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Into the nonsense of our days



All the absurd little meetings, decisions, inner skirmishes that go to make up our days. It all adds up to very little, and yet it all adds up to very much. Our days are full of nonsense, and yet not, because it is precisely into the nonsense of our days that God speaks to us words of great significance—not words that are written in the stars but words that are written into the raw stuff and nonsense of our days, which are not nonsense just because God speaks into the midst of them. And the words that he says, to each of us differently, are *be brave . . . be merciful . . . feed my lambs . . . press on toward the goal . . .* These words that God speaks to us in our own lives are the real miracles. They are not miracles that create faith as we might think that a message written in the stars would create faith, but they are miracles that it takes faith to see—faith in the sense of openness, faith in the sense of willingness to wait, to watch, to listen, for the incredible presence of God here in the world among us.—Frederick Buechner, *The Magnificent Defeat* (Harper & Row, 1966), pp. 49-50.

Green eggs and applesauce



The online version of the *Merriam Webster Dictionary* defines “applesauce” as slang for bunkum or nonsense. That is a fairly well-established usage; I remember as a boy reading a book from my father’s youth—probably the 1930s—where “applesauce” already carried that meaning. Apparently there is a more contemporary slang meaning relating to a certain computer manufacturer which is kind of funny, but inappropriate in a family newsletter.

But I digress. Did you see the article in the February issue of *The Lutheran* entitled “Applesauce communion”? The writer is a young (I presume) pastor who brought the Eucharist to an elderly person in a nursing home and was convinced to help the woman receive by crushing up the body of Christ and mixing it with applesauce. “I had never heard of mixing the body of Christ with applesauce,” the pastor admitted. “We aren’t taught in seminary what to do when someone can’t swallow the bread and wine.”

That actually relieves me, just a bit. It’s better than saying that the seminaries are actually *teaching* people to mix the body of Christ with applesauce.

The story gets stranger still. The elderly woman’s daughter asked the pastor to leave the host-infused applesauce “so her mom could finish it during snack time.”

And the pastor agreed.

Gut feelings

Why would a Lutheran pastor do such a thing? Well, it boils down to this, quoting her again: “My gut tells me these things are OK.” And this is a way to “make communion as welcoming and accessible as possible.” And then after all, we are in a time when “our worship continues to evolve to meet the changing needs of God’s people.”

So there you have it. The authority for how we live and act and worship as Christians is “my gut.” It’s so much more evolved, you know, than things like Scripture or the confessions. You don’t even need to consult an app on your iPhone; just check with your gut.

The young pastor also tells us: “In seminary I learned a fancy term for this: ‘the use of the means of grace.’ The idea is that we should extend to people as many opportunities as possible to experience God’s grace while holding fast to its essence.”

What’s the use?

The reference, apparently, is to the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America’s *The Use of the Means of Grace*, a pretty good statement, on the whole, adopted by the ELCA back in 1997. It would not occur to me to call the phrase a “fancy term,” but oh well. Apparently not much beyond the title was taught, however (or at least not much was learned). There is, I admit, nothing in the statement which says “Don’t crush the host and mix it with applesauce.” It does, on the other hand, suggest that “the bread and wine of communion are handled with care and reverence.” My gut tells me that mixing the body of Christ with applesauce falls short of this goal. My head tells me that too, matter of fact.

Pastoral dilemmas

I do appreciate the young pastor’s dilemma, though. Certainly providing the Eucharist to those who have difficulty swallowing is a pastoral challenge, and probably one not often taken up in seminary instruction. I’ve faced the challenge myself, including with my own mother-in-law.

But I have never resorted to applesauce. Some pastors have found that a small piece of the host, especially if softened in the consecrated wine, can be more easily swallowed. Others have noted that *The Use of the Means of Grace* and long Christian tradition have recognized that the full benefit of the sacrament can be received in the reception of only

one element. A drop of wine on the tongue can bring the blessing of forgiveness of sins, life and salvation.

An afternoon snack

As for leaving the host for the recipient to “snack on later”—well, it’s difficult to find any kind of justification for that. In the history of Christian worship, the only thing I can think of that relates to that in any way is the practice, fought against strenuously by the church, of people secreting away the host for use later, either on account of misguided piety or nefarious purpose.

Apparently the woman’s daughter asked the pastor to do this. The proper response would have been “no.” Pastors are supposed to know better.

