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# The Reporter

## November 2021

November 2021

Volume 19, Issue 09

### “Outgrowing God”

by Pastor Proeber

Just recently a book was brought to my attention. Its title sparked my interest, but not sufficiently to make me read the from book cover to cover. The title is “Outgrowing God,” and the author is Richard Dawkins. Some of you may recognize his name, or have even read some of his books. He has earned a reputation for not only questioning the existence of God, but actually taking it to an antagonistic, even argumentative level.

Certainly there are some who laud his work, and promote it extensively. This latest volume will probably bring him similar accolades. While I haven't read it completely, I did read enough to draw some conclusions.

The premise is intriguing: “Outgrowing God.” Still, it actually reminded me of an old German proverb: “If God were no greater than me, what kind God could he be.” The proverb explains one of the devil's time tested and well used temptations. It harkens back to the Garden of Eden where he deceived Adam and Eve into believing they could be like God knowing good and evil. His ruse was simple, and remains the same. He comes with the deception that people can be like God. They can make their own decisions. They can pick and choose what they believe or reject. They can make their own rules by which they live. There is only one major obstacle. If God were like me, what kind of God would he be?” Selfish? Arrogant? Self-centered? Unforgiving? If God were like humans, this is the kind of God he would be.

Now consider a book with the title, “Outgrowing God.” It ultimately promotes the idea that people should grow beyond their reliance on, or acknowledgement of God. It sounds attractive, even desirable. Still, what does it really mean?

When we outgrow God, it means we don't need him any more. We don't need his control, his preservation, his wisdom, or his love. Just consider for a moment, if we would replace the Lord as the ones who were in control. Quite simply and very quickly, everything would go out of control. From the laws of nature to the weather, and even in the mundane aspects of our life, chaos would rule supreme. The same could be said about God's preservation. How would we stand against evil in the world? How would we escape the disasters and cataclysmic catastrophes? How would we make it from one day to the next? Then, what about wisdom, who would determine right or wrong, good or bad, wise or foolish. Everything would be judged by an indeterminate moral subjectivism. In the end, anything could be justified, because it would be what I would want.

*Continued on page 2*

*Outgrowing God, from page 1*

Pandemonium would soon become the norm, since everyone would be living for themselves and by their own rules. Still, the worst thing which would happen would be the loss of God's love. If we outgrow God, we also outgrow his love for us. This would make life a "living hell." Some might argue this is an overstatement or exaggeration, but consider how the Bible actually describes hell. In the Gospels it is explained as a place "where the fire never stops burning and the worms (maggots) never stop eating." Even more descriptive is that hell is a place where one is completely separated from God and from his love. This is the real danger of outgrowing God.

Now, most would probably admit, "I wouldn't want that! I wouldn't want my life to be devoid of the Lord!" This is all well and good, but we may need to rethink what our decisions and actions might actually say.

The First Commandment teaches "we should fear, love, and trust in God above all things." The Lord is the one we hold in complete awe, honor with undivided love, and follow with uncompromised trust—and, always without exception. What do our lives reveal from time to time? God may be important, but not important enough to put him above all our personal plans. God may be loved, but his love is often unequally divided when it has to compete with love for ourselves. God may be trusted, but only to a point.

We live in a time when our fear, love, and trust for the Lord are tested on a daily basis. There are all sorts of mandates, demands, requirements, and laws which conflict more and more with the open and unimpeded worship of the Lord. Do we put these first? Do we believe good citizenship is a priority to God's desire for faithful worship and fellowship? Do we trust the opinions and wisdom of humans who claim to have a firm grasp of the truth, or do we put our lives into the Lord's hands who is the source of Truth?

