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“The Scripture cannot be broken.” John 10:35.

“Thy Word is a Lamp unto my feet, and a Light unto my path.” Psalm 119:105.

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“The Lord,
our
Righteousness”

— Jeremiah 23:6



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STATEMENT OF PURPOSE:

To set forth in simple and plain language the pure doctrine of God's Word as taught by the true Lutheran Church in full accordance with the **Book of Concord of 1580** and the **Brief Statement of 1932.**

To show, **on the basis of Scripture,** what true Christians are to believe and how, out of love for their Savior Jesus Christ, they are to lead Godly lives.

To furnish aids for Bible study and articles for Scriptural devotion and meditation.

To demonstrate, by our Scriptural stand, that our **Concordia Lutheran Conference** is not a sect or false church body, but that the congregations which form it confess, teach, and practice the Word of God in its full truth and purity and use the Sacraments according to Christ's institution. All who do this are the true visible Church on earth.

To seek out all who truly share our Scriptural position in doctrine and practice, and to urge the mutual public acknowledgment of such God-given unity. Thus we shall be able thereafter to practice a God-pleasing fellowship with them.

To show that we do not have among us a mixture of divergent teachings but that we are *"perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment.."*

To set forth pertinent historical information which has a bearing upon the Church and to expose modern philosophical thought and the so-called scientific theories which contradict the Word of God.

To expose particularly the false teaching and practice of the various so-called "Lutheran" church bodies by comparing their teachings and practices with what is plainly recorded in the Word of God, in the Lutheran Confessions, and in the old orthodox Lutheran writings.

To expose false teaching and practice wherever it makes its appearance and to keep abreast of the current happenings in the church and among the nations as signs of the times.

To be truthful and factual in our reporting and freely to correct any misinformation of which we are not aware and which has been called to our attention. Also to clarify any information or statement of doctrine or practice which may be unclear to our readers or which may create a wrong impression.

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The Active Obedience of Christ — His Righteousness for Our Justification

“By the righteousness of One the free gift came upon all men unto justification of life.” —Romans 5:18b

When thinking about what Jesus did to save us from our sins, the thought that most commonly first comes to mind is the great pain and agony that He endured for us, beginning with His suffering in the Garden of Gethsemane and ending with His death on the cross. Christ’s suffering and death (which we refer to as His *passive obedience*) was absolutely necessary for the appeasing of God’s wrath against us and the securing of forgiveness for lost mankind, for the Bible says: *“Without shedding of blood is no remission”* (Hebrews 9:22). But this passive obedience —if considered all by itself— would still have left us in a state in which we would be lacking true righteousness before God (even though the penalty of our disobedience would have been removed). In addition to the *passive obedience* of Christ, the Gospel tells us about another important aspect of His work of redemption, which was absolutely necessary in order for us to be *“justified”* (declared righteous) by God, and to be received into the eternal mansions of heaven by His grace (Matthew 25:46). And this other crucial part, which is, sadly, often minimized or overlooked completely in outward Christendom, is His perfect keeping of God’s Law in behalf of all mankind. This is what we refer to as His *active obedience*.

The Lord our God has set forth strict, unbending demands and prohibitions in His holy Law — requiring *absolute perfection* of us in *everything* that we *do, say, think, or even feel* deep down in our heart (Genesis 17:1). Accordingly, even if we could live our whole life and only sin one time, and even if that one sin were only a brief unholy thought or emotion, we would still be judged as being guilty of breaking the entire Law of God. *“Whosoever shall keep the whole Law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all”* (James 2:10). Since He Himself is holy (sinless and hating sin), the Lord our God must also require holiness and perfection of us. *“Ye shall be holy: for I the Lord your God am holy”* (Leviticus 19:2). *“Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect”* (Matthew 5:48). If He would make any exceptions, allowances, or excuses for sin —if

He would be tolerant or dismissive of even one of our sins— it would show a defect in His own holiness.

So then in order *not* to fall under the verdict of “guilty,” a person would have to keep all of God’s Commandments perfectly —not just outwardly, but also in the very thoughts and feelings of his heart and mind. And who among us is capable of doing *that*? Is there any human being in the entire history of humanity (with the exception of Christ Himself) who has ever lived his entire life in sinless perfection? No, not one (Romans 3:9-12, 19). Now there are those that would say: “So what? What’s the big deal? I sin; you sin; *everybody sins*. Why be so concerned about pointing out the fact that a person has broken God’s Commandments?” The reason why this really *is* a very important matter (even for those who do not acknowledge it to be) is because “*the wages of sin is death*” (Romans 6:23) —both *temporal death* and *eternal death*. Even that which man would regard as the smallest and least significant violation of God’s Commandments makes the sinner worthy of the ultimate punishment of everlasting damnation in the fires of hell. The Apostle Paul wrote in his letter to the Galatians: “*As many as are of the works of the Law [that is, as many as try to save themselves through the keeping of the Law] are under the curse [damnation]; for it is written, Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the Law to do them*” (3:10). Because it is completely impossible for sinful mankind to fulfill the Law of the Lord perfectly as He requires, St. Paul goes on to say: “*No man is justified [i.e., declared righteous] by the Law in the sight of God*” (Galatians 3:11); and the Psalmist prays to the Lord, saying: “*Enter not into judgment with Thy servant, for in Thy sight shall no man living be justified*” (143:2).

Since we are completely incapable of satisfying His legislative justice (the righteousness that His Law demands) and would be barred from heaven on that account, the Lord, in His great mercy and grace, decreed in eternity, even before the world was made, to send His only-begotten Son into the world as a true man to take our place under His Law and as our Substitute to fulfill it perfectly (Galatians 4:4-5). This is what Jesus accomplished for us in His *active obedience*. Our Savior emphasized the fact that His *active obedience* was an important part of the work of redemption that the Father had given Him to perform when He told His disciples: “*Think not that I am come to destroy the Law, or the Prophets. I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil*” (Matthew 5:17); and again: “*As the Father gave Me commandment, even so I do*” (John 14:31). The fact that Christ lived a life of sinless perfection is verified

by the Holy Ghost through the inspired writings of various Apostles. St. Paul states in his second letter to the Corinthians that Christ “*knew no sin*” (5:21). The writer to the Hebrews testifies that Jesus “*was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin*” (4:15). In his first epistle, Peter testifies that Jesus “*did no sin, neither was guile found in His mouth*” (2:22). And the Apostle John writes in his first epistle that “*in Him [Christ] is no sin*” (I John 3:5). It is also worthwhile noting that His perfect keeping of the Law can be observed in all of Jesus’ words and deeds, from childhood on up, as these have been recorded for our learning and edification in the Gospels of Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John.

For our salvation, the Second Person of the Holy Trinity took into Himself a true human nature and placed Himself under His Law in order to fulfill it perfectly as our Substitute. “*When the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth His Son, made of a woman, made under the Law, to redeem them that were under the Law, that we might receive the adoption of sons*” (Galatians 4:4-5). But how exactly does the fact that Christ perfectly kept the Law of God benefit *us* who have violated His Law countless times and are, therefore, worthy of the full extent of His wrath? The *active obedience* of Christ benefits us because of the *vicarious* (or, *substitutionary*) nature of His entire work of redemption. Like as His suffering and death (His *passive obedience*) was carried out in our behalf *as our Substitute* (Isaiah 53:4-5), so also His perfect fulfilling of the Law was done *as our Substitute* (Romans 5:18-19). Just as for the sake of Christ’s *vicarious passive obedience*

Just as for the sake of Christ’s *vicarious passive obedience* God graciously declares *us* to be free from the punishment of our sins, ...so also for the sake of His *vicarious active obedience* God graciously declares *us* not only to be free from all of our sinful imperfections but to be truly righteous —counted as if *we* had actually kept the Law of the Lord perfectly.

