

From the Director

Mendelssohn's Oratorio, *St. Paul*—4a

Paul and Barnabas have set out with the blessing of the church at Antioch, and in the power of the Holy Spirit, to *sing of Thy great mercies, O Lord, my Savior, and of Thy faithfulness evermore.* And immediately they encounter opposition, out of envy from their own countrymen. This opposition mirrors that against Stephen in Part One (Chorus, “Thus saith the Lord”), and as with Stephen threats mount against these who proclaim “the gospel of peace.” In an apt—if potentially confusing—back-reference, the libretto here uses the words levied against Saul way back in Damascus (Acts 9): *Is this he who in Jerusalem destroyed all calling on that name which here he preaches? May all deceivers ever be confounded! Take him away!* (Chorus No. 29) Again the choir prays in the words of a chorale: *O Thou the true and only Light, direct the souls that walk in light; And bring them 'neath Thy sheltering care, to find their blest redemption there. Illumine those who blindly roam; and call the wanderer kindly home: The hearts astray that union crave, and those in doubt, confirm and save.*

Paul and Barnabas soldier on, and turn to their ministry, fulfilling Paul's calling to take the gospel to the Gentiles. Interestingly, Paul is quoted in the book of Acts as applying Isaiah 49:6 (which seems quite clearly to be Messianic) to himself: *For so has the Lord Himself commanded: Behold, I have made thee a light to the Gentiles, and for salvation unto all the earth.* (adding Acts 2:21) *For those who call upon the Lord shall be blessed.* (No. 31, Paul and Barnabas)

Here amidst conflict and resolve the libretto begins a kind of dizzying conflation of the Book of Acts. Two confrontations—the first with pagan Lystrans, the second with regional Jews—are made to stand for the bulk of the rest of the biblical account of Paul's mission work, the highs and lows.

Following the healing of a lame man in Lystra (No. 32), the locals declare that Paul and Barnabas are Greek gods come in human flesh (Chorus, No. 33): *The gods themselves as mortals have descended: Behold them here, and adore them!* Chorus No. 35 is the sole text in this work that comes from neither the scriptures nor a chorale. It is a pastorale, with this very pagan sentiment: *O be gracious, ye immortals! Heed our sacrifice with favor!* Even more so than with typical oratorio choruses, the repetition of this prayer appears as “vain repetition” - lovely but kind of sad and meaningless. Of course the apostles seek to dissuade them, and here Paul is given his own words from 1 Corinthians 3:16, 17: *For know ye not that ye are his temple, and that the Spirit of God dwells within you? And whoever defiles God's temple shall surely be destroyed. For the temple of God is holy, which temple ye are.* Now the chorus enters with the final use of a chorale tune. As most of the choir sings from Psalm 115:3 (*But our God abides in heaven, his will directs all the world.**) the mezzos sing the Lutheran “credo” - *In one true God we all believe, Maker of earth and heaven, Our Father, who to all mankind hath the name of children given. In one true God we all believe; our God abides in heaven.*

In our speaking, witnessing, and singing, let us remember that God no longer dwells in temples made of human hands, but has made those who love him living stones, being built up as a spiritual house of holy service. This is the dwelling place of all those on earth to whom he has given his own name and called his children.

Sing on!

*here we have an unfortunate problem with translation from the German, which accurately cites Ps. 115:3b, “he does all that he pleases.” The English translation, made to fit the rhythm given, gets at the idea, at least.

Chuck

Calendar Corner:

Sunday, Mar. 18—morning services: Children's Ministry Sunday—Boys Choir; youth musicians

Sunday, Mar. 18—4pm Concert Series: Hymn Festival—Scandinavian Hymn Tunes, Fox Valley Organ Guild

Also includes our Jubilation Bells, preceding the concert

Sunday, Mar. 25—morning services: Jubilation Bells; Chancel Choir; H.E. Singley, organ

Sunday, April 1—Palm Sunday morning services

THE PRAYER COLUMN
LEE HOFFNER, CHOIR CHAPLAIN

Acts 19 demonstrates the value of a teachable attitude. Apollos demonstrated this when Aquila and Priscilla invited him into their home. A mutually gracious attitude between these 3 people allowed the Lord to work in their lives and see to it that His message was taught by them with both love and accuracy.

We are also meant to look for the evidence of the Holy Spirit in a new believer's life. The Spirit's presence is measurable in a believer having new ability to witness and to live a Christian life. It is also measurable according to Paul's inventory of the fruit of the spirit. We are meant to look for these signs in the lives of those who demonstrate receptivity to our witness.

To include your new prayer requests, call or email
Chuck King (668-0878 x122; cdking@college-church.org).

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Chancel Choir Rehearsal Music:

Voice Building

Sing, my tongue, the glorious battle [chant]

St. Paul – some review

Lamb of God (Christiansen) - March 25

Easter

Beethoven "Hallelujah"

Good Friday music

Alone You Go Out, O Lord

When I Survey the Wondrous Cross (Martin)

Jesus, our Lord, we adore Thee

When Jesus Wept

My Song Is Love Unknown

St. Paul—

Nos. 14—22; the second half of Part One

Choir Calendar:

***Please mark this now! Choir Retreat:
September 14 & 15 (Friday evening,
Saturday all day) at College Church,
with Brad & Beth Holmes.***

Jubilation Bells Rehearsal

***Wednesday 6:45 PM in the Choir Room
Bells play in the March 18 concert
And morning services March 25***

Brass Ensemble Rehearsal

***Wednesdays 8:15 PM
in the Old Balcony***

String Ensemble Rehearsal

***1st and 3rd Thursdays at 7:30 PM
Strings in services March 4***

**Concert Series
College Church Sanctuary**

***March 18, 4:00pm
American Guild of Organists
Fox Valley Chapter organists
Scandinavian Hymn Tunes—
Featured organists play hymn settings
followed by the audience singing***