While we may not have reached the dangerous plateau of outgrowing God, we do flirt with living our lives more and more apart from him. So, what do we do? The first thing we need to do is pray. Pray for wisdom, understanding, strength, boldness, and especially forgiveness. Then we need to faithfully acknowledge the promises the Lord has given us, promises which have never failed, nor will ever fail. We also need to understand the importance of regular fellowship at both worship and the Lord's Supper. These are for the strengthening of our faith and the grace to serve him with a God-pleasing life. Last, but certainly not least, we need to trust what the Lord clearly tells us. Paul understood, and rejoiced in the unsurpassed encouragement which comes from the truth of Scripture when he wrote:

Yes, and I will continue to rejoice, because I know that this will turn out for my deliverance, through your prayer and the support of the Spirit of Jesus Christ. This matches my earnest expectation and hope that I will in no way be put to shame, but with all boldness, as always, so even now, Christ will be magnified in my body, whether by life or by death. Yes, for me to live is Christ, and to die is gain. But if I am to go on living in the flesh, that will mean fruitful labor for me. Yet which should I prefer? I do not know. I am pulled in two directions, because I have the desire to depart and be with Christ, which is better by far. But is it more necessary for your sake that I remain in the flesh. And since I am convinced of this, I know that I will remain and will continue with all of you, for your progress and joy in the faith. (Philippians 1:19-25)

*Continued on page 3*

*Outgrowing God, from page 2*

Life for us as believers means bold, faithful, and fruitful service. Death for us is eternal life. The world cannot begin to offer anything like this. Modern medicine cannot begin to compete. The collected store of the world's wisdom cannot begin to compare. What we have in Christ, surpasses all.

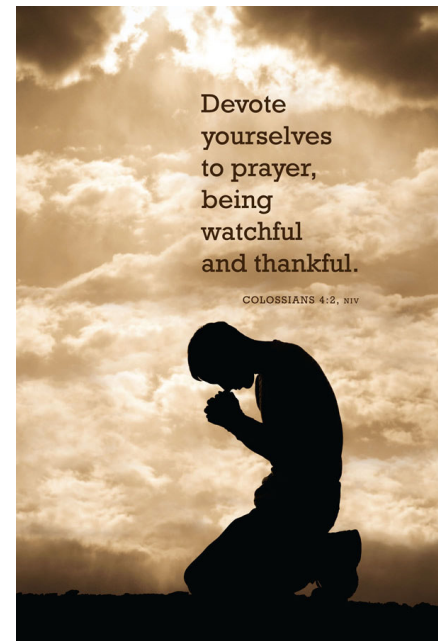
In complete humility, I pray that neither I, nor any of us, outgrow God or our need for him. If anything, we need to rely on him even more in our weakness, uncertainty, sickness, loss, poverty—in everything. Because, if God is for us, there is nothing which can be against us.

If God himself be for me, I may a host defy;  
For when I pray, before me my foes, confounded, fly.  
If Christ, my Head and Master, befriend me from above,  
What foe or what disaster can drive me from his love?

I build on this foundation; that Jesus and his blood  
Alone are my salvation, my true, eternal good.  
Without him all that pleases is valueless on earth;  
The gifts I have from Jesus alone have priceless worth.

No danger, thirst, or hunger, no pain or poverty,  
No earthly tyrant's anger shall ever vanquish me.  
Though earth should break asunder, you are my Savior true;  
No fire or sword or thunder shall sever me from you.

My heart for joy is springing and can no more be sad,  
'Tis full of joy and singing, sees only sunshine glad.  
The sun that cheers my spirit is Jesus Christ, my King;  
The heaven I shall inherit makes me rejoice and sing.



*Christian Worship 419 st. 1, 3, 6 & 7*



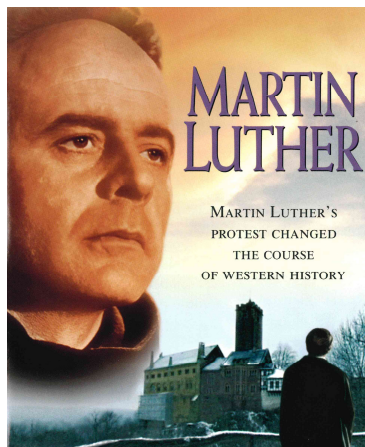
## Absolute Loyalty to the Word

It is the duty both of preachers and of hearers first of all and above all things to see to it that they have clear and sure evidence that their doctrine is really the true Word of God, revealed from heaven to the holy, original fathers, the prophets and apostles, and confirmed and commanded to be taught by Christ Himself. For we should by no means ever let doctrine be manhandled according to the pleasure and fancy of the individual who adapts it to human reason and understanding. Nor should we let men toy with Scripture, juggle the Word of God, and make it submit to being explained, twisted, stretched, and revised to suit people or to achieve peace and union; for then there could be no secure or stable foundation on which consciences might rely.