God graciously declares *us* to be free from the punishment of our sins (since He suffered it in our place), so also for the sake of His *vicarious active obedience* God graciously declares *us* not only to be free from all of our sinful imperfections but to be truly righteous —counted as if *we* had actually kept the Law of the Lord perfectly in all of our thoughts, desires, words, and deeds (since this is what Christ did in our

place). All of our transgressions have been removed from our charge —having been placed on Christ (Isaiah 53:6), and the righteousness of Christ’s perfect life has been attributed to us. This gracious reversal of judgment —our sinfulness being charged to the righteous Christ, and His righteousness being credited to us sinners— is described by the Apostle Paul as follows: “*He [God the Father] hath made Him [Christ] to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him*” (II Corinthians 5:21). How fitting, then, that in the Old Testament the pre-incarnate Christ is given the “name” of “*the Lord [Jehovah] our righteousness*” (Jeremiah 23:6).

The Scriptures use the term “*justification*” to describe the way that the Lord declares sinners to be righteous for Jesus’ sake —forgiving them all their sins. Justification is a “*forensic*” imputation of righteous (as a judge in a court of law would pronounce a verdict of innocence upon a person). According to Scriptural usage, “justification” is *not* what is sometimes described as a “*medical*” infusion of righteousness (which would be righteousness of living). Even though we have been completely justified by faith, we still commit sins in our lives; but the glorious result of Christ’s work of redemption is that we sinful human beings are declared by the divine Judge to be *righteous* and *holy* (saints) for the Savior’s sake (Colossians 1:22). Now while it is certainly right and proper to say that Christ purchased our justification through His suffering and death —His *passive obedience* (Isaiah 53:4-5; Romans 5:10; Hebrews 10:14,18; I John 1:7)— we must not minimize the importance of His *active obedience* in securing our justification. Romans 5:18-19 refers specifically to Jesus’ perfect obedience to God’s Law as bringing about justification (forgiveness, imputed righteousness) for all mankind. “*By the offence of one [namely, Adam’s violation of God’s command], judgment came upon all men to condemnation; even so by the righteousness of One [Christ’s sinlessness] the free gift came upon all men unto justification of life. For as by one man’s disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of One shall many be made righteous.*” This passage clearly connects, as cause and effect, the active obedience of Christ with the forgiveness of all mankind (objective justification).

It is for the sake of Jesus’ perfect fulfilling of God’s Law as our Substitute that we are declared righteous —regarded by the Lord as if *we* have perfectly kept His Law. And while this gracious non-imputation of guilt and imputation of righteousness has the whole world of sinners as its object (II Corinthians 5:19), its full benefit is enjoyed only by those who *receive* the forgiveness of sins *by faith* in the Gospel promises. This, of

course, was true also in the Old Testament when the believers' faith was directed ahead to the fulfillment of the messianic prophecies. "*David also describeth the blessedness of the man, unto whom God imputeth righteousness without works, saying, Blessed are they whose iniquities are forgiven, and whose sins are covered. Blessed is the man to whom the Lord will not impute sin*" (Romans 4:6-8). The righteousness that God imputes to us sinful creatures is the righteousness that was earned for us by Christ's substitutionary life of righteousness in satisfaction of God's legislative justice in our behalf.

The *active obedience* of Christ, because it is a crucial part of His redemptive work whereby we are saved, is a motivating factor that urges and impels us Christian to follow the perfect example of Christ in our lives out of loving gratitude. Unlike the examples of the believers that are recorded in the Bible for our learning, the example that *Christ* left does not need to be evaluated in the light of God's Law in order to determine whether it was morally good or not (even though such a comparison would always validate His righteousness), because we know *a priori* (without the need of such examination), based on the sure testimony of God's Word, that everything Jesus did was completely holy and sinless. From the Gospels of Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John, which record many historical details relating to Jesus' *active obedience*, we can find numerous examples of His flawless adherence to the Law that should also be followed by *us* in *our* lives out of love for Him. Jesus' humble submission to His parents (Luke 2:51) is a model for all Christian children to remember and to emulate. His example of fervent prayer, coupled with His desire for the will of His heavenly Father to be done in all things (Matthew 26:39, 42), shows us how we also should bring our petitions before the Lord in the hour of need. The way that Jesus prayed on behalf of those who crucified Him (Luke 23:34)—desiring that they would be brought to repentance and be saved from their sins—reminds us not to neglect praying for those who spitefully use us and persecute us (Matthew 5:44). Throughout His public ministry, Christ, who, because He is God, certainly could have demanded that everyone serve Him, instead chose to serve us both in His *active* and *passive obedience*; and He teaches us to follow His example of humble service in our dealings with our neighbor (Mark 10:43-45; John 13:13-15).

It is important to remember that without Christ's substitutionary keeping of God's Law none of our works could possibly be pleasing to the Lord. Apart from the righteousness of Christ, even all of our best works are nothing but "*filthy rags*" in His holy sight (Isaiah 64:6). But

the Bible tells us that in and through the saving work of Jesus Christ, God declares us to be free from every taint of sin, and accepts our works of loving obedience as “*righteousness*” (Philippians 1:11). This is the only way that our imperfect following of His Commandments can be acceptable before the Lord (I Peter 2:5), since by faith in Christ our imperfections are completely covered under the robe of His righteousness. So then with reference to our life of good works, the *active obedience* of Christ supplies us with the *motivation* and *power* to do good, the perfect *example* of what is morally good, as well as the *purifying righteousness* by which our works are accepted by God as being truly “*good*” (Ephesians 2:10) through the substitutionary satisfaction of His legislative justice.

If we keep these things in mind, we will certainly not minimize the importance of Christ’s vicarious *active obedience* as this relates to our eternal salvation and to our Christian life here on earth. Without this part of His saving work, we would still be obligated to keep the Law of God perfectly in all of our thoughts, desires, words, and deeds in order to be saved (which obligation we sinful creatures would never be able to fulfill). So may God the Holy Ghost stir our heart and soul through the study of this glorious doctrine of His grace, causing us through it to grow all the more appreciative of Christ’s work of fulfilling the divine Law flawlessly in our stead, whereby we are able to stand before the Lord clothed in His perfect righteousness and receive His boundless grace, mercy, and peace here in time and hereafter in eternity.

—P. E. B.

*Yet as the Law must be fulfilled
or we must die despairing,
Christ came and hath God's anger stilled,
our human nature sharing.
He hath for us the Law obeyed
and thus the Father's vengeance stayed
which over us impended.*

TLH 377, v. 5

The Vital Relationship of Orthodox *Practice* to Orthodoxy in **Doctrine**

“Why call ye Me, ‘Lord, Lord!’ and do not the things which I say?”
—Luke 6:46

[This timely topic was thoroughly discussed at our Summer Plenary Pastoral Conference, June 19, 2007. Its substance is presented herewith in summary for the information and edification of our readers. —Ed.]

We rightly confess in full accord with Holy Scripture that Christians must distinguish carefully between *orthodox* and *heterodox* churches, and that therefore they must test *teachers of religion* as well to determine whether they are true or false prophets. This is not merely a “divine advisory,” as many regard it who have made up their minds that they, personally, are simply unqualified to make such judgments; but this is a *solemn charge* laid upon every believer to exercise with due diligence for his own spiritual safety and for the safety of his spiritual brethren.

Many laymen in particular would rather leave the evaluation of theologians to other *theologians*, trusting *their* judgment and then adopting such judgment as their own. But the Apostle John writes to those who would enjoy true fellowship with Christ and with one another, saying in his first epistle, chapter 4: “*Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God; because many false prophets are gone out into the world*” (v. 1). This is a heavy responsibility which every Christian bears, not to leave those who may themselves be spiritual foxes in charge of chasing other foxes away from the spiritual hen house, or predatory wolves, manifest false prophets, to guard sheepfolds against invasion by other wolves. The Chief Shepherd of His sheep tells them: “*Beware of false prophets which come to you in sheep’s clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves; ye shall know them by their fruits*” (Matthew 7:15-16). Spiritual predators can be easily and accurately identified by what they **teach** AND, as we shall see in our present examination, also by what they **practice**.

The sheep themselves can and should be able to recognize false prophets and judge them for the menaces they are, “clear and present dangers” to the Savior’s sheep and lambs. They do not need commissions on doctrine and committees on church relations to make a “*righteous judgment*” for them (John 7:24)!