I would not like them here or there

The January issue of the same magazine featured an article about a “Dr. Seuss liturgy” performed at a couple of congregations in upstate New York. It was, the magazine allows, “an unusual Sunday service.” The liturgy was written in rhyme. The sanctuary was decorated with Dr. Seuss books. Children and others (including the pastor) wore funny Dr. Seuss-style hats. One congregation served a breakfast of green eggs and ham.

All of this was modeled, in good ecumenical fashion, on a Pennsylvania Episcopalian congregation that offered “A Seusscharist.”

But hey, it was an outreach tool. “Grandparents brought grandchildren who didn’t normally come to church. Curious visitors came and attendance rivaled Christmas and Easter.”

Were you there?

This particular article came in *The Lutheran’s* section entitled “Two months out,” which is supposed to present ideas for seasons or occasions coming up in a couple of months. Let’s see, January issue . . . that would take us about to Easter. Or maybe Lent. Yes, that’s good. Lent can be so dreary, a little Dr. Seuss might liven it up a bit.

But perhaps I’m overreacting. The pastor offers a series of “tips for a Dr. Seuss liturgy,” one of which is that “worship leaders should practice the liturgy so they read and pray it with dignity and reverence.” Yes, that would be good. Dignity and reverence.

Like the photo accompanying the article,

showing the pastor, dressed in green chasuble and funny hat, sitting on the floor with six children, also in funny hats, right in front of the altar with its paragon proclaiming, “Holy, holy, holy.” The irony just never ceases, does it? Again, a case where a pastor really should know better.

In a word . . .

The Lutheran is supposed to know better, too.

What is the purpose of such articles? If the purpose is to give more fodder to those who think the ELCA has gone completely off the rails, then perhaps it accomplished that. But if *The Lutheran's* staff actually thinks any of this is good liturgical or sacramental theology—or even good pastoral practice—then I’ve got a word for them: *Applesauce!*

—by *Richard O. Johnson, editor*

The real St. Patrick

by James Bergquist



Lutherans need to know about the real St. Patrick. We might be surprised at how much we owe to him. And how greatly Patrick and the Celtic Christian movement that followed him continue to challenge us today.

Forget the hoopla about Patrick’s banishing snakes from Ireland. Disregard tales about leprechauns and shamrocks. The real St. Patrick is far more interesting.

St. Patrick stands out among the “great cloud of witnesses” surrounding not only Irish Catholics but all Western Christians. Patrick indeed must be recognized as a genuine missionary saint whose faithfulness led to the evangelization of our cultural ancestors. In the end, Lutherans—and others of the Protestant tradition—stand along with Roman Catholic brothers and sisters as co-heirs of Patrick and the Celtic church he founded.

Here is why.

Patrick was born along the coast of southwestern England about 393 AD. His family quite possibly was Christian, probably descendents of Roman soldiers and merchants who first brought the faith to England. As a teenager he was captured by a raiding party from Ireland and taken there as a slave in 401 AD to tend sheep on the green hills. He escaped some six years later to France. After returning home to England for a time, and after some period of theological training in France, he returned to Ireland about 432. Some say he responded to a vision that called to him, “Come walk among us once again.” He died in 461—on March 17.

Ireland at the time was a rough-hewn place. It was almost entirely rural, illiterate, and governed

by dozens of violently competitive chieftains. Among such Patrick settled. He and his followers soon built monastic centers or abbeys—crude affairs by most standards, no more than huts of brush. From these centers the gospel touched kings and commoners in increasing numbers.

From such humble beginnings the Celtic movement started down the road that was to shape Western history and its subsequent Christianity. Two things stand out about Celtic Christians.

First, the Celtic monks forged a rugged missionary effort that converted our ancestors. Most of Europe was not yet Christian. Calling themselves “*peregrine*” —“wanderers” for Christ—beginning about 590 AD hundreds of Celtic monks and laity set out to evangelize Scotland, Wales and northern England. Most notable among them were pioneer missionaries Columba and Aidan. During the 600s and 700s Celtic missionaries crossed the English channel to northern France, the low countries, and Germany. We hear of such unfamiliar names as Columbanus, Wilfrid (also called Boniface), Willibrod and Gall (he of the famous St Gallen abbey in Switzerland). They often went in groups of twelve, most often planted monasteries as mission outposts into which they settled and from which they taught. The Celtic tradition in England was reunited with Roman Christianity after 664 AD, yet the Celtic missionary spirit continued to infuse the early medieval church. There is no direct link between Celtic missionaries and Scandinavia, but there is a strong indirect connection. The north German Christianity that owed so much to Celtic mission in turn became the base for the evangelization of the northland. In 824,

in the spirit of St. Patrick but as a Roman bishop, St. Ansgar became a missionary, first to Denmark and then to Sweden. His efforts lay dormant for another 170 years until at last the Scandinavian lands became officially Christian (to the relief of everyone in Ireland, Britain and Europe who had suffered from earlier onslaughts by the Vikings).

