

# TABLE TALK

Official Publication of the LMS-USA

...these words... shall be upon your heart; you shall  
teach them... and talk of them... Deut. 6:6,7



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## *The 2014 LMS-USA Annual Conference: Issues 20 Years Ago (1994-2014). And Now?*

Saturday, June 2, 2014 in Chetek, Wisconsin was the venue of the Annual Conference of the Lutheran Ministerium and Synod—USA at Christ Lutheran Church.



This Annual Conference was a look back at papers and presentations from two decades ago, not simply in the simple exercise of history and nostalgia, but to underscore that the Biblical, theological, and liturgical underpinnings of the Lutheran Ministerium and Synod—USA have remained the same since its inception. There are only two reasons for this: **The Word of God itself does not change in either timelessness or reliability** (2 Timothy 3:16-17; Hebrews 13: 7-8; 2 Peter 1: 19-21; Revelation 22: 18-19). Secondly, **the Lutheran Confessions are the correct exposition of the Word of God** as understood by the orthodox, evangelical Lutheran Church since the advent of the *Book of Concord* in the 16th century.

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A faithful commitment to these underpinnings has been and continues to be the hallmark of the Lutheran Ministerium and Synod—USA internationally, both in **its inclusion in the International Lutheran Council (ILC) on September 17, 2012 in Niagara Falls, Ontario**, and in its identity as defined by Pastors David Lau and Nathanael Mayhew in “*A Brief Study of the Lutheran Churches in America*”:

*“This Lutheran church body is made up of pastors and congregations who withdrew from the American Association of Lutheran Churches (AALC) and organized as a separate group in 1995. They left the AALC in order to take a stronger stand for the inerrancy of Scripture and against the charismatic movement. They subscribe to the Lutheran Confessions contained in the Book of Concord of 1580, as well as the Indianapolis Statement on Scripture. They present themselves as Biblical, Confessional, Evangelical, Liturgical, and Congregational. The official publication of the LMS-USA is Table Talk.”*

The Opening Service of Holy Communion on June 21st at Christ Lutheran launched the weekend of events. **Rev. Donald Thorson’s** message at the Opening Service provided a solid Biblical exposition and historical context of **Psalm 137**, in a presentation entitled, “*Despondency and Vengeance at the Waters of Babylon: A Psalm of War, Defeat, Displacement, and Degradation*,” even as Rev. Thorson continued in a brief morning session that followed the service with an exposition of **Matthew 5: 17-20** entitled, “**Jesus’ Fulfillment [Of the Law] and [The Topic of] Repentance.**”

In his exposition of Psalm 137, Dr. Thorson demonstrated the probable authorship of the Psalm by a musical Levite, and **the critical his-**

**torical context of the Psalm** itself. Pivotal in the latter regard is the **70 year Babylonian Exile of Judah** prophesied by Jeremiah (Jeremiah 7:4; 16:4; 25:1). While some Biblical exegetes and commentators date this 70 years from the destruction of the Temple in 586 B. C. to the eventual completion of the rebuilt Temple in 516 B. C., **Rev. Thorson made a powerful argument for beginning with 609 B. C., the death of the last righteous king of Judah, Josiah, and continuing to the year 539 B. C., which saw the appearance of Cyrus the Great of Persia** and his defeat of the Babylonians prophesied in Holy Scripture (2 Chronicles 22-23; Ezra chapters 1, 3, 4, 5, 6; Isaiah 44-45; Daniel chapters 1, 6, 10). The second component of the historical context is the **fateful reign of Zedekiah** (“*Jehovah is Righteous*”/597-587 B. C.) in the run-up to God’s judgment of Judah in the Babylonian Exile. Particular attention was paid to the exegesis of **Psalm 137:9** with its vengeful, retributive expressions, a verse which caused the American Lutheran Professor Milton to tragically jettison the doctrine of the inerrancy of Scripture in the original autographs in 1966.

