

The Light Shines in the Darkness!

You may recognize the words above as the title of the current Lutheran Laymen's League 2015 Lenten Devotional Book. We are using this devotional guide during this Lenten Season in our East District staff devotions held every morning in our office. The words of this title also prompted me to think of the fact that now that "*Spring has Sprung*" so to speak – construction on the highways and byways in the K-W (Kitchener-Waterloo) area have begun again in earnest.



On highway 7-8 that runs directly behind the townhouse complex in which my wife and I live, as a part of the widening of this highway, a number of new light standards have now appeared. We were most grateful when a sound barrier was constructed between our complex and the highway. However, as one of these forty to fifty feet high light standards now towers over the highway not too far from our residence, we are beginning to wonder what the effect will be when the power is connected to one of these mammoth structures. With all the modern technology that is in existence today, I believe that the brightness of the light standard that stands nearest to us will be directed primarily to the highway below it. But, at the same time I keep kidding my wife, that when it is activated we may not have to turn a lamp on in the rooms of our house facing the highway – but simply open the blinds and raise the shades on our windows that are facing in that direction.

As construction has begun again, it seems on all the major roads around us – it is a real challenge each day to attempt to guess which route we should take to get to where we want to go. Which route that we travel on, on any given day, will provide us with the least delays? To my pleasant delight, the route that I took one day that ended up being a stop and go, bumper to bumper, traffic backed up for miles trip – flowed freely and lickety-split the very next day. Having said this, what road are you traveling on in your spiritual life? Are you travelling on the highway that has been built by love. All may travel on it who believe this promise: "*If we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.*" (I John 1:9).

Not unlike my notion of how bright the light standard on the nearby highway may or may not affect things or how disgruntled I may become in anticipating a major delay one day based upon how things were the day before – so often we have false notions about God and what He is like as well. Thus, this description of God given by a man who knew God well:

"I came crawling to Him on my hands and knees in deepest penitence. What did He do? Did He rebuke me? God knew I had had plenty of that. Did He criticize me or give me all kinds of advice? No, He knew that I had had enough of that, too. What He did do was to put His loving arms around me and hold me. Then I stood up a new man and have had a song in my heart ever since."

This road or highway was constructed by the loving heart of our most wonderful and merciful God. In the Old Testament it was prophesied that when our Lord Jesus came upon this earth a new highway would be constructed. When the Master announced His intentions to His disciples during Holy Week, "Behold, we go up to Jerusalem," the construction of this highway began again in earnest. In the construction of this highway a great cost was involved. It cost our Lord Jesus intense suffering, persecution, rebuke, and denial by His best friends. But this did not stop the divine Road Builder in completing His objective. He kept building the highway even though it led up a hill, and even though He had to carry on His own shoulders the cross which was to bridge the final chasm and complete the highway from earth to heaven.

When our dear Lord suffered and died upon the cross to suffer and die there for our sins and rose again from the dead on Easter Sunday – no longer would we, as God's children, have to fear the consequences of sin or the penalty of death or separation from our Creator. For, because of this, we have been reconciled with God the Father through the suffering, death, and resurrection of our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ!

May God's blessings rest upon you during this Holy Week and Easter Season!!

*In Christ,
Rev. Paul Zabel*