Missionary lineage

There is a solid missionary lineage, an apostolic connection, between St. Patrick and his followers and all Western Christians, Lutherans not excluded. The line runs from Ireland to Germany to Scandinavia, through the Reformation, and across the Atlantic to us today. It is a long missionary trail. No wonder, then, that those largely unknown Celtic “wanderers for Christ” have bequeathed to us a blessing that may sustain us today as we seek to travel the road of mission to that ultimate frontier between faith and unbelief:

*May the road rise up before you;
May the sun be always in your face,
And the wind be to your back;
And until we meet again,
May the Lord keep you in the palm of his hand.*

Scrupulous scholarship

The second lasting impact Celtic Christians made lay in their scrupulous scholarship. Wherever in Ireland, Britain and Europe they settled in their rural abbeys, Celtic monks searched out and copied hundreds of biblical and ancient Latin secular manuscripts, including many preserved by the Islamic universities of Spain and beyond. As a result, education, art, and theology eventually had an opportunity to flourish once more and to shape emerging Western culture.

Celtic Christianity spanned the final disintegration of Roman imperial order. Celtic monks lived during the darkest of the early medieval dark ages.

The Western lands were plagued by violence, superstition, slavery and human sacrifice. Into this wilderness came the Celtic monks with the gospel of renewal and peace. They crossed geographical frontiers, engaged the forces of darkness in their heartlands, and brought vitality into the Christianity of their day. As we confront our own new dark age, a time when we are losing the memory of our biblical and moral roots, we are encouraged by Celtic scholarly discipline, commitment to the Scriptures, and willingness to engage new challenges.

Make room in the parade

My initial introduction to Patrick and to Celtic missionary Christianity happened nearly fifty years ago through Dr. Andrew Burgess, a professor of missions at Luther Seminary in St. Paul. My fascination has not ceased at how the Celtic monks traveled to strange and savage places others bypassed, how they put down roots in their monastic centers of learning, and how effectively the leaven and light of the gospel of Jesus did its work among the people with whom they came to live.

So move over, you wearers of the green. Make room in your parades for Lutherans of all parts whose origins are from the land of sauerkraut and the frozen north. For we share a common ancestor—the real St. Patrick and the Celtic Christian tradition. Let us celebrate together those whose missionary wanderings and whose scholarly efforts have shaped us and continue to challenge us.

Dr. James A. Bergquist is the retired President of Trinity Lutheran College in Seattle, a former India missionary, seminary professor and dean, a pastor and home mission director of the ALC and ELCA, and for the past ten years a post-retirement visiting professor at seminaries in Hong Kong and India. This is his first contribution to Forum Letter.

A tale of grace (not)



On a fairly regular basis, readers send us tips about the trials and tribulations of congregations here and there as they try to deal with what the tipsters believe are heavy-

handed tactics by the wider church. Heavy-handedness is an equal opportunity kind of thing from which no Lutheran church body is exempt, but lately most of these stories have to do with congre-

gations attempting to leave the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA).

Forum Letter does not intend to become a place to air such ecclesiastical fights; the material sent to us often provokes eye-rolling or tongue-clucking, but then we're only hearing one side, and there's a wearisome sameness to the stories of what this bishop did or that congregational minority said.

Skinning a badger

Still, one developing situation has reached a phase that makes it newsworthy. The ELCA congregation in question is Grace Lutheran in Eau Claire, WI, a congregation of some 2500 members. Last spring a vote was taken to disaffiliate from the ELCA and join Lutheran Congregations in Mission for Christ (LCMC), which was approved by 57%. Of course that's short of the required 2/3 to disaffiliate.