*("What Luther Says," paragraph 4770, page 1475)*

## “Reformation 2021”

by Al Todd



On Sunday, October 24, 2021, twelve members of Our Redeemer gathered for a Reformation Celebration. A buffet dinner was served in the Fellowship Hall and included entrees of traditional “German” food and well as “American” food. We even had some authentic German beer!

After dinner, we went to the sanctuary to view the original black and white film “Martin Luther.” This was the movie first produced in 1953 that was nominated for two Academy awards and received rave reviews from movie critics. The film covered Luther’s life between 1505 and 1530 A.D. and the birth of the Protestant Reformation. We were reminded again of how God worked through Luther to give him the insight and courage to stand firm on the Word of God, even to the point of death, and the importance of the Word and Sacraments to keep us in the faith.

Desserts were served after the movie ended. It was noted that despite, by today’s standards, the sub-optimal production values, this is still considered the most accurate portrayal of the events in Luther’s life during this crucial turning point in world history.

It was great to be able to have this Reformation celebration at Our Redeemer because the usual Los Angeles circuit Reformation service at St. Paul’s in North Hollywood was canceled this year due to health mitigation mandates for Los Angeles county as a result of the pandemic.

Faith Alone + Grace Alone + Scripture Alone  
CHRIST ALONE!

## November Birthdays



We rejoice in the many blessings God has given the members of our family of faith. May the Lord continue to bless them richly.

1st	Sonja T.
7th	Erle W. P.
10th	Carl S.
	Martin Luther
16th	Emmalee S.
22nd	Jacob M.
24th	Darby J.

## LWMS Fall Rally

by Sonja Todd

### The Golden West Circuit Lutheran Women's Missionary Society (LWMS) 2021 Fall Rally

The LWMS Golden West Circuit convened their 2021 Fall rally at Shepherd of the Hills Lutheran Church, Las Vegas, Nevada. The church building is in a residential area with plenty of parking. They have two very large Pre-school rooms.

Pastor Thomas Unke (Pastor at Shepherd of the Hills) gave the opening devotion and prayer at 9:00 A.M. This was followed by our morning Bible study which was led by Pastor Philip Seivert (Grace, Yorba Linda, CA). The Bible study was "Jesus Confronts the Woman at the Well".

During our morning break we again had yummy treats that the ladies of Shepherd of the Hills prepared.

The Spiritual Growth Committee prepared a fun game, "Wheel of Fortune." We had three teams and one member of each team came up to spin the wheel to see how many points they would get if the correct letter was guessed. They had to guess names of certain hymns in the new hymnal.

Next on the agenda was our Business Meeting. King of Kings had the best attendance at the Rally. There were about 50 ladies and a few men at this Fall Rally. A total of \$1,160.00 was collected for registration and plate offering. A discussion was had to increase the registration cost to \$10.00 per person. Three board positions will be open for the next Spring Rally (President Elect, Secretary and Spiritual Growth). Anyone interested?

Lunch was prepared by the ladies of Shepherd of the Hills. It consisted of several salads and sandwiches. There were a lot of dessert as well. The lunch was held in the Fellowship Hall, and it was very nicely decorated with a Fall theme.

Our speaker was Rev. Rob Siirila. Pastor Siirila and his family spent many years in Taiwan, Hong Kong, and China. He speaks fluent Mandarin. Pastor Siirila showed slides and spoke of his time in those countries. His presentation was fascinating and laced with humor which made it very interesting.

The closing devotion was led by our own Pastor James Proeber.

The Spring Rally will be held at King of Kings in Garden Grove, CA. March 12, 2022. Please plan to attend.