As Rev. Thorson organized the explanation of Psalm, he used the **structure of the composition**, verses 1-3 which describe the lamentable state of the exiles under Babylon; verses 4-6 which are dedicated to a remembrance of Jerusalem in better days; and verses 7-9 which express vengeance on Edom and Babylon, **to apply warnings to those who follow generation after generation in rebellion against God and the practice of idolatry.** Ignoring the prophetic Word of God and embracing contemporary pagan cultures always results in the chastisement and judgment of God throughout history as it did for Judah in the 6<sup>th</sup> century B. C. Only the confessing of sin and repentance, ac-

accompanied by a renewed commitment to the promises of the Biblical God, can save His people.

The Annual Conference then proceeded to reexamine some of the most historically significant presentations given by pastors of the LMS-USA in the 1990s, with a reassessment and reaffirmation of the ongoing relevance of these messages in the ongoing task of fidelity to God's Word in the proclamation of the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ.

**Rev. Dr. John Erickson** of Christ Lutheran in Chetek unpacked his August 1994 Lutheran Biblical Inerrancy Conference presentation in Indianapolis entitled, ***"The Divinely Inspired, Inerrant, and Infallible Original Autographs—But Can We Say More?"***



The text of this 1994 presentation was an outgrowth of the debate between Dr. Donald Thorson and Dr. Theodore Jungkuntz at the 1994 AALC National Convention over the inerrancy of Scripture in the original autographs, with the former affirming the position stated in the AALC's Confession of Faith at that time which said, ". . . *the canonical books of the Old and New Testaments, as a whole and in all their parts, constitute the divinely inspired, revealed, and inerrant Word of God, and we submit to this as the only infallible authority in all matters of faith and life.*"

**Pastor Erickson noted in 1994 that Scriptural inerrancy and inspiration derive from the proper understanding that the Biblical God is the One and Only Almighty and Everlasting God Who Is Who He Is.** When we understand this, a proper understanding and affirma-

tion of Holy Scripture as God's Word to us follows, a consequence of knowing the God who cannot lie (Numbers 23:10; Titus 1:2). If God is thoroughly reliable, it simply follows that His Word to us is identically reliable.

The 1994 address quoted Clayton Bell's book, ***"Moorings in a World Adrift,"*** which links belief in the Virgin Birth of Christ to the veracity of the New Testament evidence (page 34), and the infamous ***Chicago Statement on Biblical Inerrancy in 1978***, which affirms in **Article 19** that:

***"We deny [that a confession of the full authority, infallibility and inerrancy] is necessary for salvation. However, we further deny that inerrancy can be rejected without grave consequences, both to the individual and to the Church."***

***"The Divinely Inspired, Inerrant, and Infallible Original Autographs—But Can We Say More?"*** in 1994 underscored what Pastor Erickson wanted his audience to hear again most powerfully in 2014: Coming to an understanding of the inerrancy issue, and believing it, will make all the difference in the world as to the place the Word of God is given in the life of the believer.

Pastor Erickson cited the devotional use of Scripture by his parents during his youth, and the employment of the Scripture as the final rule for individual conduct and governance, and in evaluation of all those in ecclesiastical and secular authority. Especially poignant in both 1994 and 2014 was the reference to his cousin Ruth, who died in 1977 as a missionary in Brazil after giving birth to her last child.

She would spend months in a coma before death. Ruth's husband, Don, was a trained pastor who could find no solace in the aftermath of his wife's departure from this present life---until he began reading the

work of Pastor Erickson's great uncle, Dr. John Lavik, whose simple Biblical faith and unswerving trust in the Word of God testified mightily to the great comforting truths of the Christian Gospel rooted in forgiveness, comfort, and hope. In a moving account of the restoration of a believer devastated by incomprehensible loss, Conference attendees would be reminded of the letter of admonishment written to Pastor Erickson by his cousin's husband. The latter would underscore the critical character of **letting God's Word be God's Word**, using it, living it, preaching it for every matter of faith and life.