The following day there appeared in the local newspaper an opinion piece by one of those who favored staying in the ELCA, suggesting that in light of the controversy, it was time for the pastors and the council to resign. At the next council meeting, there was a vote of confidence in the pastors. Then, apparently figuring there's more than one way to skin a badger, the congregation council decided that, while the congregation hadn't voted to disaffiliate from the ELCA, a healthy majority *had* voted to affiliate with LCMC, and so they proceeded down the road of dual affiliation.

That may sound a little odd, but they seem to have made this decision in good faith. The congregation's leaders saw this affiliation with LCMC as a way to keep those who wanted to leave the ELCA in the congregation—sort of a compromise that would satisfy the anti-ELCA folks, at least most of them, while still maintaining the congregation's formal connection to the ELCA.

An ELCA no-no

Dual affiliation, of course, is a no-no in the ELCA, unless the synodical bishop decides it isn't. In this case, Bp. Duane Pederson invited anti-LCMC members of Grace to come and be part of a "Synodically Authorized Worshiping Community" that would be meeting at nearby First Lutheran Church, in services led by the bishop and his staff. First Lutheran is, by the way, the congregation that the bishop himself served as senior pastor for sev-

eral years prior to his election as bishop of the Northwest Synod Wisconsin. It was time, the bishop suggested, for the minority at Grace to "shake the dust from their feet and move on."

And so seventy or so disgruntled members of Grace duly began worshiping at the site of First Lutheran on Sunday afternoons, incorporating themselves as "Amazing Grace." Clever, huh?

The council at Grace interpreted this—logically enough, it would seem—as these folks having left the congregation to form a new one. Not wanting simply to expel them from membership, they voted to change their status to "associate members" (a category normally used to classify people like snowbirds who spend the winter in Florida and are active in a congregation there for only four or five months before going back to Minnesota).

Eyebrow-raising

All unfortunate, of course, and nothing about the story is particularly edifying or even interesting, given the number of congregations around the ELCA where such divisions have happened since 2009 (though the bishop's particularly active involvement here might raise some eyebrows).

But then this rump group decided to sue Grace, attempting to force them to give up their LCMC affiliation. They also wanted the congregation council removed. In the lawsuit, they didn't call themselves "Amazing Grace"; they were, they said, "Grace Lutheran Church—ELCA" and they were suing "Grace Lutheran Church—LCMC." As far as the original congregation is concerned, of course, they are still Grace—ELCA, since their vote to withdraw did not pass. Nice twist, huh?

What is most remarkable, though, is that now Judge Molly Gale Wyrick, in a decidedly unsolomonic ruling, has issued a temporary restraining order requiring Grace (the real one) to postpone their annual meeting (which had been scheduled for the Sunday just following the judge's ruling) and to continue to operate with the current budget and leadership until a judicial decision can be rendered in May.

Consultation

Meanwhile, in December the leaders of Grace (the dually affiliated one) were summoned to meet with a consultation committee convened by the

bishop. The pastor told me they received notice of this meeting less than a week before the scheduled date. They were told they would have a half hour to present their case, but were cut off after twelve minutes. The consultation committee ordered them to disaffiliate from the LCMC, to restore to full membership all those who had been moved into the “associate” category, and instead to declare all members of LCMC to be “associate members” (which, of course, would include all the remaining members of the congregation).

The congregation, to put it mildly, does not seem inclined to follow this recommendation.

Meanwhile, the Amazing Grace group had the creative idea of approaching the insurance carrier for Grace Lutheran Church, claiming that since the rump group is the “real” ELCA congregation, it is really they who are the insured, not the “original” Grace Lutheran Church. And therefore the insurance carrier should pay for Amazing Grace’s legal expenses. One can’t help but think of the story of the man who admitted to murdering his parents, and then threw himself on the mercy of the court because he was an orphan.

Issues abound

Certainly raises a lot of interesting issues, doesn’t it? Start with the matter of the ELCA’s ham-fisted treatment of congregations on the wrong side of “bound conscience,” at least in some synods and under some bishops. There’s the unscriptural scandal of congregation members suing one another. There is a remarkable array of church/state constitutional and legal implications; there’s some precedent, unsavory though it may be, for a court deciding property issues, but I’ve never heard of a judge demanding that a congregation postpone its annual meeting and directing them to spend money in a particular way. (And of course the unspoken issue, the elephant in the room, the thing we’re all wondering: How might some of the rest of us get a judge to postpone *our* annual meetings?)

