



BISHOPS POST



“No one can lay any foundation other than the one already laid, which is Jesus Christ” I Cor 3,11

I used to love playing “broken telephone” on youth camps. The first person thinks of something, whispers it into the neighbour's ear, and so it is whispered from person to person. The last one then says out loud what she had heard. Laughter! The first one says the original version. Even more laughter! How could a message change so drastically!?

The tragedy is that something similar happened in Church history. Jesus clearly and openly proclaimed: Whoever believes in me, shall have eternal life! And with this message he sent out his disciples, on it he founded the Church. This was the message that the apostles spread from country to country.

As it was passed on from generation to generation, the message was adapted, altered and important parts omitted. When the young Martin Luther heard it 1500 years later, it was hardly recognizable. He heard of a fearsome God, eager to punish all wrong. He heard that salvation had to be earned with trembling and much hard work. Only when he studied the book of Romans he stumbled across the original message in Romans 3v 23,24: “for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, and all are justified freely by his grace through the redemption that came by Christ Jesus.” This message set him free, and made him challenge the Church.

Can this “broken telephone” be prevented? The gospel needs to be passed on from one to the other, from one generation to the next. And we too share with others what we have understood. Is it not inevitable that at the end something completely different will be heard?

No, it is not inevitable. We can prevent this to happen by ensuring that we time and again hear the “original message”, by reading and studying the Bible. The sermons that we hear, the devotions and Christian books that we read all explain and re-tell the original story. No matter how good they are - they can never replace the Bible. We need to regularly read from this Book, because it, more than

anything else, shows us the firm foundation of our faith, Jesus Christ.

As we celebrate 30 years ELCSA (N-T) we are grateful for all those who have worked in our Church. Now it is our turn to pass on the message, time and again making sure that the life giving gospel of Christ can be clearly heard!

News from the Church:

The 1st of September 2011 was a day of new beginnings:

The Zürn family (Parents Katrin and Heiko with children Phillip, Helen, Laila and Elisa) could start their work in the North Rand congregation, after receiving their work permit and arriving safely.

With **Pastor Michael Diezun** it was a different story. 10 hours before departure Berlin had not even started working on his Visa. Yet two hours before departure he received his passport, ready for travel and work! We thank God, those who did a lot of phoning, and lastly a very efficient employee at the embassy for making it possible! He serves the Midrand/Kelvin congregations.

It also was the first working day of **Ulrich Johl** from the Kempton Park congregation, as "Program Facilitator". After much planning, deliberation and interviewing Church Council has finally made this appointment. He will introduce himself in a separate article. May God bless him in his work, and make him a blessing for the Church.

Pastor Hugo Filter (Braunschweig) has completed his Chemotherapy treatment and is currently undergoing radio therapy. We pray that God will grant that the treatment succeeds, the cancer recedes, and that Hugo will soon be strong and healthy again!

Church Synod meets from 20 to 23 October 2011 in Harburg. Quite a few representatives will participate for the first time. Please pray that God will bless this synod and all those who participate, to the glory of His Name!

Your brother in Christ,

Horst Müller