Three sources cited in the 1994 treatise continued to resonate in 2014: The late **Dr. Gleason Archer** of Trinity Evangelical Divinity School in Deerfield, Illinois and his *"Introduction on the Importance of Biblical Inerrancy"* in *"Encyclopedia of Biblical Difficulties,"* which among many other things underscores Jesus' use of the Old Testament Scriptures and His absolute belief in the trustworthy and factual character of the cited texts. **Dr. Donald Thorson's Principles of Biblical Interpretation** is similarly commended to believing pastor and layperson alike. Finally, *"The Divinely Inspired, Inerrant, and Infallible Original Autographs—But Can We Say More?"* cites the aforementioned Chicago Statement on Inerrancy (1978) and its Article 10 which states:

*"We affirm that inspiration, strictly speaking, applies only to the autographic text of Scripture, which in the providence of God can be ascertained from available manuscripts with great accuracy. We further affirm that copies and translations of Scripture are the Word of God to the extent that they faithfully represent the original. . . . We deny that any essential element of the Christian faith is affected by*

*the absence of the autographs. We further deny that this absence renders the assertion of Biblical inerrancy invalid or irrelevant."*

The second presentation of the Conference was a second look at Rev. Donald Thorson's "Principles of Biblical Interpretation," delivered on August 14th, 1994.

Rev. Thorson listed **seven (7) principles** of Biblical interpretation:

**Christ Alone!** as the First Principle; **Regeneration** as the Second Principle; **The Holy Spirit's Testimony** as the Third Principle; **Prayer** as the Fourth Principle; **The Original Text** as the Fifth Principle; **The Plain Sense** as the Sixth Principle; and **Hermeneutics of Harmony** as the Seventh Principle. An avalanche of Biblical citations is systematically categorized under each of the seven headings as supporting evidence of the proper methodology for Biblical interpretation, with additional references to the orthodox Lutheran exegetes, including Abraham Calov (1612-1670), Hollaz (1648-1713), Michael Walther (1593-1662), Quenstedt (1617-1688), and the 20<sup>th</sup> century's Robert Preus of Concordia Fort Wayne. Dr. Thorson's 1994 paper concludes that the clear testimony of Scripture and Jesus Christ is that the Bible is the inerrant and infallible Word of God. The believer is bound to faithfully proclaim and teach this infallible Word of God, giving himself to reverent and serious exegesis of the Word, in the knowledge that **Jesus Christ our Lord has assured us of an inerrant text** (Matthew 5:18; Mark 13:31).





The third Convention retrospective in 2014 was a re-examination of **Rev. Dr. Ralph Spears'** April 1996 paper at *The Third Indianapolis Conference* at St. Matthew Lutheran Church, entitled, ***"The Confessions: How They Have Grown Out of Scripture."***



Pastor Spears' presentation began with a quotation of the famous kenosis ["self-emptying"] passage of **Philippians,**

**chapter 2**, which articulates the human and divine natures of Christ in the context of servanthood and subsequent obedience even unto death on the Cross. The Apostle Paul concludes the section with the admonition that "... every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord to the glory of God the Father." The implications of the Cross for the Apostle in Philippians 2 are inextricably linked to his proclamation in **Romans 10:9**, that "If you confess with your lips that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you shall be saved."

The salvific significance of confession of faith in the truth of the Logos (John 1) is woven around a series of Biblical examples listed in ***"The Confessions: How They Have Grown Out of Scripture."*** These include Simon Peter's confession to Jesus at Caesarea Philippi that He "is the Christ, the Son of the Living God," a truism which breaks the stranglehold of Hell and keeps it from prevailing against any confessing believer as understood in the Lutheran formulation of the Power of the Keys; Thomas' confession of

Christ as *"My Lord and My God"*; the unnamed father of a desperately ill boy who responds to Jesus' invitation to believe with, *"Lord, I believe, help my unbelief"*; the confession of Martha in John 11:27, *"Yes, Lord, I believe that you are the Christ, the Son of God, who was to come (who is coming) into the world"*; the Roman Centurion; Stephen in Acts 7; the Magnificat of Mary in Luke 1: 46-55; the Confession of Zechariah (Luke 1: 68-79); the Confession of Elizabeth (Luke 1: 42-45); and the Confession of Simeon (Luke 2: 29-32). These and other Biblical examples and verses cited by Pastor Spears are augmented by the cited confessions of Polycarp, the *Didache*, the Apostles and Nicene Creeds, and Luther himself.