In spite of it all, the senior pastor at Grace tells me the congregation is doing really well; morale is good, there’s a renewed sense of mission. Nonetheless, if you are inclined to pray for people caught in nasty and contentious situations, this is one that might be worth a prayer.

—by Richard O. Johnson, editor

Omnium gatherum



Freefall • Doing a little office clean-up recently, I came upon a misplaced 2010 issue of *FL*, and as it was a rainy Saturday afternoon and my sermon was done, I sat down to re-read it. In that issue (February), I had commented on the declining circulation of *The Lutheran*, evidenced by the annual circulation figures tucked away in each December’s issue by order of the postal service. I reported that from 2006 to 2009, paid circulation had declined by some 20%. This got me to wondering, of course, what’s happened since then, so I dug out the December issues from 2010 and 2011. Paid circulation in 2010 was 214,390, a 15.2% decline from the prior year. Well, that perhaps isn’t unexpected, given the fallout from the 2009 sexuality decisions. The figure for 2011 was 190,811, an 11% decline, which, to put the best construction on it, was the lowest decline since 2008. Still, the circulation decline since 2006—that’s five years ago—hovers just under 40%. I report this, honestly, not

out of any *schadenfreude*, but with sadness. Whatever one may think of individual articles or features in *The Lutheran*, a churchwide magazine has traditionally been a big part of the glue that holds a church body together. It’s hard to imagine *The Lutheran* will still be around in another five years, unless something quite unforeseen happens. Editor Daniel Lehman admitted as much in his editorial in the February issue, with the heading “Future of magazine under review.” He tells us that this year they will “engage a professional consultant” to help answer questions like “Do we still need a monthly publication?” Of course *The Lutheran*’s decline in circulation simply mirrors the difficulties faced by all forms of print journalism in this internet age. A parishioner called the other day and asked me to cancel her subscription to *The Lutheran*. “I just don’t read it,” she said. She didn’t say why, but in the end the reason doesn’t much matter. What matters is that she just doesn’t read it. She apparently isn’t alone.

Whimsical teeth • This is way overdue, but chalk it up to my sabbatical. Last August I poked a little fun at the ELCA's Northwestern Minnesota Synod, which passed what I called a whimsical resolution declaring July 10 as King James Bible Sunday. I argued that it should have had some teeth in it, like encouraging congregations to use the KJV translation of the Psalms instead of the *ELW* paraphrase. Come to find out the author of that resolution was my friend Pr. Paul Koch, who pointed out to me that the article in *The Lutheran* (on which I based my note) didn't quite tell the whole story. The resolution in fact called on congregations to read *all* the lessons from the KJV that Sunday, "thus [writes Pr. Koch] giving God's ears a reprieve from the neutered *ELW* Psalter." The resolution also encouraged congregations to learn more about the work of Biblical translation, certainly a salutary idea. I appreciate his gently whimsical correction, and the intent behind the resolution. May his tribe increase.

Political connections • There are some people who find enjoyment in pointing out the Lutheran connections of various politicians, and particularly in a presidential election year. We haven't had a Lutheran in the White House yet, so sometimes the connections have to be, uh, somewhat distant, such as the observation that Michele Bachmann *used to be* a Lutheran. But I was surprised recently to learn (and this is *really* getting distant) that the devoutly Roman Catholic Callista Gingrich, Newt's current wife, is a graduate of Luther College in Decorah, IA. Please note this should not be construed as an endorsement of anyone or anything.

On the other hand • It is interesting, isn't it, that Lutherans, as numerous as they are, generally have not made the political big time (except, perhaps, in the politics of certain Midwestern states). I can't really think of any Lutheran politicians in high office beyond Frederick Muhlenberg (Speaker of the House in the first and third congresses) and William Rehnquist (Chief Justice). There's a photo in our dining room of John M. Nelson, my wife's great-grandfather, who represented the Madison, WI, area with considerable distinction in Congress for a couple of decades a hundred years ago. He was also "Fighting Bob" LaFollete's campaign manager during one of the progressive Republican's presidential

campaigns. Oh, and then he *is* listed as one of the "famous people" buried in Forest Hill Cemetery in Madison. You've heard of him, right? Well, as they say, *sic transit gloria mundi*.

