

"Billy Buchta and the Kosovo Kid" -- Matthew 7:11

The Baptism of William George Buchta
October 10, 1999
Our Redeemer Lutheran Church
Emmett, Idaho
Pastor Michael L. McCoy

Dearly beloved children of the Lord God,

Last spring you may have seen the report on television about the husband and wife from Kosovo that I saw. Actually I'm only about 90% certain that they were from Kosovo, but today, for the sake of focus, we will say that they were. Similar events have happened with people from many nations - Germany, Mexico, Egypt, Korea, Brazil and a host of others. Whenever it takes place, the life-changing event is stunning in the realities that are truly conferred. As mentioned, the event is not a particularly rare one, but it often makes the national news when mere minutes are involved, and sometimes the story creates a great deal of discussion with some people rejoicing in the blessed event while others gnash their teeth in frustration over the gracious benefits given and the awesome rights bestowed.

The journey begins with a foreign woman making her way to the United States of America and crossing the borders of this great nation. Such a trek takes place in many ways, but once within the geographic boundaries, she gives birth to a child. The result is that a child is born and there is joy, not only at the new life in this world, but especially there is rejoicing because this child is instantly a citizen of the United States of America and as such, has all the rights, privileges and honors of citizenship in the land of the free and the home of the brave, where there are certain inalienable rights -- namely life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness.

The Kosovo husband and wife were fleeing for their lives from a war-torn place. They had destruction at their heels and they sought out and relied on the mercy of others to help them escape. The Kosovo woman is great with a child that was conceived in a land of death and destined to fare no better than its parents. The birth of the child is only hours away when, suddenly, father, mother and unborn child become refugees who are whisked off to another land. Their exodus leads them to the land of dreams, to the United States of America. Hours after arriving the mother gives birth to a child, the Kosovo Kid. What a life-giving and life-changing event!

That Kosovo Kid now has a life that is protected by the Law, a freedom that has been won by so many others who have given of their gifts and time and abilities to earn the right and to make certain that there is liberty not only for all, but especially for that Kosovo Kid. Blood has been shed and life has been sacrificed to make certain that those who are born here - who are citizens - who are heirs of the Constitution of the United States of America have, not only in theory, but in confession and practice: life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness. All that, and more, is what our nation bestows on those who are born here.

And Jesus said, If you then, who are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father Who is in heaven give good things to those who ask Him!

The good things from *Our Father in heaven*, indeed, are what have been sought for Billy Buchta. A husband and wife living in a land of death, cross the threshold into this holy place, into the very presence of the Lord. Together with all who gather in His Name, they bear their infant son to the Baptismal fount where the Lord has promised His blessing to the little ones. A few moments ago, William George Buchta, was born again ... born from above by water and the Word in Holy Baptism. What a life-giving and life-changing event!

Billy Buchta now has the life that is protected by the Gospel, a freedom that has been won by the Incarnate Son of God on the cross as Jesus has given His gifts of eternal life, salvation, and forgiveness of sins; and has given His time during the state of His humiliation and has given Himself to be a ransom for many and to rise from the dead, and to make certain that there is liberty not only for all, but especially for Billy Buchta. Emmanuel shed His Blood and God sacrificed His life to make certain that those who are born again of water and the Spirit - who are citizens of the Kingdom of God - who are heirs of heavenly mansions have, not only in theory, but in confession and practice: eternal life, the liberty of God's pardon and the pursuit of the unchanging Word of the Lord. All that, and more, is what our God bestows on those who are born again in Baptism.

And Jesus said, If you then, who are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father Who is in heaven give good things to those who ask Him!

But behold, not all are happy with such pronouncements, rights, gifts, and blessings. Some grumble and complain; they object and grind their teeth. That Kosovo Kid did not know what was happening. That Kosovo Kid won't be able to remember the time when it took place. They rant that the Kosovo Kid did not make a decision, didn't choose, didn't accept, or hadn't come to the age of reason or accountability. They huff and they moan at what this nation gives and grants without the infant having done something, having done anything to earn the right of being a citizen. They are offended by the truth and they begrudge the graciousness of the nation to whom they have pledged their allegiance.

