



Vashon Lutheran Church

Faith Shaking Theology?

I did it again. I picked up yet another book by Bart Ehrman – an agnostic professor for New Testament. In his youth, Ehrman was an evangelical “born again” Christian, who believed in the inerrancy of the Bible. When he went to seminary, he began to realize “that my former views of the Bible as the inerrant revelation from God were flat-out wrong” (page xi). However, it was not the scholarly research that eventually made Ehrman an agnostic, but the problem of evil and suffering in the world, along with his conclusion that God does not do anything about it.

In his latest book, *Jesus, Interrupted*, (I don’t understand the title of the book), Ehrman talks about “historical-critical problems with the Bible: contradictions in details, discrepancies on major points of view, authors claiming to be apostles when they weren't, historical problems in the reconstruction on the life of Jesus, and so on” (page 226). All these “problems” are not new. They are at least 200 years old, if not older. Because of the textual variations between manuscripts, Ehrman concludes that the Bible is “a very human book, not a divinely inspired one” (page 222). Furthermore, the selection of the New Testament canon is the result of human church leadership. With this in mind, one might wonder why an agnostic still keeps teaching New Testament to undergraduate students in college. Ehrman, though, does not see a dilemma between being an agnostic and teaching the “most important book in the history of Western civilization” (page 282). “It [sc. the Bible] is the most widely purchased, the most thoroughly studied, the most highly revered, and the most completely misunderstood book – ever!” And he adds, “Why wouldn't I want to study it?”

Even though I do not necessarily care for Ehrman's publications, or theology, I can agree with him for the most part in his recent book as an academic, but not as a pastor. As an academic, I, too, applied the historical-critical method in interpreting Scripture. I, too, have studied “historical facts” in seminary, including the writing of the Bible. The Bible did not fall down from heaven. The first written reports about Jesus' life and ministry started some 20 years after his death (Paul's letters). In the case of the Gospels, it is even 40 to 60 years. The Apostles did not sit down and write their accounts thinking that their words might be collated in a tome of sacred writ. It wasn't until around AD 370 that we have the first complete record of the 27 canonical books of the New Testament. Since we do not possess the original New Testament, but only copies, there are thousands of manuscripts, which contain a number of textual variations. (Although, I think that Ehrman underestimates the importance of oral tradition and the accuracy of the copyists.)

By looking at this scholarly “evidence,” we might want to surmise that the Bible was the result of an entirely human process. Yet, as a pastor, I think the wonderful thing about the Bible (and God's grace) is that God made use of sinful and faulty human beings to write down his Word. As I look at the books that did not “make it” into the canon, I cannot help but think that the Holy Spirit was at work in the process of selecting our Holy Scriptures. Even if we did not have a Bible (and had to rely on the spoken word only), I choose to believe that our faith in Jesus Christ would have survived throughout the ages. After all, “Faith comes from what is heard, and

what is heard comes from the word of Christ” (Romans 10:17). Jesus Christ, our Lord, is the incarnate Word, which was with God from the beginning, long before there was the written Word of God. Conversely, this written Word of God, as it is contained in the Bible, points us to our salvation, which we have in Christ. It is in that sense “that the Bible is the only authoritative source for knowing divine truth that God [and Christ] reveals to us.”

The Bible does not only tell us what God has done for us, or what God still does for us. The Bible also assures us of what God will continue to do for us. This is something one cannot come to understand through a historical-critical reading of the Bible, but only by believing that God's Word and promises are true. Or, with words from the Prophet Isaiah (40:8), “The word of God will stand forever.”

May the Word of God continue to empower you to faithful and fruitful service. In Christ's name,
Bjoern E. Meinhardt, Pastor



RUMMAGE SALE

Our rummage sale was a success! The proceeds from this sale (supplemented by Thrivent Financial for Lutherans) will go in support of the mission work of the Stubbs Family in Tanzania and our sister congregation in Elista, Russia.

WORK IN THE FOOD BANK GARDEN is going well and many thanks to all who have participated. In October we will have at least one clean-up Saturday, which will be announced. Come join us and give consideration to becoming the new co-ordinator.

WOMEN'S BIBLE STUDY GROUP

The Women's Bible Study Group will meet 2 pm. October 29th at Kathleen Odekirk's home to continue the book of Acts. Please read Acts 1-9:31 and pages 15-49 (The birth and growth of the church in Jerusalem through the work of the Spirit and the persecution and expansion in Judea and Samaria) in book by William Kurz (*The Collegeville Bible Commentary on the Book of Acts*). Give your attention to the speeches by Peter, Acts 2:14-35, Acts 3:11-26 and Stephen, Acts 7:2-51. What is Peter saying about Jesus? What is Stephen saying about the prophets, the house of God, and the people of God? What is happening in the early church? Let's discuss these issues.