Both in 1996 and in 2014, Pastor Spears referenced **Hebrews 4:14**, *"Since then we have a great High Priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our confession,"* with a **challenging question** to the Conference: ***"Why does Thomas' confession contain 5 words (in English)? Why does Peter's confession contain 10 words? And why do the Lutheran Confessions fill this whole book [the Book of Concord] of 636 pages?"***

The answer to the challenging question contains several components. First, the Biblical confessors mentioned in the Gospels had the subject and object of their confession before them face to face. Soon, it would be their task to ***"deliver this faith to the saints"*** (Jude 3) with more extended explication and explanation of the reality and truth of what they had encountered in the flesh. Second, as cited by **Dr. Harold O. J. Brown** of Trinity Evangelical Divinity School in his magnum opus, *Heresies*, the Church was not simply facing persecution and death from without with the pas-

sage of time, but an even greater threat **from within**: damaging criticism and **heretical false doctrine about Jesus Christ**. These dangerous internal developments mandated clear Scriptural teachings from the Confessing Church about the reality of the Incarnation for our sakes and its effectiveness for salvation, in the internal struggles from the first century through the fourth.

Luther continued the doctrinal fight in the sixteenth century against heresies like the earlier Arianism and Pelagianism as documented in ***“The Confessions: How They Have Grown Out of Scripture.”*** Pastor Spears underscores that the brief Apostles Creed would be followed by a Nicene Creed of 219 words, twice the length of the Apostles, but that **Luther actually preferred the final Ancient Ecumenical Creed, the Athanasian**. The Athanasian Creed is 10 times the length of the Apostles, and 5 times the length of the Nicene. Why is this so? As Pastor Spears demonstrated to the Conference attendees, St. Athanasius’ struggle with the Arians and their denial of the full divinity of Jesus Christ necessitated the need to fully explain the unlimited natures of the Persons of the Trinity, their Co-Equality, and their Unity. The Athanasian Creed left no doubt as to the resurrection of the body, of the believer, and the certainty of God’s righteous judgment of the living and the dead, with the believer assured of a promised life in eternity with the Living God in Jesus Christ.

The paper concluded in 2014 as it did in 1996, with a quotation of **Dr. Herman Sasse** in **“This is My Body”**:

*“A confession solemnly made by a church, and even by an individual Christian, has an amazing power of survival. If even the great heresies of the past reappear time and again, either openly or in disguise, how much more is this true of the*

*great truths confessed by the Church of Christ! There will be old and new forms of Arianism, of Pelagianism, of the denial of the Real Presence of Christ in the Lord’s Supper—to mention only a few great heresies---until the Last Judgment. But there will also be confessors of the Homooousios (Divine Substance) of the Sola Gratia (Grace Alone) and the Sola Fide (Faith Alone) of the Real Presence, until the Last Day. **The true confession is never man made. It is our Lord Himself who asked His adversaries the question: ‘What do you think of Christ. Whose Son is He? It was He Himself who put the question to the disciples: ‘Who do you say that I Am?’ It is He who demands the confession of faith. Wherever the Gospel is preached, the question arises out of this Gospel: ‘Who is He?’ The confession is the answer to the question contained in God’s Word. But the true confession—like that of Peter—is given by God, as Jesus said to this First Confessor of the Church, ‘Flesh and blood has not revealed it to you, but My Father who is in heaven.’”***