And behold again, fellow citizens of the Kingdom, not all are pleased with such pronouncements that in his baptism Billy has been given the gift of faith; that he has the right to be called a son of God; that he has the gifts of forgiveness of sins, eternal life and salvation; and the blessings which Christ our Lord bestows in and through the Baptism. Some grumble and complain; they object and grind their teeth. That Billy Buchta did not know what was happening. That Billy Buchta won't be able to remember the time when it took place. They rant that infants aren't able to make a decision for Christ, that they haven't chosen Him, that they don't accept Jesus; or haven't come to the age of reason or accountability. They huff and moan at what the Lord gives and grants without the infant having done something, having done anything to earn the right of being a Christian. They are offended by the truth and they begrudge the grace of God, especially as it applies to little ones like Billy Buchta who have been brought to Jesus, who believe in Him and now who utter perfect praise.

But dear children of God, please listen to the Good News of the Lord's Holy Writ, If you then, who are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father Who is in heaven give good things to those who ask Him!

Just as the nation has constitutionally bound herself to certain self-evident truths and inalienable rights for all people, namely, life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness; so the Lord has promised and graciously bound Himself to the truth and His means of grace for all people, namely, Baptism,

Absolution and the Holy Communion. Please understand this also, dear people, just as the ranting and ravings of certain stingy, ungrateful citizens of the United States do not change the historic reality or the objective constitutional rights of those babies born within the borders of this nation; so also the complaints and false doctrines of certain Law-oriented, ungrateful members of the congregation of Christendom do not change the historic reality or the objective truths of God's Word for those infants born again within these walls of His Church.

Scott and Karen are godly parents, providing as much as they are able for their children. They have made certain that their children are warm, have good food, have clothing, are held, are spoken to, are rocked and a host of other good gifts that people are able to provide. But they, like you and I, know that there is a limit to what they are able to provide and they have heard the words of Jesus, *If you then, who are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father Who is in heaven give good things to those who ask Him!* As a result they have bore their infant son to this holy place in order that he would receive Christ in Holy Baptism -- to receive the Son of God Whom the Father has given to the world, to participate in Jesus' Death and Resurrection, to be blessed with the many gifts that God gives in this sacrament, and to be made an heir of heaven.

Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! By His great mercy we have been born anew to a living hope through the Resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, and to an inheritance which is imperishable, undefiled, and unfading, kept in heaven for you, who by God's power are guarded through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time (1 Peter 1:3-5).

Dear beloved children of our Redeemer, *The promise is to you and to your children and to all that are far off, every one whom the Lord our God calls to Him (Acts 2:39).* Scott and Karen have believed this truth and the promise of God and have desired it for their children, and especially for their son, Billy Buchta today. "No greater jewel, therefore, can adorn our body and soul than Baptism, for through it we obtain perfect holiness and salvation, which no other kind of life and no work on earth can acquire" (*Large Catechism*).

One particular issue remains unknown to us and it is one that, while we are not able to answer, we are called to be concerned about and involved in. What about that Kosovo Kid? Has God worked faith in his heart through Word and Sacrament? Has he been brought to the baptismal fount and been given the Water of Life? Is the Kosovo Kid within or without the Church?

Jesus declared to His disciples who congregated on the mountain in Galilee, *"All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to Me. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the Name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, to the close of the age"* (*Matthew 28:18-20*).

The Church's commission; the Bride's marching orders are clear concerning those near and those far away. Therefore, *may you be strengthened with all power, according to His glorious might, for all endurance and patience with joy, giving thanks to the Father, Who has qualified us to share in the inheritance of the saints in light (Colossians 1:11-12).*

"I Jesus have sent my angel to you with this testimony for the churches. I am the Root and the Offspring of David, the bright Morning Star." The Spirit and the Bride say, "Come." And let him who hears say, "Come." And let him who is thirsty come, let him who desires take the Water of Life without price (Revelation 22:16-17).