OK, only some of them • Pastor Bob Quam is director of Christikon, an ELCA camping ministry in Montana. He takes offense at my offhand remark in the January issue that at Holden Village, with regard to worship "you set aside certain expectations and take it as it is. Sort of like Bible camp." (Great, now I've got both Holden Village and Bible camp people mad at me.) Anyway, he tells me kindly that "though the number may be fewer than it should be, there are 'Bible camps' in whose worship one may participate without having to 'set aside certain expectations' (unless one grants ahead of time that given a people still being redeemed, that may be the case for any Christian worship service)." He goes on to say, somewhat less kindly (though probably appropriately), that my remark "communicates something of the same comprehensively condescending regard for one of the church's ministries that some of my young adult staff may sometimes express for 'the church.'" Ouch. Point taken, and I freely admit that my Bible camp experience is entirely restricted to California where, as I also freely admit, things are often quite different from other places, and, with the exception of the climate, that's not necessarily a good thing. But I love my local Bible camp, which (if Christikon's website at christikon.org is any indication) is considerably more rustic than some ELCA camps, and with "rustic" come lowered expectations about a lot of things besides worship.

Snarky? • It seemed an innocuous little press release from the ELCA News Service about a Lutheran World Federation project in Haiti. Then there was that last sentence: "The ELCA is the only U.S. Lutheran church in The Lutheran World Federation, a global communion representing more than 70 million Christians worldwide." True enough, at the moment, though sort of an odd thing to say in a press release of this nature. I looked back through some past ELCA stories about the LWF to see if this was a standard bit of boilerplate, and it isn't. Maybe it doesn't have anything to do with the fact that the North American Lutheran Church is seeking membership in the LWF. And then again, maybe it does.

More on Islam • There were several responses to my brief reflections on Islam in the January issue. One writer was “appalled,” saying that my caveat that I am no scholar of Islam was “patently obvious.” His objection was to my comment that Muslims generally believe that Allah is the one true God, whom Jews and Christians understand only imperfectly. He quotes from Qur’an (only he calls it the “Koran”) to prove his point: “They do blaspheme who say God is one of three in a Trinity, for there is no god except one God (Allah).” My quote is slightly different from his, but I’m looking at the English translation of the Qur’an I got from the local Muslim Center. Of course saying it just that way, “one of three,” would be regarded as blasphemy by theologically precise Christians, too; in Trinitarian theology, the prepositions are really crucial. But perhaps my correspondent overlooked my comment about seeming contradictions in the Qur’an, to say nothing of divergent interpretations. He goes on to refer me to a book that “should be read by anyone who wants to know the facts about Islam.” Since I have to budget my book-buying funds as well as my book-reading time, I did a little homework on the book he cites: *Unveiling Islam* by Emir and Ergun Caner. The latter was at one time the dean of the seminary at Liberty University in Virginia. “Was” because in 2010 he was removed as dean due to “factual statements that are self-contradictory,” according to the university, founded by Jerry Falwell. Both Caner brothers, it turns out, have created quite a stir in Southern Baptist circles; some of our Baptist brethren defend them as “experts” on Islam, while others question whether one should believe a word they

say. In short, the book may not be quite the best source for Lutherans to learn the “facts about Islam.” (I admit to being predisposed against any book that’s supposed to offer “the facts about” much of anything.) So I think I’ll start, as I said in January, with Miroslav Volf’s *Allah: A Christian Response* instead, and then go from there.

Trinitarian confusion • Speaking of Trinitarian theology, here’s something that left me shaking my head. Or maybe gnashing my teeth. Due to staff changes, I’ve picked up teaching confirmation class, which I hadn’t done for the last three years or so. It being the middle of the year and all, I figured I’d just use whatever curriculum was already in place, and it turned out to be Augsburg Fortress’s *re:form*. If you’re not familiar with this one, it claims to be “a fully customizable curriculum that’s rooted in historic Christianity.” The first lesson I was to teach focused on the question, “Did Jesus Know He Was God”—an interesting speculative question, though I can’t recall any junior high kid ever asking me about it. The lesson tried to tie in the sort of “self-discovery” of early adolescents with what Jesus might have experienced as he tried to, you know, figure out who the heck he was. Good thing, however, he couldn’t ask the authors of this curriculum who he was, because the video states with great authority that “Christians believe that Jesus of Nazareth was also the third person of the Trinity.” And that’s even more seriously wrong, theologically speaking, than mixing up the prepositions. Way more.

—roj

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