The term “*orthodox*” is seldom used anymore in these latter days of sore distress, even among *Lutheran* pastors who would like to be known as preachers and teachers that are faithful to the Word of God both in what they teach and in what they practice. They prefer the adjectives “conservative” (which is really a *political* term) and “confessional” (which commonly refers to the Lutheran Confessions comprising the *Book of Concord* of 1580), even though the latter do not address and treat all the doctrines of Holy Writ. For our part, we cherish the word “*orthodox*” because of what it truly means and signifies. “Ortho-” is a prefix from the Greek [*ὀρθός*] that means “straight,” “true,” and “without perversion.” (Compare its use regarding medical specialists who “straighten” and “correct” crooked limbs, teeth, etc. — *orthopedic* surgeons, *orthodontists*.) Much to his surprise, this writer received an e-mail several years ago inquiring concerning our Conference and its “orthodox” position whether we have some connection with the Eastern [Greek, Russian, Armenian, Serbian, etc.] *Orthodox* Church and *its* doctrine and practice! And this was from a *pastor*! “Dox” comes from the Greek word for “thinking” [*δύω*] and thus also for fostering “thinking” by teaching and “prescribing ordinances” which govern thinking. *Orthodoxy*, then, is adherence to correct, straight, unperverted teachings and ordinances, to what the Apostle Paul calls “*sound doctrine*” (I Timothy 1:10; II Timothy 4:3; Titus 1:9; 2:1), “*good doctrine*” (I Timothy 4:6), “*the doctrine which is according to Godliness*” (I Timothy 6:3).

Orthodoxy in DOCTRINE is not merely a “goal” to be sought after and hopefully to be achieved among those who represent themselves as teachers of religion in the visible churches of outward Christendom. It is God’s own requirement. The Holy Scriptures confirm this “*in the words...which the Holy Ghost teacheth*” (I Corinthians 2:13) in both the Old Testament and in the New. The Psalmist confesses: “*Through Thy precepts I get understanding; therefore I hate every false way*” (Psalm 119:104); “*Thou hast trodden down all them that err from Thy statutes; for their deceit is falsehood*” (v. 118); “*Thy Word is very pure; therefore Thy servant loveth it*” (v. 140); “*Thy righteousness is an everlasting righteousness, and Thy Law is the truth*” (v. 142).

Jeremiah, the Lord's spokesman, declares in the words of God Himself: "*He that hath My Word, let him speak My Word faithfully*" (Jeremiah 23:28). Jesus makes consistent orthodoxy the hallmark of discipleship, saying in John 8: "*If ye continue in My Word, then are ye My disciples indeed; and ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free*" (vv. 31-32). Moreover the Apostle Paul leaves no doubt as to the degree of conformity with divine truth that the Lord fully expects of His people when he says: "*Now I beseech you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you; but that ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment*" (I Corinthians 1:10).

This is no "pipedream of the Holy Spirit," as one *liberal* theologian once characterized Paul's exhortation, as if such consistent conformity were not possible in this life among fallible men. For St. Paul is not addressing personal sanctification of life, which is a "work in progress" and varies from believer to believer. He is speaking of conformity with the perfect, *infallible* standard of Holy Writ in what is preached, taught and applied, so that God's people "*hearken **not** unto the words of the prophets that...speak a vision of **their own** heart and **not** out of the mouth of the Lord*" (Jeremiah 23:16). And, as we pastors and all our laymen know very well, these passages of Holy Writ are but a mere sampling of the many *sedes doctrinae* which **require** orthodoxy of both preachers and their hearers.

Those who *transgress* this divine requirement, either by deliberately and flagrantly teaching contrary to sound doctrine or by demonstrating indifference to sound doctrine and thus ignoring its vital importance, not only do so to their own peril, but they bring also others into jeopardy, continually causing "*divisions and offenses,*" dissensions and stumblingblocks, in outward Christendom (Romans 16:17), instead of faithfully feeding Christ's local flocks, edifying His sheep and lambs, reproving, rebuking, and exhorting them "*with all longsuffering and doctrine*" (II Timothy 4:2). Intolerant of *sound* doctrine themselves, just like their hearers who won't put up with it, they willingly *itch* (i.e., scratch and tickle) *their ears* with what they want to hear (v. 3) so as to maintain their popularity and look out for their own personal welfare here in this world. Such teachers of religion the Lord calls "*shepherds...that do feed **themselves***" but not His flock (Ezekiel 34:1-16). And St. Paul says that "*they that are such serve not our Lord Jesus Christ but **their own belly**, and by good words and fair speeches **deceive** the hearts of the simple*" (Romans 16:18). Their "*good words*

and fair speeches” are specially deceptive “*sheep’s clothing*” (Matthew 7:15) because they lie and deceive by God’s Name [Second Commandment], using the Name of Christ (Matthew 7:22) while departing from His Word (Mark 8:38). To them, Jesus Himself will say on the Day of Judgment: “*I never knew you. Depart from Me, ye that work **iniquity!***” (Matthew 7:23). Those who “*teach **otherwise** and consent not to **wholesome** words, even the words of our Lord Jesus Christ and to the doctrine which is according to Godliness,*” Paul tells Timothy, are “***proud**, knowing **nothing**, but doting about questions and strifes of words, whereof cometh envy, strife, railings, evil surmisings, perverse disputings of men of **corrupt minds** and **destitute of the truth**, supposing that gain is Godliness*” (I Timothy 6:3-5).

And yet, their hearers who refuse to “*try the spirits*” on the basis of Scripture, will not be blameless victims; for Paul says that they will have turned away their own ears from the truth to be turned unto fables (II Timothy 4:4). They will have preferred non-nutritive spiritual garbage [“*the husks that the swine did eat*” (Luke 15:16)] to “*the sincere [pure] milk of the Word*” (I Peter 2:2). They will have turned down the “*strong meat*” of “*sound doctrine*” (II Timothy 4:3) that is appropriate spiritual food for “grown-up” believers, those who “*by reason of use,*” that is, having let the Word of Christ dwell in them richly (Colossians 3:16), “*have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil*” (Hebrews 5:14) to recognize the difference between orthodoxy and heterodoxy. Such lazy and naive hearers are perpetual “*children*” in their knowledge of Scripture and in spiritual judgment (cf. also I Corinthians 14:20), who refuse to grow up and thus allow themselves to be “*tossed to and fro and carried about with every wind of doctrine*” by theological flim-flam con-artists who cunningly “*lie in wait to deceive*” (Ephesians 4:14). There is no excuse for spiritual ignorance, when **God’s Word** “*giveth **understanding** unto the **simple***” (Psalm 119:130).

But it is not only *orthodoxy* in **doctrine** that is required by the Lord for the nurturing of His flocks. He also requires *orthodoxy* in **PRACTICE** — not as distinct from doctrine but as in accordance with doctrine. “Practice” is defined as “the consistent **application** of the doctrines of God’s Word.” The Lord Jesus asks in our title-text: “*Why call ye Me ‘Lord, Lord!’ and **do not** the things which I say?*” (Luke 6:46); and the Apostle James, as if in answer to the Savior’s almost rhetorical challenge, says: “*Be ye **doers** of the Word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves*” (James 1:22) — but “*doers,*” not by coercion, not motivated by the commands and threats of the Law, but willingly and cheerfully, constrained by “*the*

love of Christ” (II Corinthians 5:14) to do His will, motivated by the “*perfect law of liberty*” (James 1:25), His precious Gospel, whereby His Holy Spirit “*worketh in [us] both to will and to do of His good pleasure*” (Philippians 2:13).

The *orthodox application* of *orthodox* doctrine is **absolutely vital** if what the Lord our God sets forth in His Holy Word is not to be merely “taught” mechanically and “preached” with lip service as meaningless “theory.” The “*doctrine which is according to Godliness*” (I Timothy 6:3) is not only to be *taught* and *consented unto* “in theory,” but that doctrine is both the **standard** and the **vehicle** whereby God’s precepts are to be *applied* or *put into practice* as having been written for our learning (Romans 15:4), as well as for our steadfastness (I Peter 5:9 and II Peter 3:17) and for our being properly equipped [“*thoroughly furnished*”] for a life of Christian sanctification (II Timothy 3:17) according to “*the will of the Lord*” (Ephesians 5:17).