WORSHIP AT THE COMMUNITY CARE CENTER

In October we will have a month off. We will again offer worship at the Care Center on November 22 at 9:15am. In the meantime, Pastor Bjoern will be in contact with the administration at the Care Center to clarify some open questions to be in compliance with Vashon Island Community Care Center policies. Those interested in volunteering to help with the service should contact Pastor Bjoern.

CELEBRATION OF FULL COMMUNION

This year the ELCA Church-wide Assembly passed an agreement of full communion with the United Methodist Church. Here on Vashon we will engage in a celebration of full communion at Vashon United Methodist Church on November 1st. Details about the service are still pending.

TWO NEW BIBLE STUDIES IN OCTOBER

1. Science and Faith

Starting in October Pastor Bjoern will have two Bible studies. On Sunday mornings, starting Oct. 18th at 9:15, he will have a study on Science and Faith. The book he will be using is: *God's Undertaker: Has Science Buried God?* by John C. Lennox. At the first meeting options on how to proceed with the study will be discussed.

2. The Study of Key Doctrines

Pastor Bjoern Meinhardt will offer a Tuesday theology class, which will explore seven key doctrines of the Christian faith that are vital and relevant to worship, discipleship and mission. Starting Tuesday, October 13, there will be a class in the morning (10 AM) and in the evening (7 PM). The outline of the course is as follows:

Oct 13: The Trinity

Oct 20: Sin

Oct 27: The Incarnation

Nov 3: The Holy Spirit

Nov 10: No class

Nov 17: The Bible

Nov 24: The Church and the Means of Grace

Dec 1: The Last Things

INTERCESSORY PRAYER GROUP

An intercessory prayer group meets every Thursday morning at 9:00am in the church. Please call Gail Larson at 567-4779 for prayer requests and if you are able join the group to pray for those in need.

AN ELECTRONIC MOUSE IN 2010

In January of next year *The Church Mouse* will go electronic. There will be three ways in which you can receive it.

1. You can go to our website www.vashonlutheranchurch.org
2. You can sign-up to have it e-mailed to you
3. You can sign-up to continue to have a hard copy mailed to your home address.

You need to contact the church office to have the Church Mouse mailed to you or to give your e-mail address. You can e-mail your wish to VLC98070@centurytel.net. (VLC is case sensitive so use capital letters).

FREE DENTAL CARE AVAILABLE

Care is available to Vashon residents who meet poverty level criteria (poverty guidelines are posted on bulletin board by pastor's office). Our community dentists, hygienists, assistants, and Medical Teams International Mobile Van have come together to provide free cleaning and restorative services to eligible residents on Sept. 25th. Walk-ins cannot be seen. Call for screening in order to schedule an appointment at 206 463-9032.



NEW HYMNS

Martin Luther encouraged congregational singing and wrote many hymns that we use today. There is always a need for new hymns that reflect current concerns within the church. The ELCA has set a goal that by the 500th anniversary of our church, to create 50 new hymns, in all styles and types. Each congregation is encouraged to seek out people who want to write new hymns and music. Then use the new hymns in congregational worship and select the best and forward them to the local synod. The synod will select the best to use in our celebration in 2017. This is a worthwhile and doable project. Let's all contribute to a new voice in worship.

A SERVICE of PRAYER and HEALING

We will have the opportunity to quietly gather for prayer and healing in the Lutheran church sanctuary from 6 – 6:30 p.m. the first Sunday of each month. *Our next service will be October 4th at 6pm.*

Regardless of who you are and what you carry, you are welcome in this place. Come to pray aloud or silently.

Come forward to be prayed for through naming your concerns or retaining your silence.

Or...simply come to sit for a while and unwind with your own thoughts.

No pressure, no intrusion...A simple service without music...without liturgy...in a candle-lit sanctuary where we gather to hear a few readings, pray and be prayed for, and sit and just be.

The Rev. Jeff Larson, Ph.D. is a Lutheran minister and clinical psychologist called by Vashon Lutheran Church to provide counseling services to the community. As a member of the body of believers he feels that spiritual health in its many shapes and forms is key to attaining psychological and physical health.

PASSION PLAY TOUR & MORE IN 2010

The Passion Play takes place every ten years and the next time in 2010. I will lead a group trip June 21- July 2, 2010. Goodspeed & Bach have put together a spectacular trip. The *trip is custom-made* and includes entrance fees to the play, many museums, a garden, and Heidleberg castle. Breakfasts and some meals are included.

We will visit the following cities: Heidelberg, Strassbourg, Colmar, Geneva, Zurich, Konstanz and Mainau, Neuschwantstein, beautiful Alpine village of Graswang (during the passion play), Berchtesgaden, and Salzburg.

We put a *cap amount* on the expenses for *land-travel* The more people who go on the trip, the less expensive it will be. Land Tour Cost (double occupancy) for 25 travelers is \$2699. per person; for 30 travelers is \$2599.