## Outreach Opportunities

The Outreach Committee has begun to organize more events to provide opportunities to invite people to Our Redeemer. Some events are conducted outside the formal worship service. There are also special worship services with food and fellowship afterwards. We hope these events will encourage you to invite people you know to learn more about our church and to hear the message of Grace we proclaim. As we look at the remainder of 2021, the Outreach Committee would like to invite all our members to think about new and possibly different ways to “reach out” to those who need to know their Savior. Please share your thoughts with Al Todd or Pastor Proeber.

Thank You!

## Tree Decorating, Chili and Caroling

On December 12th we will meet in the sanctuary at 2:00 pm to put up the tree and decorations which encourage us to worship our new-born Savior, Jesus Christ. It is also when we will have our chili supper.

We will even try to do some caroling, however, with all the COVID protocols in place, this may not happen. Please watch for more information.

## Pre-Thanksgiving Dinner at ORLC

Sunday, November 21<sup>st</sup> at 5:30 pm in the Fellowship Hall. Invite a friend or relative for our traditional pre-Thanksgiving celebration!

## Thanksgiving Worship

The psalmist said it the best, “O give thanks to the Lord, for he is good and his love endures forever.” On Thursday, November 25<sup>th</sup> we will have the opportunity to thank the Lord in a 9:30 am worship and live-streamed service. There will be songs of praise, as well as handbell music.

## Advent Services begin in November

Sunday, November 28<sup>th</sup> marks the beginning of our Advent season of preparation. This year we will look at God’s Old Testament promises and prophecies to prepare ourselves for the Coming Savior—Jesus Christ. Please note, there will be no mid-week Advent services this year.

## Christmas Worship

Christmas is always a special time at Our Redeemer. Not only are there the worship services on Christmas Eve, December 24th at 7:00 pm, and Christmas Day, December 25th at 9:30 am, there are also the other get-togethers and opportunities to invite people to “come and see the great thing the Lord has accomplished.



As we approach this special time of the year, remember the wonderful privilege we have to invite the people to hear what the Lord has done for them. Not only will it give you an opportunity to share your faith in the Lord, it will also give you an opportunity to share your hope and joy in Christ.

All our services will be life-streamed. There will also be an added television set in the fellowship hall on which the services can be watched.

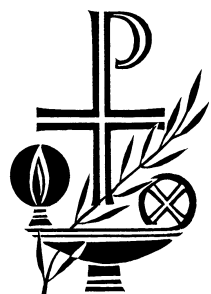
## Notes & News

### Handbell Choir

Practice for the end of one church year and the beginning of another continues. The ringers are preparing for the festival services which will include Thanksgiving, Advent, and Christmas.

We are thankful for those who generously give of their time and efforts to make practices and ring for our worship services.

There is also an invitation—if you are curious, or if you would like to try ringing—to speak with Debbie. If possible, we would like to include more ringers for 2022.



### Sunday Morning Bible Class

Christian education and Bible study is regularly held following the coffee / fellowship hour at church. The lessons are based on one of the lessons for the day and offer

additional insights to the theme for the day, as well as devotional thoughts for the week ahead. Because of the format, each class is a separate unit, so if you miss one Sunday, you can still come without losing any continuity.

Remember, Bible Class is every Sunday morning at 11:00 am.

### Mid-Week Bible Study

Every Wednesday evening there is a Bible Study in the fellowship hall. The 7:00 pm class offers opportunities for learning insights into the Word, as well as lively discussion.

Currently, the class is studying the Epistle of James. It is a letter on Christian sanctification, or how we live our lives set apart for God's holy purposes.

So far, we have covered chapters one and two. The closing three chapters leads us to consider our faith as evidenced by the words we speak and the works we do.

Come and learn more about the Lord's will for us as his people!

### Sunday School

Our Sunday School continues to be held on the second and fourth Sundays of the month, during the worship service. There is always a lesson and a review activity. Simple songs will also be added to the class time. If you have any questions, regarding the program, or possibly helping, please speak to one of the teachers—Sonja Todd or Sue Proeber.

### Opportunities

We are always looking for new opportunities for service, outreach, study of the Word, and encouragement. Recently some thoughts have been shared, and will be scheduled for the Spring and Fall of 2022. Both of these programs will help us reach out to families with young children. One suggestion was a "spring egg hunt." This would be in conjunction with Easter. Another suggestion was a Fall Festival. Watch for more information.