Not every situation, circumstance, condition and act to which its principles, ordinances and precepts apply is **specifically mentioned** in Holy Scripture; and yet *orthodox PRACTICE* requires that **consistent application** of orthodox doctrine be made without equivocation in and to all such cases in which the *principles* set down by God in His Holy Word properly pertain. This does not give the theologian or the individual pastor **license** to apply or not to apply Scripture doctrine according to his own pleasure, according to his own subjective judgment, according to the accepted custom of the day, according to the preferences of his hearers, or according to whether or not a “backlash” of resistance or resentment might result. The principles of Holy Writ must be **taught** as established by God Himself in His Word (Matthew 28:20a), and the same principles must be **applied** consistently, evenhandedly, forthrightly and unequivocally to ALL situations and to ALL persons involved in such situations where those principles are being violated, obviated or ignored.

The same baseless claim is, of course, made regarding *orthodox practice* as is made concerning *orthodoxy* in **doctrine**, namely, that complete consistency is impossible to achieve here in this world among fallible men. Were there no *infallible standard* for orthodox doctrine, were there no *infallible standard* for orthodox practice, those who make such a claim would have a “case” for their slipshod *doctrinal* theology, as well as for their sloppy *pastoral* theology, according to which just about “anything goes” nowadays. But the Lord of the Church holds pastors in

particular, but also their people, accountable not only for the faithful preaching and teaching of His Word, as we have seen above, but also for its faithful practice. He states plainly for all to read that the Holy Scriptures are “*profitable*” —not nebulously impractical and hopelessly problematic— “*for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness*” (II Timothy 3:16).

The *principles* which are to be applied faithfully and consistently in **orthodox PRACTICE** are established NOT on the basis of passages that require *exegesis*, or interpretation, in order to learn and understand the God-intended meaning of the text. Rather (and this is what makes truly *orthodox PRACTICE possible*), those principles are based upon the passages that are so *clear* and so *certain* in and of themselves as to what they say and teach that they are called *sedes doctrinae* or “seats of doctrine,” the pillars or pilings that belong to “*the foundation of the apostles and prophets*” (Ephesians 2:20). Such passages neither need, nor require, nor do they even permit any interpretation in order for us to determine their true, God-intended meaning. They say what they say; they mean exactly what they say, they teach precisely what they say and mean, and they are “*profitable*” for **practical application** in “*doctrine*” — teaching what the will of the Lord is (Titus 2:12-14; etc.), in “*reproof*” — identifying and condemning sin (Ephesians 5:11-18; etc.), in “*rebuke*” — sharply convicting a person of his own sin and guilt (Proverbs 9:8; Titus 1:13; etc.), in “*correction*” — turning the sinner from evil ways to repentance, faith, and the fruits of righteousness (James 5:19-20; etc.), in “*exhortation*” — urging and comforting the penitent sinner with the sweet Gospel so that the love of his Savior constrains him (II Corinthians 5:14) to walk in the paths of righteousness for His Name’s sake (Psalms 1 and 23; etc.), in “*instruction in righteousness*” — equipping the Christian to recognize and to be “*zealous of good works*” in the sight of God as the evidence and fruit of his faith (Titus 2:14; Ephesians 2:10; John 15:5, 8; etc.).

Practice “falls flat,” however, and can never be *orthodox* when the *sedes* are blatantly ignored or are represented as not being “applicable” to what they clearly address. The *Statementarians* [the signers of *A Statement* in 1945] became guilty of **false PRACTICE** when they “deplored” the fact that Romans 16:17 was applied against prayer fellowship between professing Christians who were not in complete unity in every point of doctrine. And the very same false PRACTICE in the area of fellowship occurs when the principles set forth in such passages as Romans 16:17, Amos 3:3, and II Corinthians 6:14ff. are commonly

set aside as “not applicable” by those who want to pray with the heterodox at table, join with the heterodox in singing religious music in civic glee clubs and choral societies, worship with the heterodox in services conducted under the auspices of a chaplaincy in hospitals, in prisons, on military posts, and at Boy Scout “jamborees.” Pastors become guilty of **false PRACTICE** when they permit their congregations to support the Lord’s work with merchandising schemes (sales, bazaars, fairs, etc.) contrary to the Savior’s plain words in John 2:16. Churches are guilty of **false PRACTICE** when they observe “open communion” contrary to Acts 2:42, Amos 3:3, I Corinthians 10:17, etc. Church bodies are guilty of **false PRACTICE** when they permit and even encourage congregations to call pastors whom they cannot or do not even intend fully to support but expect them to support themselves, at least partially, by means of secular employment contrary to I Corinthians 9:14, Luke 10:7, etc. Congregations become guilty of **false PRACTICE** when they extend suffrage (voting membership), the holding of offices of authority over the men, and incumbency in the pastoral office to women in the church contrary to I Corinthians 14:34 and I Timothy 2:11-12. Parents are guilty of **false PRACTICE** when they neglect their children’s Christian education and spiritual upbringing contrary to Deuteronomy 6:6-7 and Ephesians 6:4. Such examples only scratch the surface of the cancer of **false practice** that runs rampant even among those who profess to be doctrinally sound. Their orthodoxy in **doctrine** (assuming that they even have that) is **belied** by their *lack* of orthodoxy in **practice** (Luke 6:46). They simply do not “practice what they preach.”

Practice also “falls flat” when *sedes* are perverted or twisted, when they are stripped of their true sense (according to the common usage of their words in their context), when a euphemistic or symbolic meaning is foisted upon them, when their force is mollified or softened, and when they are otherwise “watered down” to accommodate variance under the guise of “reasonableness.” The claim is often made that particularly certain modern-day practices are *not even mentioned* in Scripture and therefore cannot be condemned as being “sinful” on the basis of passages of principle. The completely unjustified charge of “legalism” is therefore often leveled against those who insist upon **orthodox practice**. We cite only several pertinent examples:

—Grape juice is used instead of wine in the Lord’s Supper upon the claim that the word “wine” never once occurs in the texts that treat of the Sacrament of the Altar.

—Surgical abortion is permitted upon “humanitarian” grounds (“to save the life of the mother” or “in the case of rape or incest”), and equating such abortions —never so much as mentioned in Scripture— with “murder” under the Fifth Commandment is branded “legalistic.”

—It is a “stretch,” we are told, to condemn gambling as a sin under the Seventh Commandment, as “stealing” that which our neighbor is not willing to part with, or, at best, wantonly wasteful stewardship of our daily bread.

—Jesus condemns as “*adultery*” looking on a woman to lust after her (Matthew 5:28). Does that apply equally in the condemnation of a male “centerfold” poster in a girl’s locker? “The passage doesn’t specifically say so,” claims the accommodationist; but neither does any passage specifically mention “kiddie-porn”!

—Proverbs 5:20 teaches that it is a violation of chastity for a man to “*embrace the bosom of a stranger*,” that is, according to the context, of one to whom he is not joined in the married estate. That very romantic embrace, forbidden as inappropriate in any other venue, should not be condemned in modern social dancing, claim those who accuse us (and Dr. Walther, and Drs. Engelder, Kretzmann, Graebner, Maier, and many others) of “legalism” because of our Scriptural position to the contrary! Why, even the children of this world recognize the embrace in social dancing as a “sexual ice-breaker,” a sensual experience, “sexual mobility,” and the opportunity to do in public, in a socially-approved activity, what otherwise is unacceptable. And yet many professing Christians, thinking themselves to be “*children of light*” (Luke 16:8), do not “*walk as children of light*” (Ephesians 5:8), refusing to see what is clearly evident to the spiritually blind!