Group flight rates will be available this summer.

Land Deposit Schedule: \$500. per person to reserve arrangements; \$1000. due Sep 15, 2009 *and is due now*; final payment due March 15, 2010. *Refund schedule:*

Up to Sep 1, 100%; up to Sep 17, 75%; after Mar 17, 2010 no refund.

There are brochures available. If you are interested, please contact Pastor Meinhardt.

BAPTISM SCHEDULE FOR 2009

During 2009, baptism will be a special part of the worship on these dates:

November 1st, Sunday, All Saint's Sunday

December 25th, Friday. Christmas Day

REMEMBER IN YOUR PRAYERS:

Brad and Jane; Lyanne Koehler (Patte Wagner’s aunt); Judy and Michele, who are friends of Gail Larson; Terri Hitch; Tim Marsh (Asst. Mgr. at Thriftway); Josephine (relative of Linda VanStone); Karen Rae; Doug Clark and his daughter (friend of J. Lincoln); Stephanie Lee & family. Also remember those in care facilities: Lelan Lau, Carl Nelson, & Oda Sorensen. Contact Gail Larson at 567-4779 to initiate a prayer request.

HAPPY OCTOBER ANNIVERSARY

Steve & Joanne Kicinski Oct 13

HAPPY OCTOBER BIRTHDAY

Preston Scheer	1-Oct	Dennis Hess	22-Oct
Rika Chappell	2-Oct	Anne Gaspers	25-Oct
Lanora Hackett	7-Oct	Jill DuBois	26-Oct
Erica Wagner	13-Oct	Margaret Koch	28-Oct
Adam Powelson	16-Oct	Erik Cleland	28-Oct
Hazel Nelson	16-Oct	Julie Gaspers	28-Oct
Elsa Croonquist	17-Oct	Kris Sovde	31-Oct
Tom Kicinski	19-Oct		

DAYS OF REMEMBRANCE

- 10/4 Sun Francis of Assisi, renewer of Church, 1226
- 10/6 Tues Wm. Tyndale, translator, martyr, 1536
- 10/7 Weds Henry Melchior Muhlenberg, missionary to America, 1787
- 10/17 Sat Ignatius, Bishop of Antioch, martyr c. 115
- 10/18 Sun St. Luke, Evangelist
- 10/23 Fri James of Jerusalem, martyr
- 10/26 Mon Philip Nicolai, 1608; Johann Heermann, 1647, Paul Gerhardt, 1676, hymnwriters
- 10/28 Weds St. Simon & St. Jude, Apostles
- 10/31 Sat Reformation Day

VASHON THRIFTWAY 1% COMMUNITY DONATION PROGRAM

Remember to save your Vashon Thriftway receipts to be used for our missions program.

Thriftway will donate 1% of the total to VLC. Remember the rules:

- Cash register receipts must be from Vashon Thriftway.
- Cash register receipts must be for purchases made by members of Vashon Lutheran Church.
- Receipts turned in cannot be more than one year old.
- Purchasers must sign each receipt, and indicate their phone number.
- Receipts may be placed in the indicated receptacle in the Fellowship Hall.

Thanks for helping
Stewardship Chair



Fall Worship Assistants

October through December

Sunday	Ministry	Name
1st	Assistant Minister	Patte Wagner
	Communion Assistant	Jeff Larson
	Lector	Perry Prescott
	Ushers	Richard Odekirk Kathleen Odekirk
2nd	Assistant Minister	June Langland
	Communion Assistant	Janet Williams
	Lector	Stephanie Lee
	Ushers	Jim Dam Gretchen Yates
3rd	Assistant Minister	M. Goth
	Communion Assistant	Hazel Nelson
	Lector	Jeff Larson
	Ushers	Bonnie Snaza Peggy Stringfellow
4th	Assistant Minister	Gary Peterson
	Communion Assistant	Karen Stamper
	Lector	Jack Lincoln
	Ushers	Jack Lincoln Susan Lincoln
5th	Assistant Minister	Jill DuBois
	Communion Assistant	Jeff Larson
	Lector	Stephanie Lee
	Ushers	Jack Lincoln Susan Lincoln

October Lessons

Date	October 4, 2009	October 11, 2009	October 18, 2009	October 25, 2009
	18 Pentecost	19 Pentecost	20 Pentecost	Reformation Sunday
First Reading	Gen 2:18-24	Amos 5:6-7, 10-15	Isa 53:4-12	Jer 31:31-34
Psalm	8	90:12-17	91:9-16	46
Second Reading	Heb 1:1-4; 2:5-12	Heb 4:12-16	Heb 5:1-10	Rom 3:19-28
Gospel	Mark 10:2-16	Mark 10:17-31	Mark 10:35-45	John 8:31-36