



Shepherd of the Hills Lutheran Church  
*Pastor Terry's Thoughts of the Week*

## **Authority**

Those of you who have served in the military know what authority is and who wields it. Rank serves its purpose. You have also known that some of those in authority abuse it and are poor leaders. Most are found out by the stupidity of their own actions.

Others in authority are fair, knowledgeable, and respected because they make good decisions. They are usually rewarded by the loyalty of their troops.

Now to the rest of the world, most of us who are no longer in the military or who never served. What kind of authority do we have and how do we use or abuse it?

Parents have "authority" over their children. They say "yes" and "no" as the situations demand. But this kind of authority also carries with it a tremendous amount of responsibility. There is the responsibility of preparing the next generation for ... we know not what! I've heard many people use this passage as an admonition to children and I've heard others use it as an excuse for abuse. In other words, like everything in this world, a good thing can be distorted and abused.

The church in the world, through the centuries, has tried to become "authoritative" in teaching in an effort to help us all understand God, the goodness of God and the activity of God more clearly. Pastors of our church attend seminaries which try to give individuals intensive basic instruction so that when "out on their own" they have the tools and resources to expand and retain knowledge and a relationship with God and God's people.

This Sunday we look at the authority of God through a doctrine of the church referring to the “trinity”. Since early times we have spoken of God as a Father, Jesus as the Son and The Holy Spirit as our guide in life. The early church tried to “simplify” all this for us as developed this doctrine of the trinity. Not the best piece of work in two centuries. All kinds of theologians have offered complex examinations of the doctrine. If you want to really get “involved”, turn to pages 54 and 55 in the green hymnal. This is the third of the three ecumenical creeds, that is, the Apostles, the Nicene and this, the Athanasian creed. These three are what hold the church together. As Christians, we all agree to these foundational beliefs.

This theologian, Athanasius didn’t think the first two were clear enough or emphatic enough for his liking, so he sat down and wrote a more emphatic (and repetitious) piece of literature which The Church accepted as delightfully excluding a lot of people who were considered heretics at that time. In many congregations this creed is used on Trinity Sunday. Still, most of us don’t really understand how God does what he does – and for me, that’s OK. We ascribe all kinds of love of the earth and people to God and we use our faith to proclaim with out lives that Jesus saves us from our sins. The spirit guides us and how God uses all of these elements – and more – that he has, are beyond us, but thankfully FOR us.

Specific understanding is not necessary for a good life in Christ with God’s guidance – and for that I am truly thankful!

*TMK*

*-- Week of June 7, 2009*