The final major presentation of the Conference was that of **Rev.**

**Mark Dankof**, who took a retrospective look at his April 23, 1996 presentation in Indianapolis entitled, ***“Creeds as Confessions in Liturgy,”*** re-published on the Internet in 2014 in an updated version tabbed ***“The Hands of Time and the Appearance of Logos.”***

The updated version of the paper began with Biblical quotations from **John 1:1-5; 2 Timothy 3:1-5; and**



**Matthew 24:3-4**, referencing the eschatological signs of the End of the Age, and the challenges to the Confessing Church in its proclamation of the truth about the *Logos* in this context. Of special relevance to the 2014 update for the Conference is **Dr. C. George Fry's** essay on **Helmut Thielicke** for the *Handbook of Evangelical Theologians* (Baker, 1993, pages 219-233), which covers Thielicke's prophetic ministry in German in the darkest days of World War II, especially his legendary **Stuttgart Cathedral** lectures. These lectures delivered to a beleaguered city under aerial siege, employed **two weapons: The Word of God and the Small Catechism of Luther**.

Pastor Dankof underscored that the core question of all of history and eternity alike is *"Who is Jesus Christ and Why and How did He become the Word (Logos) Who Became Flesh and Dwelt Among Us?"* (John 1:14). To effectively answer this question, each and every believer must once again *"contend for the faith that was once for all entrusted to the saints (Jude, verse 3)."* The believer and the Confessing Church can only contend when both are immersed in the knowledge of the Word of God and the historic Confessions of Faith as the Holy Spirit of God directs during countless hours of personal and collective study, availing themselves of the Full Armor of God (Ephesians 6).

The paper emphasized that ancient heresies are repristinated constantly in history up to the present manifestations of apostasy corroding the American and Western Churches from within. The writer of Ecclesiastes understood that there is *"nothing new under the sun,"* especially in combating the subversive and cancerous influence of false teaching about the *Logos* and the Word which testifies to Him. Fidel-

ity to the Word of God is in order, *"... that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing, you may have life in His name (John 20:30-31)."*

The 5 heresies covered in 1996 and 2014 are **Gnosticism, Marcionism, Montanism, Monarchianism, and Arianism**. The struggle between Biblical and Confessional orthodoxy and heresy is always a life and death matter, but especially in the 21<sup>st</sup> century in the context of eschatology. In a word study extracted from the *Dictionary of New Testament Theology*, volume 2, pages 457-61, by W. Gunther, the author as quoted in the Dankof update of 2014 indicates that **the classical Greek usage of deception is critically linked to injustice (adikia) and evil (kakia)**. He states that in the New Testament, the active verb for deception is used almost exclusively in an **apocalyptic sense** and of **false teachers**. As an adjective, the term is used to describe deceitful spirits (I Timothy 4:1). As a noun, it is used to describe a deceiver, an imposter, a false teacher. In the New Testament, the verb *"to deceive"* is used interchangeably with the verb *"to destroy"* (apollyo). And Satan is described specifically as *The Destroyer* (Revelation 9:11). H.-C. Hahn notes in quoting Oepke in DNTT, Volume 1, pages 462-65 that deception and destruction may be reliably linked in the New Testament sense as *"definitive destruction, not merely in the sense of the extinction of physical existence, but rather of an eternal plunge into Hades and a hopeless destiny of death."*

Pastor Dankof concluded that the believer and the Confessing Church must be convinced, as John was on Patmos during his exile at the hands of Domitian (A. D. 81-96), that earthly exile is far better than experiencing this Second Death, and that Eternal Life has its source only in confessing the *Logos* and embracing

(Conference Report Conclusion)

His Crucifixion, Resurrection, present status at the Right Hand of the Father, and the Blessed Assurance of His Second Advent in time and space.

As a conclusion to the conference, and as a response to the papers presented, Rev. Dr. Ralph Spears undertook a reading of Pastor Richard Horn's paper *"What Brought Me to the LMS-USA As a Place of Fellowship and Service for the Past 19 Year."* (At the last minute, Pastor Horn was unable to attend the Con-

ference). This presentation was followed by Chaplain Tom Chopp's affirmation of his Institutional Chaplaincy under LMS-USA auspices.

