



For Immediate Release

**Rev. Walter E. Obare's sermon at the installation of
LCMS President Matthew C. Harrison**

ST. LOUIS, Sept. 11, 2010—Rev. Walter E. Obare gave the following sermon, with the theme “And God Has Sent Me to Seek the Lost,” at The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod’s “Service of Installation” for President Matthew C. Harrison held at Concordia Seminary, St. Louis:

“Dear saints in Christ Jesus; brothers and sisters, I salute you all in Him who is, who was and who is to come; our Lord and savior Jesus Christ.

“It’s a trustworthy saying that deserves full acceptance. *‘That Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners of which I am the worst.’* I was shown mercy. He considered me faithful, and appointed me to His service.

“In Ezekiel 34 the sovereign Lord says: *‘I myself will search for the lost and bring back the strays.’*

“And today He says to me as His servant: *‘Go after the lost sheep and find them’* This is not only to all Christians in the common priesthood, but is to all the folks in the clergy roster. But now in a special way to you my son Matthew as you take upon yourself the call to be the servant of servants in The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod (LCMS), and in the church Catholic.

“The most well known tribe in East Africa is the Maasai. They are pastoralists and they have an old story about their origin and how in the beginning God gave all cows in the world to them. Even today cows are their bank accounts and especially the old men are very keen on their cattle.

“When in the U.S.A. happened 9/11 attacks that saw the Twin Towers come down and even the Pentagon aimed at. One young Kenyan Maasai man donated 20 cows to show solidarity with Americans when America was afflicted. In fact, this was the highest action of sympathy from the Maasai point of view.

“Also, when preaching to the Maasai, the language they best understand is to speak about their cows, sheep or goats. Today’s text fits them very well. Speaking of cattle and saying that one of them is lost, you can see on men’s faces how they become alert and filled with awe on their faces. A big question comes to their minds: Has someone stolen my dear one or has it gone astray? Now we must go after the lost and find it! Nothing more can be so urgent than to go out for the lost. And when the lost one is found or some cattle are brought by force from some other tribes, a feast is organized. This is certain.

“In the book of Ezekiel and also in our Gospel text, the Lord accuses the shepherds of Israel that they did not care for His sheep. They don’t care, but still themselves they eat of the best of the sheep. Therefore the sovereign Lord says: *‘I myself will search for the lost and bring them back.’* All people in the world -- call them Europeans, Arabs, or Asians, Americans, Oceanics or Africans -- are created by the living God. And all fell into sin by the fall of the first Adam, and all are redeemed by the death of His only Son Jesus Christ. Like all cows all over the world belong to the Maasai (as they believe), the same is, all people on earth and under the earth and in heaven belong to God. He has created them and has paid the most precious price for them, the blood of His only Son.

“After the fall, all people as descendants of Adam and Eve are lost and are under the wrath of God. There is only one way to be saved. It is on account of the death of the only innocent one, Jesus Christ. He came to seek the sinners and save them. He did this by His suffering and death on the cross.

“After completing His redemption work, Jesus instituted the Holy Baptism as the Sacrament of rebirth. There’s no other way to be saved, and no other way to enter heaven, than the Sacrament which Christ instituted after His death and resurrection. In the Holy Baptism, all the heavenly treasures are given to us as was said very well by Dr. Martin Luther in his Small

Catechism. *'It works forgiveness of sins, rescues from death and evil, and gives eternal salvation to all who believe this, as the words and promises of God declares.'*

“We are clothed (covered) into the righteousness of Jesus, in His name and by His blood we have forgiveness of sin. And where there is forgiveness of sin, there is also life and salvation. And this is absolute truth.

“But as we still live this earthly span of life, living in this sinful and dark world, it so happens to many baptized children of God, that they are (as Ezekiel writes) scattered in all kinds of places on the day of clouds and darkness. But God has not forgotten them, in fact He says as Isaiah writes, *'Yet the Lord longs to be gracious to you; he rises to show compassion'*. Is. 30:18. We must repent and hear His voice, the voice of the good Shepherd; the voice of God.

“Besides the Holy Baptism, Christ has also instituted the Holy office of preaching God's Word and administration of the Sacrament of the altar. You cannot hear the voice of the good Shepherd from the air; Christ is using His own instituted means of grace. Stop and hear His voice today and now; hear what apostle Paul writes to the Corinthians, *'Do you not know that the wicked will not inherit the kingdom of God. Do not be deceived, neither the sexually immoral nor the idolaters nor adulterous nor male prostitutes nor homosexual offenders nor thieves nor greedy nor drunkards nor slanderers nor swindlers will inherit the kingdom of God. And that is what some of you were. But you were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the spirit of our God.'* 1 Cor. 6:9-11.

“To be *'scattered in all kind of places on the day of cloud and darkness'* means two possibilities:

“One, you have moved to live and work in another place and have not found the same kind of Lutheran congregation, and have joined another church-body or congregation, sect or cult where you cannot hear the same voice of God any more. This can lead to getting lost or to stray.

“Secondly is to be drowning in the post modern thoughts that create doubts in your mind to an extent of questioning the authority of scripture:

- God being behind all creations

- The Biblical narratives on miracles, the incarnation, resurrection, ascension up to the existence of God.

“Reasoning that only ends in you, and makes to you be your own god.

“Another case is where you have followed your earthly lusts and the secularized world. You might have heard it from your peer group that you need to obey your feeling [rather] than obeying the good council of elders, parents etc even extending it to disobeying the church. You can enjoy alcohol even to the point of being drunk. You can cheat to your superiors, parents, pastor and even your spouse. As though this is not enough:

- You can follow homosexual or lesbian predispositions.
- Some church leaders may even tell that same sex life is a created predisposition; you don’t need to fight against it.

“Brothers and sisters, sin is sin! God did institute from the beginning the lifelong marriage between a man and a woman! You can fight the good fight against homosexuality just as you can fight against other earthly lusts e.g. cheating, and other vices that came to us by the fall. Full joy, not just in our world, but also in heaven, for they who repent and in Christ, find their way back home. This home is heaven through the church.

“The confessional church and a confessional church leader must keep the clear biblical stand in the teaching and preaching of the Word. He must also be an example for the sheep over which he is made an overseer. This is your call Matthew and all of you newly elected into your new positions. Bring the doubting, those who are not sure whether to follow the Bible or to follow the post-modern views of our day. Help The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod to remain a confessional church within the church Catholic. The catholicity of the church is known by these marks:

- The Holy ministry headed by the faithful ministers of the Word.
- The Holy liturgy as has come down to us through the ages. The so-called contemporary that I only compare with the spontaneous fashions in ladies dresses that appear in the market almost every six or even four months in Kenya deviates from it.
- The pure preaching of the Word - Law and Gospel.

“Brother Mathew and all of you who will be commissioned here today, be ready to go out in search for the lost sheep and bring back the strays. The mission must continue, here in America and beyond the seas. This is God’s will for you and for your church body. *‘Fight the good fight, holding on to faith and a good conscience. Some have rejected these and so have shipwrecked their faith’* 1 Tim.1:18-19.

“May God abundantly bless you and your church body as you faithfully serve your people and also go out into the entire world in mission.

“And now, may the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding keep your hearts steadfast in Christ Jesus!”

“Amen.”

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Disclaimer: Text provided may differ slightly from the actual sermon presented.

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