—St. Paul condemns being “*unequally yoked together with unbelievers*” (II Corinthians 6:14). “‘*Come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord,*’ (v. 17); and, on the basis of that *sedes* (and others including the First Commandment), we forbid, in application or PRACTICE, membership in lodges, in the Scouting organizations, and in any other associations which are antitrinitarian, which require belief in “God” but hold that even the gods of pagans are equally valid in fulfillment of that requisite, which teach work-righteousness and justification by character-modification and self-directed moral improvement (“doing a good turn daily” and living “on the level and on the square”). Truly ***orthodox practice*** requires that we apply not only the First Commandment principles and the doctrine of justification, but also the prin-

ciples of complicity (I Timothy 5:22) and fellowship (Amos 3:3; Romans 16:17) to membership in such organizations as being *unequal yokes with unbelievers* — even though most Lutherans today have long ago abandoned as “legalistic” positions against such alliances.

“*Abhor that which is evil; cleave to that which is good,*” writes St. Paul in Romans 12:9. **Orthodox practice**, the consistent application of Scripture doctrine, of principles taught by the Word of our God, requires the recognition that, in His sight, there is no moral “grey-scale” between black and white, between darkness and light, no room for the accommodation of evil, even in degrees, as if certain “evils” were “spiritual misdemeanors” while others are “spiritual felonies.” II Corinthians 6:14-17 is pointedly instructive in that regard. There is no middle ground, no fence to straddle. “*How long halt ye between two opinions?*” asked God’s servant, Elijah, of the prophets of Israel (I Kings 18:20-21). They were literally limping on both sides, “*and the people answered him not a word.*” There is NO LEGITIMATE REASON to surrender orthodoxy in **PRACTICE**, refusing to apply with consistency “*the doctrine which is according to Godliness*” (I Timothy 6:3) if and when that **doctrine** is being preached and taught in its full truth and purity. **False practice** indicates either that the doctrine preached and taught is itself false, flawed or perverted, **OR** that the preachers and teachers, and probably their hearers as well, simply refuse to acknowledge the truth, refuse to believe the truth, and, as the fruit of their unbelief, refuse to **apply** the truth in **orthodox practice**.

May God, by His never-failing grace mediated to us in and through His blessed Gospel, continue to guide us into all truth, the truth of His infallible, clear, authoritative, and all-sufficient Word, and keep us ever faithful, not only in our profession of the same, in **orthodox** PREACHING and TEACHING, but also in its faithful, diligent and consistent application, in truly **orthodox** **PRACTICE**, for the love of our precious Savior, that His Name may continue to be hallowed among us to His glory alone!

— D. T. M.



CONVENTION DIGEST

MOTTO: “The Lord, our Righteousness” —Jeremiah 23:6



Appropriately named for the large tracts of native oak trees for which the area is known, the city of Oak Forest, a southern suburb near Chicago, Illinois, was the site of this year’s **Fifty-Sixth Annual Convention** of the *Concordia Lutheran Conference*. Hosting the convention on the last

weekend in June was **Peace Ev. Lutheran Church**, the Rev. David T. Mensing, Pastor. Nestled among those oaks, the congregation’s church building and attached Christian Education Facility provided ample room for the convention services and sessions, for the delicious meals served by the ladies, and for wholesome recreational activities during “off hours.” Guests from afar began arriving already the previous weekend; and soon pastoral and lay delegates with their families, as well as visitors from as far west as Seattle and as far out east as Pennsylvania, gathered as dear brethren to do the work of the Lord’s kingdom-at-large and to enjoy their God-wrought fellowship in the opening devotions, in the various services, in their joint labors, and in their Christian sociability.

Immediately preceding the convention itself was a two-day **Pastoral Conference** on June 19th and 20th, during which the chief agenda items were 1) a review of Scriptural *hermeneutics* [principles of Biblical interpretation], 2) a discussion centering on the vital relationship between orthodox practice and orthodoxy in doctrine, and 3) the public colloquy of our seminarian, Mr. Jason Mabe, on the first-year coursework he completed this past term. At least thirty laymen from the various congregations attended these sessions. It was during the first day of the conference, in connection with the discussion on *hermeneutics*, that the pastors took up with Pastor Mahan of Jackson, Michigan, his and his congregation’s public variance from our Scriptural position on mod-

ern worldly social dancing, the very position concerning which he had expressed and sworn his complete and unreserved agreement the previous October (See *The Concordia Lutheran*, November-December, 2006). Despite that profession of unity, Pastor Mahan and Faith Congregation, beginning already in November, publicly and repeatedly circularized the Conference congregations (cf. *Constitution*, Article VI, 2,3) with letters expressing not only their variance, sudden open opposition, and persistent false teaching and practice with regard to the consistent Scriptural application of Sixth Commandment principles, but also bearing blatant false witness both against our Conference and against individual pastors in spite of repeated correction according to fact and the Word of God. Ignoring the brotherly and urgent admonition also on the part of laymen present, Pastor Mahan repeatedly resorted to sarcasm, defiance, open hostility and ridicule of our sincere efforts to gain him from the error of his ways and showed himself to be at variance with our Conference not only on the matter of modern worldly social dancing and the application of Proverbs 5:20 as a *sedes doctrinae* (Cf. Walther, Engelder, Kretzmann, Graebner, Maier, etc., etc.) but on many other matters of doctrine and practice which an orthodox pastor should be able to articulate with consistency. Not willing any longer to hear his brethren, he simply left the meeting in the middle of the Tuesday afternoon session, thus making amply manifest that, sadly, he was no longer “*of us*” (I John 2:19). The remainder of the day’s sessions was taken up with a thorough discussion of the important relationship between orthodox practice and orthodoxy in doctrine. [See the article in this present issue as an epitome of that presentation and discussion.] —On the second day of the conference, the pastors colloquized our seminarian, Mr. Jason Mabe, on the doctrinal content of first year Dogmatics, comprising chiefly the nature and concept of theology through angelology [*pneumatology*], and found him, by the grace of God, to have given competent and thoroughly Scriptural answers to their questions. They did not colloquize him on New Testament Greek but accepted in lieu thereof his outstanding performance on written exams administered over the course of the past two semesters. The laymen present found the colloquy to have been both interesting and informative and rejoiced with the pastors in their evaluation of Brother Mabe’s proficiency. —The final session of the conference concerned questions of casuistry; and this session, per our usual custom, was reserved for the pastors only.

On Thursday, June 21st, the Conference **Board of Directors** held its annual business meeting to preview the convention agenda, to

hear in advance the general content of each standing committee's report, and to draft a recommendation regarding the defection of Pastor Mahan and his congregation for special consideration of the delegates in convention assembled.

The convention itself began on Friday, June 22nd, with a service of convocation at 9:30 a.m. The local pastor served as liturgist; and the Conference President, the Rev. Edward J. Worley of Seattle, Washington, preached an edifying keynote sermon. He chose as his text the motto of our convention, Jeremiah 23:5-6, taking as his theme: ***The Lord, Our Righteousness***, and dividing it into two parts, namely, **I. *Jesus Christ is the Gift of the Father***, and **II. *Jesus Christ is the Lord, our Righteousness for salvation***.

Following the service, the first session was called to order with a brief devotion conducted by the President. During this first brief session, *ad hoc* convention committees were appointed; the delegates were officially seated; and the assembled convention heard the *Annual Report of the President*. President Worley devoted the entire report to an in-depth summary of the sad events which eventually resulted in two defections from our fellowship on the part of "gainsayers that have arisen in our very midst, speaking perverse things to draw away disciples after themselves" (See Acts 20:30). The first was the sudden and completely unexpected resignation from our Conference of Pastor Mark W. Dierking in October, 2006, followed shortly thereafter by the severance also of his congregation. [This was reported on in considerable detail in the November-December issue of *The Concordia Lutheran*.] At the Fall Pastoral Conference in October everything possible was done to make sure of unanimity among all our pastors to the extraordinary length of a rising vote with a solemn vow of reaffirmation including the phrase "with no mental reservation" to obviate any "escape-clause thinking," as President Worley put it. Nevertheless, a mere two weeks later, Pastor Mahan and the voters of Faith, Jackson, sent to all the pastors and congregations of the Conference a virtual litany of charges and slanders containing no Scriptural support and no factual evidence cited from our published position. Thus began a battle for the truth that occupied more than seven months leading up to the present convention. President Worley summarized the diligent efforts he and others had made in the repeated admonition of Pastor Mahan and his congregation, all of which were rejected out-of-hand and most of which received virtually no response. Instead the President and the other officers, including the entire Board of Directors, "received only a repetition of baseless and

groundless charges and an expansion of factual distortion and outright lies and slanders. It is too sad for words.” Referring the delegates to the forthcoming recommendation of the Board of Directors, he closed his report with the prayer “that God would graciously convert the hearts of those who have recently showed themselves to be of a different spirit in their carnal approach to the Scriptures — that He would bring them to a clear knowledge of their errors, humble repentance of their sins, and confession of the same, to the end that they might be restored as beloved brethren in our midst.” Following that report, it was committed to a special committee for review; and, after several other matters of routine business, the convention stood in recess for the noon meal served by the ladies of Peace Congregation.