The Official Closing of the LMS-USA National Conference and Convention took place on the Second Sunday After Pentecost in Festival Worship at Christ Lutheran Church on June 22nd, 2014. Pastor Tylan Dalrymple of Christ Lutheran delivered the message.

The 2015 Annual Conference and Convention of the LMS-USA will be held June 19-21, in Chetek, WI. Ω

## St Matthew Lutheran Church

2837 East New York Street  
Indianapolis, IN

**105 Anniversary Celebration**  
**Sunday, September 21, 2014**

**Divine Worship Service - 10:30 a.m.**

**Dinner follows the service**

**Opening of time capsule - 2:00 p.m.**

(In basement wall... alleged to be from 1925-1927  
with items dating back to 1910)

~ All are welcome ~

**Note: The LMS Ministerial will hold their annual meeting in the afternoon. If necessary the meeting will continue Monday morning.**



The following article originally appeared in *Eternity Magazine*, Copyright 1982. It is used here by permission of the copyright holder, the Alliance of Confessing Evangelicals.

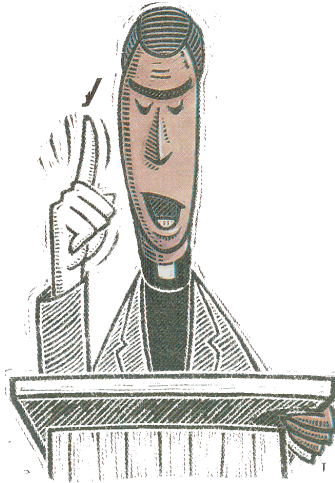
## The Ten Most Unwanted Public Prayer Habits

by Leroy Patterson

I had just settled comfortably in a pew when I heard the pastor say to me, "Brother, will you lead us in a word of prayer?" I tried to hide behind the row in front of me, but as I peeked around, it was obvious the pastor was looking right at me. I stumbled to the platform, mumbled "Let us pray" and launched into one of my spontaneous prayers. After fumbling through, hardly knowing what I had said, I sat down and took refuge in the crowd.

The experience took place in the early days of my ministry, but the trauma of it has remained with me. It caused me to reflect upon the subject of public prayer. And the result, I had to admit that I'd fallen into some horrendous public prayer habits. As I visited other churches from time to time, I derived some small comfort from the fact that I was not alone.

After years of observation, I've compiled the following list of unwanted public prayer habits. I wish I could mail this list to the door of every church.



### 1. The Solemn Assembly Prayer

You know it's coming when the one praying changes his or her voice to a holy tremolo; it drops an entire octave and assumes a pontifical quaver. The sanctuary fairly echoes with sacred resonance. It seems this is intended to impress the congregation and apparently also God.

### 2. The Cliché Camouflage.

Filling in the prayer with as many clichés as possible helps to cover up our lack of preparation. It goes something like this:

"Lord, we bow *our hearts* before Thee today. We pray that Thou *wilt bless each one of us*. Wilt Thou *hide*

*Thy servant behind the cross, and enable him to glorify Thy name? May our hearts be set on fire as we listen to Thy Word . . ."*



### 3. The Prayer of the Just

While this usually is typical of the young, it has been known to infect the prayers of even mature believers. This habit is identified by the monotonous use of the word *just*.

"Lord, *just* bless us today, and *just* be with us as we *just* worship You. We pray, Lord, that You will *just* bless the sick. You will *just* anoint the one who brings Your Word..."

### 4. The Holy Promotion

This is the prayer used to raise support for a pet project or announce a coming attraction. The first kind goes like this:

"Lord, as we look around our growing community, we are reminded of the need for expanding our facilities." (This person's expansion plans likely have been turned down already.)

A promotion prayer may go like this:

"Lord, as our guest evangelist begins his series of meetings tonight at 7 P.M. right here in our auditorium, may each of us be convicted of our

need to come and bring our unsaved friends."

