

SEPTEMBER

2018

Thoughts
Box 77
Greendale
WI
53129

CHANGE TO CHANGE THE WORLD!

I hope you are collecting your change in a container to send the proceeds (Please, no enormously heavy parcels!) to The Word Today! We are collecting it at Our Shepherd; so far we are averaging over \$500/month! How about your church? Does it have an international mission emphasis? Collecting for Change to Change the Word for The Word Today would be excellent! If your church has interest, we can send you labels to put on your change jars. I even have some people at the bank saving change for it! When I enter to bring the rather hefty bin of change, they say, "Wait a minute! I have some for you!"

ARTICLES OF FAITH, OR ARTIFACTS?

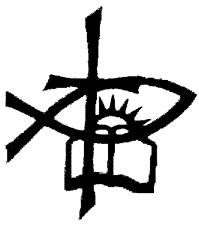
The word "article" when it is applied to theology means a particular doctrine, such as, "The Holy Trinity is an article of the Christian faith." The articles of faith are collected into what we know as the three creeds, Apostles, Nicene and Athanasian.

I recently was thinking about how many physical Bibles there are around the world, and how many are treated as just another article, such as an article of clothing. So many Bibles are simply sitting, collecting dust. People have many articles of clothing that are never worn, and they may have a Bible that is never read. We can extend this analogy to the world of the Net by discussing how many Bible Apps are being underutilized, collecting cyber-dust.

An *article* that is not used for a very long time eventually becomes an *artifact*, a testimony to a bygone era. A Bible that is not used, in book form or electronic, transitions over time from an article used by a person claiming belief in God to an artifact demonstrating the person's dead faith. *Salvation is a "use it or lose it" proposition.* You are either alive and growing in your knowledge and love of God, seeking to live it out in life, or you are declining spiritually. The Word of God needs to be handled. You need to give the Holy Spirit something to work with in shaping your spirit! Do not let the Word of God become an artifact!

SORROW AND OPPORTUNITIES AROUND US

Just pray with people. It shouldn't be fancy, flowery, just heart-felt. Today I learned that my father's room at the assisted living facility, which was not assured due to a lengthy wait list, will be ready when he is discharged from rehab. At the bank I found out that one teller's mom had a heart attack, and thankfully was rescued; all this a few days apart from the one-year anniversary of her husband's sudden death. Last Sunday the news was that a woman battling cancer has no sign of it in her liver, which is huge considering she is two weeks away from delivering a baby. A guy at church had a long tear in his Achilles, and is for the first time in weeks following surgery able to move his foot.



*The Bible is God's Word . . . Jesus is God's "Word" made flesh . . .
His death and resurrection, the message needed Today.*

September

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One of our eldest members not only survived a fall which broke her hip, but after surgery has bounced back (perhaps the wrong phrase?) and made it to the cherished Bible fellowship group again as one of her first trips outside the house. So, just pray. It's easy; you say, "Let's pray..." and start in on it. Don't give a whole lot of time for someone to make objection. Show them God is around and attentive. Show you care. Just pray with them.

CORRUPTION IN THE BODY OF CHRIST

"But among you there not be even a hint of sexual immorality... (Ephesians 5:3)." The Bible is clear on what constitutes healthy, godly relationships and what is immoral, warped by sin.

There are allegations that the Pope was aware of the sex scandals that have rocked the Roman church, and that he did not clean house. This is such a sad circumstance for all of Christendom! The world looks at such things and judges Christians to be hypocritical.

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Martin Luther, who was himself a priest of the Roman faith, eventually concluded that it is unnatural, and unscriptural to demand that church leadership be celibate. This puts an unnatural restriction on men and can lead to perversions. The name of Jesus is defamed by Christians who participate in such ungodly activities as heterosexual affairs, pornography, homosexual relationships, transgender identification, cross dressing, and the like.

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Martin Luther, the namesake of the Lutheran Church, attempted doctrinal reform, and to eliminate the errors of the church in his day, such as indulgences which were used by the papacy to fund the construction of St. Peter's Basilica – literally an attempt to sell documents claiming to offer forgiveness in order to fund a construction project. Luther's love for his church cost him his membership in it, but the reforms (the movement came to be known as the Reformation) he began took hold and led to the formation of what are called Protestant (protesting the errors of the Roman church) denominations of Christianity.

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There is a call now from within the Roman denomination for another Reformation. I believe the Roman church does not need another reformation; it needs to revisit the concerns of Martin Luther and those who sought change during the first Reformation, which included eliminating celibacy and allowing priests to marry.

FANCY PLANT ROTTING

My Narrow-Leaf Chalksticks plant in my office is rotting. It was taken out of its native habitat, put in a pot and transported to a foreign climate. We humans go rotten, too, if we are removed from the soil and light of God's Word.

Blessings!
Douglas W. Schroeder