The afternoon session opened with a brief devotion conducted by Pastor Paul E. Bloedel of Sauk Village, Illinois. The first order of business was the consideration of the *Recommendation of the Board of Directors* regarding the defection of Pastor Mahan and his congregation. We quote the concluding portion in summary:

WHEREAS, in the course of our discussions with him at our Pastoral Conference, Pastor Mahan manifested before many witnesses that his variance from our Scriptural position was not limited to our application of Proverbs 5:20 to modern social dancing, as he repeatedly claimed, but that he also disagreed with us on the doctrine of fellowship, on the need to apply all the Ten Commandments to the lives of his people, on the proper distinction between Law and Gospel, on what constitutes a heretic according to Scripture, on the difference between objective truth and his own personal opinion, on the basic principles of Biblical hermeneutics, and on the nature of orthodox practice as inseparably connected to orthodoxy in doctrine; and

WHEREAS he ultimately cut off all further efforts to gain him from his persistent error and refused to hear and to heed the Word of God by leaving the Pastoral Conference, thus further demonstrating the breach of fellowship which he had created and in which he entrenched himself contrary to Holy Scripture; and

WHEREAS Pastor Mahan and his congregation have made it abundantly clear, both by their words and by their actions, that they have no intention of continuing with us (I John 2:19) in the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace (Ephesians 4:3) according to the Scriptural standard of fellowship (I Corinthians 1:10), and therefore that they have in fact already severed fellowship with us and terminated their own membership, thus obviating any necessity for the Conference to expel them;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Concordia Lutheran Conference in convention assembled regretfully recognize the breach of fellowship created and persisted in contrary to Scripture by Faith Ev. Lutheran Church, Jackson, Michigan, and by its pastor, the Rev. Ross A. Mahan, and that we recognize their unilateral termination of their own membership in our Conference under Article VII of our *Constitution*, inasmuch as they have rejected the conditions of membership and fellowship in our church body (Article IV, 1).

This recommendation was adopted unanimously by a rising vote of the delegates. [Please see the **Official Announcement** of the President regarding this sinful severance on pp. 132-133 of this issue.]

The *Treasurer's Report* concerning the past fiscal year, given by Robert G. Bloedel, was then heard and adopted, as was also his *Initial Report of the Finance Committee* with its preliminary proposed budget for fiscal year 2007-2008. Projected budgetary expenditures totaled \$43,225.00 divided among the following items: *Scriptural Publications*—\$3,500.00; Ekaterinburg Subsidy (primarily toward the pastor's salary)—\$9,600.00; Ekaterinburg Facilities Rental Subsidy—\$2,400.00; Archival Subsidy—\$500.00; Telephone Expense—\$500.00; Convention Expense—\$1,000.00; General Travel Expense—\$5,000.00; Nigeria Travel Expense—\$6,000.00; Miscellaneous Expense—\$2,000.00; Seminary Instructor's Salary—\$4,725.00; Emergency Grant for Medical Needs of Pastor Fyनेface—\$5,000.00; Nigerian Communications Package—\$3,000.00. The preliminary budget proposal, which included figures still to be recommended particularly by the Committee on Missions, was tentatively adopted, subject to any subsequent amendment by the delegates in Convention assembled and pending final approval later in the Convention.

Then followed the *Report of the Editorial Committee* by Pastor David T. Mensing, its chairman, who briefly reviewed the content of our official organ, the *Concordia Lutheran*. As the editor of the *CL* this year, he had deliberately endeavored to maintain from issue to issue a consistent balance between articles of a doctrinal and of a practical nature, occasionally treated topics of historical importance, and even included newsworthy items from our congregations stateside and from our brethren abroad. He also tried to represent in the subject matter and doctrinal content the various festivals and themes of the church year. Adherence to publication dates and concern for timely appearance were occasionally thwarted by unusual local conditions, either on the part of the writers or on the part of the editor and *Scriptural Publications*; but these in-

stances were rare. Pastor Mensing expressed his thanks to the readers for their forbearance with lapses in timeliness, to the pastors for their contributions, to Pastor Lietz, the Book-and-Tract Editor and his “second pair of eyes,” as well as to Jason Mabe, the lay member of the Editorial Committee, and Phillip Martin, Print Shop Manager of *Scriptural Publications* for their combined efforts toward making and keeping our *Concordia Lutheran*, under the Lord’s gracious blessing, the witnessing vehicle of our beloved Conference to the light of His precious Word (Psalm 43:3) and to the doctrine which is according to Godliness (I Timothy 6:3).

The convention heard Pastor Worley, as its acting chairman, report for the *Committee on Missions*. He briefly reviewed in particular the mission endeavors of the Conference abroad. Pastor Schurganoff in Russia has been sending in regular monthly reports to the Committee concerning his daily activities and especially the regular and consistent use of the Means of Grace within his congregation as he carries out his Divine Call as its shepherd. The Committee is also encouraging Pastor Schurganoff to begin systematic stewardship training of his people to the end that they assume, to whatever extent is possible, a greater share of his support. In the meantime the Committee recommended to the convention a cost of living increase in his salary subsidy, which has not been adjusted since 2003. Concerning the brethren in Nigeria, the situation there was still too unsettled to permit our planned visit there this past January; but we will monitor conditions as best we can and seek out the most reasonable opportunity to carry out that mission. In the meantime, we have become aware of a serious medical condition with Pastor Fyneface, and the Committee recommended to the convention that we fly him here for diagnosis and possible treatment. It also recommended that we fund the purchase of a reliable satellite phone system for the brethren in Nigeria to enable them to communicate better both with one another and with their brethren stateside, including the exchange of documents by e-mail or FAX.

Pastor Robert J. Lietz then also gave the *Report of the Publishing House Board of Control*, which regulates *Scriptural Publications*, the publishing arm of our Conference. His report touched on the success achieved by God’s grace in providing orthodox and edifying material in print for the consumption of our people—from the *C. L.*, to our Conference Website, to tracts and other materials, to the publication of several book-length works, both hardbound and paperback editions, to the anticipated re-printing of the *Advanced Bible History*, of three devotional books to encourage the good practice of family devotions in our Christian homes,

and possibly also a public domain edition of the *Lutheran Book of Prayer*. The chairman then acknowledged with special thanks the work of the Business Manager, David J. Mensing, and of the Print Shop Manager, Phillip R. Martin, as well as the ongoing subsidy of the publishing house by the churches of our fellowship and the hosting of its physical facilities by Peace Congregation at no cost to the Conference. Pastor Lietz also encouraged our people to consider *Scriptural Publications* in their estate planning as a demonstration of their gratitude for the Lord's grace to them. —Then came the *Report of the Business Manager of SCRIPTURAL PUBLICATIONS*, David J. Mensing, who presented his annual balance sheet outlining the financial aspects of the publishing work including monies currently on hand, receipts expected from the annual subsidy and from sales, and expenses anticipated to complete the various projects now already underway and those planned to be completed during the coming fiscal year. Before adjourning the Friday sessions, the delegates also heard brief reports concerning the *Conference Archives* and the *Seminary Bookstore*.