(If the service is being broadcast on radio, the prayer often will include the address of the church).

### 5. The Lecture Prayer

Here a minister uses the pastoral prayer as a means of lecturing the congregation. It becomes a pretense for clubbing the sheep into line.

"Father, I know Your heart has been grieved over the small turnout at our prayer meetings. Convict Your people of their need for this time of prayer, and remind them that the church will be only as strong as its praying membership."

One of the advantages of lecturing by means of prayer is that the congregation can't talk back. Besides, with the pastor and God against them, they know it's a lost cause.

### 6. The Father, Father Prayer

I doubt that the Lord needs to be reminded so frequently that He is our Father.

"We come to You, *Father*, and thank You, *Father*, for the privilege of worshipping You, *Father*. We pray that You will meet with us, *Father*, and bless us. *Father*, minister to the sick, and *Father*, lay Your healing hand upon them, *Father* . . ."

In the prayer Jesus taught His disciples, He mentioned the Father only once.

### 7. The "You Know" Syndrome

Here the one praying feels compelled to remind the Lord of a number of things he or she thinks the Lord either doesn't know or has forgotten.

"Lord, as we meet here today, *You know* our hearts. *You know* we love You and want to serve You. Lord, *You know* the situation on the mission fields, today, and *You know*

how the needs of our missionaries have increased due to inflation. Father, *You know* Brother Jones is in the hospital and needs our prayers."

### 8. The Round-the-World-Prayer

This is the prayer of the person who feels a compulsion to use every opportunity to cover every prayer request on every occasion. It doesn't matter whether this person is invoking at a morning service, or merely saying grace at the table.



### 9. The Payment-on-Demand Prayer

Some use this prayer to hold God accountable for every single promise in Scripture, and occasionally they get quite demanding.

"Lord, You have promised that if we ask in Your name, You will do it. So we come to You with expectation that You will be true to Your Word . . ."

This kind of prayer often fails to

take into account that God's promises are often conditional, and frequently for specific individuals. The fact that He promised Abraham and

Sarah a son is no guarantee that He will do the same for us.

### 10. In Conclusion, the Summary Prayer

In this prayer the one praying feels obligated to summarize the sermon and to reiterate its main points in case someone

missed them.

"Lord, as we leave today, I pray that we will not forget that You are (1) the God of unlimited power; (2) the God of unsearchable wisdom; and (3) the God of unfailing grace. We thank You for that. Amen."

In our zeal for spontaneity in public prayer, many of us have unwittingly acquired one or more of these habits. To make matters worse, we've sanctified them as part of our tradition. Ω

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*Lord, teach us how to pray aright, With rev'rence and with fear;  
Tho' dust and ashes in Thy sight, We may, we must draw near.  
With guilt bowed down, convinced of sin, In weakness, want and woe,  
In strife without and fears within, Lord, whither shall we go?  
O God of grace, we come to Thee With broken, contrite hearts:  
Give what Thine eye delights to see, Truth in the inward parts.  
Work deep humility; the sense Of godly sorrow give;  
A strong desire, with confidence, To hear Thy voice and live:  
Faith in the only sacrifice That can for sin atone,  
To cast our hopes, to fix our eyes, On Christ, on Christ alone.  
Give these, and then Thy will be done: Thus strengthened with all might,  
We, through Thy Spirit and Thy Son, Shall pray, and pray aright.*

James Montgomery, 1771-1854

Table Talk  
P. O. Box 31  
Chetek, WI 54728

The LMS-USA is Lutheran Church body describing itself as *Biblical, Confessional, Evangelical, Liturgical and Congregational*. It is a 'Forum' in which there is an on going discussion of theological issues and concerns among clergy and lay alike. The LMS-USA meets annually for a Theological Conference and this publication, besides carrying news of the Ministerium and Synod, functions also as a vehicle for this continuing dialogue.

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ynod - USA  
❖ *A Synodical Forum by Subscription* ❖

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