

THOUGHTS

By Douglas W. Schroeder

SPEAKER ON THE WORD TODAY

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BIG YEAR!

2018 marks several milestones in the life of Our Shepherd Lutheran Church and The Word Today. It is the 60th anniversary of the congregation, as well as the 40th anniversary of The Word Today. In addition, I will have been in the pastoral ministry for 30 years, 25 of them at Our Shepherd. We have much to celebrate recalling God's goodness to us!

We hope that our partners of The Word Today can join us for a special celebration. On **May 6th**, the "official" anniversary of The Word Today, we hope to have Pastor Paul and Sylvia with us. Sylvia will be recovering from her second knee replacement, so pray that she is given great recovery so as to not impede their attendance. We will have a free catered meal for all on that day, and we bring our special offerings for the mission of TWT to the Lord at that service. Please let us know if you can join us, so we can prepare a meal for you! On **May 13th** we extend the celebration another week as we will have a visitor from Johannesburg, South Africa with us, and a light lunch following the 10:30 service. We hope you can be at one of these wonderful gatherings!

"THE WAR ON COPS"

Lately I am reading a book by that title by Heather Mac Donald. It explores the "Ferguson Effect", the possibility that increasing pressure on police activity and tactics has had an unintended effect, that of increasing crime in black communities. The book dissects the Michael Brown case from 2014 and shows how the cultural and media story spread about the killing was nearly *antithetical* to reality. For instance, six black witnesses all testified that Michael Brown was not shot as a result of police racism or inappropriate action.

We have several police officers in our congregation, and some have expressed frustration at the habitual promotion of unverified "facts" by social media and news agencies, though police are bound to silence while collecting data for processing crimes. Imagine that you were involved in an incident, but because of your unique role you could not share your side of the story publicly until months later. Meanwhile *anyone without substantiation* could infer, make accusations, even draw conclusions and flood social media with the tentative, even provocative information. The news could add their two cents. But, you must remain silent. By the time you get to talk, the issue has largely been decided in the minds of many in the public. This is a patently unfair situation in which those who wish to smear others, distort the truth, and show bigotry get the upper hand.

This touches on the 8th Commandment, which states, "You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor." In some instances, black witnesses of the Michael Brown shooting were *threatened by others in their own community if they should say anything contradicting the story that the officer without cause shot Brown*. At the trial six black witnesses testified, all of them agreeing that the shooting was *justified, but none would*

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talk to the media, purportedly out of fear for their own safety. What you will say, or what you won't say carries potentially helpful or harmful impact on society. Christians of any race are to actively *resist* unsubstantiated accusations and *promote* restraint. In a bid to change culture to suit the Black Lives Matter movement the 8th Commandment is being violated egregiously. What people don't realize is that in conducting activities which erode the justice system they are whittling away at their own freedom and safety. Mac Donald shows in her book that the law abiding residents of the inner cities are now much less safe because of pressure from the liberal lawyers and communities restricting the effective methods of police officers.

In the introduction to the Ten Commandments the Lord says of himself, "... I, the Lord your God, am a jealous God, punishing the children for the sin of the fathers to the third and fourth generation of those who hate me, but showing love to a thousand generations of those who love me and keep my commandments" (Deuteronomy 5:9b-10). This explains what took centuries of development of social science to discover; all societal crime is family crime. If family deteriorates, so does society. In cities across America special interest groups are promoting the idea that cops are racist. Yet, in places like Chicago in the 1990's over 75% of black children were raised in fatherless households. Is it any wonder that gang activity and crime are rampant in such an environment? The cops are patrolling where there is crime, not because the citizens are black. Until this reverse racism and bias against the police is stopped the death toll among the good black citizens in the cities will continue.

DELICATELY BALANCED WORLD

The Lord has placed the Earth within what is called the "habitable zone", and among the ideal conditions are temperate climate due to the Earth being the ideal distance from the Sun. The temperature may plummet below zero degrees, or a massive snow hit the East coast, but this is all within tolerance for life on Earth.

Over this past week I spoke with my folks, who were having 84-degree weather at Christmas in Florida, and also to my Canadian in-laws in Manitoba, who were experiencing 31-degree below zero weather! Not considering wind chill, that is a 115-degree difference! It would not take much more in terms of variance of the "big picture" in our solar system to skew conditions such that life would be extinguished. God's creative and preserving hand is at work always to protect human life on Earth!

The probability is *overwhelmingly* against finding similar conditions, or life, anywhere else in the universe – despite what you read in fluff science articles in periodicals!

Blessings!
Douglas W. Schroeder