The Saturday morning sessions were opened with a devotion conducted by Pastor David G. Redlin of Tucson, Arizona. Thereupon Pastor Paul E. Bloedel of Sauk Village, Illinois, began his **DOCTRINAL ESSAY** based thematically on the motto of our Convention, "*The Lord, our Righteousness*" (Jeremiah 23:6). The essay, entitled "***The Active Obedience of Christ — His Righteousness for Our Justification,***" consisted of **five parts**, the first part subtitled "***The Active Obedience of Christ Defined.***" The introduction of the essay began with a citation which the essayist used as the text of his treatise: Romans 5:18b – "*By the righteousness of One the free gift came upon all men unto justification of life.*" The second part, subtitled "***The Necessity of Christ's Active Obedience,***" was also presented on Friday morning; and the remaining three parts were reserved for Sunday afternoon. The presentation of the essay was accompanied by a great deal of lively discussion from the floor on the part of delegates and visitors alike. For the sake of brevity, we will not capsulize the parts of the essay in this brief digest but rather direct the reader to the essayist's own summary which we asked him to prepare for this issue of the *Concordia Lutheran*. [Please see pp. 105-110.]



Reporting for the *Committee on Lutheran Union*, its chairman, Pastor Lietz, summarized its efforts at contacting and engaging in fruitful discussions of doctrine and practice concerned pastors (and even laymen) from other Lutheran church bodies who are looking for a truly orthodox fellowship where God's Word alone reigns supreme and in which judgments of religious teachers and their positions are made righteously on the basis of Scripture alone. He noted first of all the publication in our *Concordia Lutheran* of an article entitled "Rightly Judging the Lutheran Church – Missouri Synod" (September-October, 2006) which garnered only a few responses from the numerous copies sent out in the mail; but these were either completely negative or at best non-committal. Such general lack of interest is clear evidence that we are indeed in that time of apostasy spoken of by St. Paul in II Timothy 4:3-4. Two personal contacts include a very frustrated "confessional" in the LCMS who has expressed great appreciation for our orthodox position in doctrine and in practice but is still a member of that heterodox body. The other is a pastor who, with his congregation, properly applied Romans 16:17 to the Lutheran Churches of the Reformation and left that body because of its persistent heterodoxy. Our discussions with him have been extremely positive and profitable, and he has thus far declared that he finds nothing contrary to Scripture in the doctrine and practice of our Conference. It was a joy to have him in attendance for the first day of our Pastoral Conference; and we prayerfully look for him to make a forthright declaration of fellowship with us on the basis of the unity that he even now recognizes as existing between us by the grace of God. Pastor Lietz also pointed to our Conference website as an invaluable tool in getting out *accurate* information about our Conference to those who, with us, genuinely treasure a truly God-pleasing fellowship.

The *Committee to Review the President's Report* then gave its positive assessment of that report; and the *Auditing Committee* reported on its examination of the books, both of the Conference Treasurer and of the Business Manager of *Scriptural Publications*. The committee found all the financial records in good order.

The afternoon session began with a devotion conducted by Pastor David T. Mensing of Oak Forest, Illinois. The delegates then heard the *Report of the Committee on Theological Education* concerning its work during the past fiscal year. Pastor Edward J. Worley, chairman of the Committee, highlighted the first-year courses taught by Professor Mensing and the success of our seminarian, Mr. Jason Mabe of Park Forest, Illinois, in completing them to the glory of God in workmanlike

fashion with excellent grades. The chairman also briefly reported on the colloquy held on Wednesday, June 20th, as part of the agenda of the Pastoral Conference and successfully passed by Mr. Mabe. One of the lay members of the C. T. E., Mr. Erik Roe, had been able to audit the Dogmatics class for about a month for a firsthand look at both the quality of instruction and the preparation and performance of the students (at that time two); and his positive assessment was included in the committee's report, together with the exhortation that all our people keep both the instructor and the student, as well as their respective families, in their prayers for the Lord's continued blessing.

The convention also then heard the *Interest Report* of Professor Mensing concerning his activities as the instructor in the Seminary this past year. He focused particularly upon the courses taught and the schedule of classes and noted that several "auditors" attended classes in addition to Mr. Mabe (and initially also Mr. John Breinig of Oak Park, Illinois, who elected not to continue his studies past the first semester). —He also informed the convention of a cross suffered by the Mabe family midway through the second semester. In a scalding accident in their home, their year-old son, Aaron, suffered second and third degree burns over 15% of his body. Mercifully the Lord protected little Aaron from life-threatening complications and set him quickly upon a remarkable road to recovery, sparing him even the permanent scarring that had been anticipated by his doctor. True to His Word, our gracious God visited upon Jason, Gina his wife, and little Aaron no more than they were able to bear, gave them through Christ the strength to endure their crosses, and worked all things to their good and blessing for Jesus' sake! —Planned for this coming summer is a sixteen-week course in Basic German compressed into eight accelerated weeks. This intensive session will take the place of an entire semester's work in German. The second installment of that course will be offered, God-willing, next summer. —Finally, Professor Mensing noted that we should share with Jason his gratitude for Gina, his wife, as an exemplary Christian spouse and potential pastor's wife, who, to the glory of God, serves the Lord Christ (Col. 3:24) holding up her husband's hands, lending a sympathetic ear to his frustrations, insulating him from as many distractions as possible, and supporting him in his desire for the pastoral office, the most blessed work on earth and the most satisfying under heaven.

The student himself then gave a brief interest report, touching upon his personal background, his decision to study for the ministry, and his seminary experience to date, and highlighting his coursework

(which he is taking on a part-time basis while working full-time to support his family). Finally, he besought the Conference brethren to remember him in their prayers and to pray earnestly for a future ministry and for able men whom God would move to desire to serve Him in the pastoral office.

Before the mid-afternoon break, the *Finance Committee* came back with its interim report, namely, that there were no changes in the budget earlier proposed. That budget, still subject to revision, would be adopted in the final session of the convention.

The convention then proceeded to the *Election of Officers and Standing Committees* for 2007-2008. The following were elected:

PRESIDENT: The Rev. Edward J. Worley

VICE PRESIDENT: The Rev. Robert J. Lietz

SECRETARY: The Rev. David T. Mensing

TREASURER: Mr. Robert G. Bloedel

BOARD MEMBERS-AT-LARGE:

Midwest—Mr. Erik Roe

Far West— Mr. Raymond Kusumi

EDITORIAL COMMITTEE: Pastor Mensing, *C. L.* Editor; Pastor Bloedel, Book and Tract Editor; and Mr. Jason Mabe, Lay Member.

COMMITTEE ON LUTHERAN UNION: Pastor Lietz, Chairman; Pastor Mensing; Pastor Bloedel; and Mr. Phillip Martin.

COMMITTEE ON THEOLOGICAL EDUCATION: Pastor Worley, Chairman; Pastor Natterer; Mr. Daniel Bloedel; and Mr. Stephen Bloedel.

COMMITTEE ON MISSIONS: Pastor Worley, Chairman; Pastor Mensing; Mr. Mark Natterer; Mr. Dale Ellis; and Mr. Dan Cooper.

FINANCE COMMITTEE: Mr. Robert Bloedel, Chairman; Mr. Paul Natterer; Mr. John Swanson, and Mr. Joseph Martin.

PUBLISHING HOUSE BOARD OF CONTROL: Pastor Lietz, Chairman; Mr. David J. Mensing, Business Manager; and Mr. Phillip Martin, Print Shop Manager.

At the Sunday morning service, the host pastor again served as liturgist and also preached the sermon. Pastor Mensing preached on **II Corinthians 5:21**. His theme, in keeping with the convention's motto, was: ***What God Accomplished for Us in His Son***. He divided the sermon into two parts: **I. What God did** to His Only-begotten Son, and **II. Why He did it** specifically **to Him**. Delegates and visitors from the congregations of our fellowship then partook of the Lord's Supper together as guests of Peace Congregation—for the remission of their sins, for the strengthening of their faith and of their walk in sanctification, and in testimony of their blessed unity in the Word of their Savior.



