

OUTREACH

Think!



APPLE TALK

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Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul *and with all your mind.*" (Mt 22:37) Television has partially anesthetized the minds of the masses, but God wants his people to use their minds to love Him!

Remember the first day of chemistry class in high school. Our teacher was gray-haired, crippled from a stroke and leaned on a cane. His first words were, "I am not here to teach you chemistry, but I am going to teach you how to think!" Mr. Hampstead kept his promise, although we did also learn some chemistry — and when I took chemistry in college I discovered that I was more prepared than I thought I would be. He taught us to think.

Responding to the Pharisees, Jesus quotes Deuteronomy 6:5 when he says, "Love the

That means being informed and alert. Consider the lowly postage stamp.

In 2001 the U. S. Postal Service expanded its Holiday Celebrations Series by issuing a stamp which highlighted the Muslim holiday of Eid. Each "holiday" season the stamp is promoted in our post offices. You may have received Christmas cards with the Eid stamp. It says "EID" at the top and "Greetings" at the bottom. The middle of the stamp portrays a squiggly design which looks like a Christmas tree. The stamp has absolutely nothing to do with

Christmas. It commemorates two important Islamic festivals: Eid al-Fitr and Eid al-Adha. The Islamic Arabic calligraphy *eid mubarak* translates as "blessed festival." Eid al-Fitr commemorates the breaking of the fast of the month of Ramadan, and Eid al-Adha (Islam's most important festival) commemorates "The Feast of the Sacrifice," recalling how Abraham was willing to sacrifice Ishmael. Muslims say that our Bible is in error, that Jewish scribes purposely changed "Ishmael" to "Isaac." If we, *not thinking*, purchase and use an EID stamp we are unwittingly affirming the false religion of Islam!

The Gospel Lesson for January 1 is Luke 2:21 and reports the circumcision of Jesus. Circumcision was and still is practiced by religious Jews because it is a sign of the Abrahamic Covenant — which established the Jewish

people and which promises a Savior who will *bless all peoples on earth.* We celebrate the birth of Jesus on December 25, and note that January 1 is the eighth day. In 2006 January 1 falls on a Sunday — which gives our churches the opportunity to affirm that Jesus is a Jew. We don't say Jesus "was a Jew" but that Jesus "is a Jew" because he is alive and "Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever." (Heb 13:8)

The Jewishness of Jesus, so obvious from Scripture, and so vividly portrayed in the circumcision of Jesus, has been downplayed by the Christian Church over the centuries. But it is compelling to Jewish people, and a "first step" to considering whether or not Jesus is the Messiah. Think about what the prophet Zechariah wrote:

This is what the LORD Almighty says: "In those days ten

men from all languages and nations will take firm hold of one Jew by the hem of his robe and say, 'Let us go with you, because we have heard that God is with you.'" (Zech 8:23)

2005 was filled with trouble: terrorist attacks, deadly earthquakes, and ominous threats of a pandemic. What will 2006 bring? We don't know the future, but we *can* claim the comforting truth of Psalm 46: "The LORD Almighty is with us; the God of Jacob is our fortress." [repeated twice for emphasis in verses 7 and 11] How then should we think? Paul tells us:

Finally, brothers, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable — if anything is excellent or praiseworthy — *think about such things.* (Phil 4:8). □

Lutheran Haven Dedicates Its New Home



Lutheran Haven, located in Oviedo, Florida, will dedicate its new nursing home and assisted living facility on Sunday, January 22, 2006 at 3 PM. The dedication will take place at the front entrance of their new facility. The new home replaces its former residence built in 1948 with additions in later years. This new state-of-the-art facility will be home to 42 nursing home residents and 28 assisted living residents. Groundbreaking took place just one year ago on a chilly, but blue-sky Sunday morning, January 23rd. Now, one year later, friends of Lutheran Haven will gather to dedicate the new home to the Glory of God and in service to His people. □



GOLDEN CELEBRATION — The Martin Luther Chapel-Marathon, FL, is preparing for their 50th anniversary on Saturday, February 25. The church was recently renovated by members of the congregation and others, in preparation for this event. Attending the golden anniversary celebration will be Rev. Carl Sammetinger from St. Petersburg, FL, who was instrumental in forming this church along with Immanuel Lutheran-Plantation Key, FL. Also planning to attend will be Dr. William Brusick, Minister of Music at Grace Lutheran Church-St. Petersburg. A worship service on February 25 will be followed by an anniversary dinner. □



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