beyond the sick,
for this was the sacrifice I just had to make.*

*You'll never have want, and there's nothing to fear,
for my kingdom awaits at the end of your road.
And though life has pain, I will always be here,
when burdens are too heavy, I'll carry the load.*

*Jesus, my Savior, whose blood was spilled for me,
my life is done. I pray your life in me begins.
Lord, may my service bear fruit for your tree;
for if I waste your good gift, then nobody wins.
Amen.*

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