## Serve the Lord with Gladness

### Reporters Wanted

Book review? Personal Story of Faith?  
Event report? Potluck-gathering? Party? Field Trip?

Half-page to three pages  
Reviewed for scriptural consistency  
Due by 25th of month to appear in next issue

Hard-copy or email to Pastor Proeber—pastor.orlcsb@gmail. com

### *A simple and rewarding way to serve!*

Thanks to Sonja Todd for her article on the LWMS Fall Rally, to Al Todd for his article on the Reformation celebration.

There is a standing invitation to provide material for the *Reporter*. Throughout the past volumes, articles authored by members have really made every issue more interesting. We pray that every member will provide an article for 2021. If you have an idea, and you are not sure whether to act on it, please don't hesitate to speak to Pastor Proeber for advice. Thanks!

### Meetings for November

Church Council            November 8th at 7:00 pm  
*Specific Boards will meet following the Council Meeting*

Outreach Committee    November 30th at 7:00 pm

*If you have a question regarding a specific area of ministry, please contact a member of the appropriate Board. He will be happy to help.*

### The Roots of Gratitude



To begin with, we must rejoice at the less important good things which we enjoy according to the Second Table of the Law in that our bodies and possessions are protected. For these gifts are of minor importance when compared with those which we enjoy according to the First Table: that God has revealed Himself, has made known what He intends to do with us, gives His Word, grants faith and the Holy Spirit, hears prayers, daily increases His church, etc.

These things are so great that no tongue is able to amplify and praise them as they deserve. To this David turns his eyes; on this he meditates, and so he is moved to gratitude. For only those are truly thankful who receive the gifts of God joyfully and rejoice in the Giver.

*"What Luther Says"  
Volume 3, page 1352*



## Devotional Corner

### "Ready and Waiting"

"Then the King will say to those on his right, 'Come, you who are blessed by my Father; take your inheritance, the kingdom prepared for you since the creation of the world.'"

*Matthew 25:34*

"If it sounds too good to be true, it probably is." These words not only sound a warning, they also offer practical advice. All too often a sweet deal goes sour, and what remains is the bitter after-taste of a lesson learned.

Heaven could be considered as one of those things which sound too good to be true. A place of perfect peace? A place where no sadness or pain exists? A place where only good will be enjoyed forever? While part of me longs for a place like heaven, another part remains incredulous.

While it may sound too good to be true, heaven is ready and waiting. It is the invitation given by God the Father through his Son which confirms its reality. God could never tell me to "come," if heaven didn't exist. What adds to my certainty is the way heaven is defined. It has existed before the creation of all things. So, from the very foundations of time the kingdom of heaven has been prepared by God and is waiting for me.

Even more convincing is the work of my Savior. Jesus is the one who gives me the confidence to know I will be called blessed by the Father. To be blessed by God doesn't mean my life will suddenly become easier. Nor does it mean I will experience a heaven here on earth. What it does mean is that I will experience God's blessing which comes through the precious life, death and resurrection of Jesus. He rescued me from the condemnation my sin deserved. He redeemed me from the bondage my enemy claimed. He even released me from the dreaded power of death and the grave. It is only through faith in Jesus that I know heaven is real, and that it is ready and waiting for me.

How blessed I am to know my Savior. How blessed I am to live every day looking forward to eternal life. How blessed I am to know heaven is ready and waiting.

### Prayer

O gracious Lord, when I am troubled, when I am weary, or when I need encouragement, come to me with your promise of life in heaven. Let your life, your death and your resurrection be my assurance heaven is ready and waiting.

Daily devotions can be accessed through [www.whataboutjesus.com](http://www.whataboutjesus.com) or [www.wels.net](http://www.wels.net). Please follow the instructions to view daily devotions and to subscribe to them. They are also available as "podcasts."



PRE-THANKSGIVING POT-LUCK  
DINNER & FELOWSHIP  
NOVEMBER 21st at 5:30 PM

\*

THANKSGIVING WORSHIP SERVICE  
NOVEMBER 25th at 9:30 AM

\*

COME and GIVE THANKS  
to the LORD!