After a sumptuous sit-down dinner, served family-style by the ladies of the congregation at the nearby Arbor Park Middle School, sessions reconvened with a devotion conducted by Pastor Robert J. Lietz of Oak Park, Illinois. Thereafter, Pastor Bloedel continued the presentation of His essay, the final three parts, to its conclusion— The third part: ***“References to the Active Obedience of Christ in the Old and New Testaments,”*** the fourth part: ***“The Comfort that Christ’s Active Obedience Gives Us,”*** and the fifth part: ***“The Active Obedience of Christ Applied in Our Lives of Sanctification.”*** —Following spirited and fruitful discussion of these sections, this informative and edifying essay was unanimously adopted with thanks to the essayist not only for his presentation of the doctrines involved but also for the Scriptural applications cited, subject to polish and the usual review of the *praesidium* before publication in the *PROCEEDINGS*.

The proposed budget of the *Finance Committee* received final adoption as previously presented, and the *Resolutions Committee* presented resolutions of thanks: **a)** to all those who faithfully served as officers during the past fiscal year, with the prayer that the Lord bless the work of the newly-elected officers; **b)** to the pastors who contributed to our spiritual edification in the sermons preached, in the essay delivered, and in the devotions conducted to His glory; **c)** to the pastor and members of Peace Congregation, as well as to the organists and members of the choir, for their brotherly hospitality, Christian fellowship and love

which contributed to the general success of the convention; and **d**) to the Lord Jesus for His perfect fulfillment of the Law in our stead, which motivates us to do that which is well-pleasing in His sight, and for His having preserved us from the perils of false brethren in our midst. And finally, the annual report of the *Conference Statistician*, Mr. Ray Kusumi, was presented for the information of our people.

The convention also unanimously accepted the gracious invitation of St. Luke's Lutheran Church of Seattle, Washington, to host the **57th Annual Convention** (June 27, 28 and 29, 2008), immediately preceded as usual by the *Plenary Pastoral Conference* on June 24th and 25th, and the *Board of Directors Meeting* on June 26th. Our people are encouraged *NOW ALREADY* to mark these dates on their calendars, so that they can plan ahead to attend.

The convention adjourned at 5:00 p.m., with the customary closing devotion led by President Worley. It had been a most brotherly and constructive meeting; and the delegates and visitors returned to their respective homes renewed in their zeal to recognize and to avoid the spiritual death-traps set for them by the devil, the world, and their own sinful flesh, and edified by the Spirit through His precious Word to live henceforth not unto themselves but unto their Savior, whose perfect *active* and *passive obedience* propitiated God's justice and purchased for every sinner justification unto everlasting life (Romans 5:18; Romans 2:24-26; I John 2:2).

Rev. David T. Mensing, Secretary



OFFICIAL ANNOUNCEMENT

It is my sad duty to announce that Faith Ev. Lutheran Church of Jackson, Michigan, together with its pastor, the Rev. Ross A. Mahan, has sinfully separated itself from our fellowship, rejected our Confessional Standard and Conditions of Membership, and thereby unilaterally terminated its own membership in our church body. This fact was *unanimously* acknowledged by the Concordia Lutheran Conference in convention assembled, June 22, 2007.

In violation of Pastor Mahan's *solemn oath* at our Fall Pastoral Conference (October, 2006) that he fully agreed with our published Scriptural position in the matter of modern worldly social dancing, that he had no mental reservation in making that declaration, and that he was committed to teach and to apply the Scriptural principles involved with unreserved consistency and to testify to them with unashamed clarity (See *Concordia Lutheran*, Vol. LI, Nos. 11-12, November-December, 2006, p. 203), he, only two weeks later, suddenly *reversed himself* and embarked upon a widely circularized campaign of public variance from our position, of rejection of the Scriptural principles underlying it, and of blatant false witness and open slander against our Conference and its pastors. It was NOT, as he later claimed, that the *only* issue between us was the exegesis of Proverbs 5:20 (See *Concordia Lutheran, ibid.*, pp. 204-205). He manifested before many witnesses at our recent Pastoral Conference (June, 2007) that he *also* disagreed with us on the doctrine of fellowship, on the need to apply all Ten Commandments to the lives of his people, on the proper distinction between Law and Gospel, on what constitutes a heretic according to Scripture, on the difference between objective truth and his own personal opinion, on the basic principles of Biblical hermeneutics, and on the nature and necessity of orthodox practice as inseparably connected to orthodoxy in doctrine.

We repeat for the benefit of our readers that there has never been, nor is there at present, a so-called “doctrine of the dance” in our midst. We do not, nor have we ever, condemned *all* dancing, as slanderers have characterized our position. However, we continue by God’s grace to apply Sixth Commandment principles to modern, worldly, lustful entertainment and recreation of **ALL** kinds, *including* dancing that is blatantly lustful, sexually suggestive (if not deliberately explicit) and clearly provocative, and that involves intimate contact between those not married to one another. *Such* dancing is *sinful recreation* contrary to God’s Word and is therefore inappropriate for Christians (as we have consistently held with our orthodox Lutheran fathers for well over a hundred years here in America alone). We hold that “whatever Scripture condemns, men dare not ignore, excuse or validate. Neither subjective judgment, common custom, social venue, or a claimed pious motive makes pure what God has forbidden” (*Reaffirmation of our Scriptural Position.*, 2004).

—Rev. Edward J. Worley, President

Also of your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them.

—Acts 20:30

Beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened unto you; but rejoice, inasmuch as ye are partakers of Christ’s sufferings, that, when His glory shall be revealed, ye may be glad also with exceeding joy. If ye be reproached for the name of Christ, happy are ye; for the spirit of glory and of God resteth upon you; on their part He is evil spoken of, but on your part He is glorified.

—1 Peter 4:12-14

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The Rev. Roman G. Schurganoff, Pastor

P. O. Box 62

620088 Ekaterinburg, RUSSIA

E-mail: lutheran@r66.ru

Holy Trinity Lutheran Church

Idama, Nigeria

The Rev. Robinson Dodo, Pastor

Holy Trinity Lutheran Church

Idama, Rivers State, NIGERIA

Salem Lutheran Church

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The Rev. Elison B. Agborubere, Pastor

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St. Clement Lutheran Church,

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Port Harcourt, Rivers State, NIGERIA

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The Rev. Nimi B. Fyeface and

The Rev. God'stime E. D. Douglas, Co-Pastors

P. O. Box 123

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St. Paul's Lutheran Church

Kula, Nigeria

The Rev. Onengiye C. Wariboko, Pastor

St. Paul's Lutheran Church

Kula, Rivers State, NIGERIA

Directory of Member Congregations

www.concordialutheranconf.com

GOOD SHEPHERD EV. LUTHERAN CHURCH

4050 South Melpomene Way
Tucson, AZ 85730 Telephone (520) 721-7618
Worship Service 9:30 a.m.
Sunday School & Bible Class 10:45 a.m.
The Rev. DAVID G. REDLIN, Pastor
4050 South Melpomene Way
Tucson, AZ 85730 (520) 721-7618
E-mail: david.redlin@worldnet.att.net

PEACE EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH

Central Avenue at 171st Place
Oak Forest, IL 60452-4913 Telephone: (708) 532-4288
Sunday School & Bible Class 8:30 a.m.
Worship Service 10:00 a.m.
The Rev. DAVID T. MENSING, Pastor
17151 South Central Avenue
Oak Forest, IL 60452-4913 (708) 532-9035
E-mail: pastormensing@yahoo.com

ST. JOHN'S LUTHERAN CHURCH

Sixth and Tangent Streets
Lebanon, OR 97355
Sunday School & Bible Class 10:00 a.m.
Worship Service 11:00 a.m.
The Rev. M. L. NATTERER, Pastor
483 Tangent Street
Lebanon, OR 97355 (541) 258-2941
E-mail: m.l.natterer@comcast.net

ST. LUKE'S LUTHERAN CHURCH

5350 South Fountain Street
Seattle, WA 98178 Telephone: (206) 723-1078
Sunday School & Bible Class 9:00 a.m.
Worship Service 10:30 a.m.
The Rev. EDWARD J. WORLEY, Pastor
9658 – 54th Avenue South
Seattle, WA 98118 (206) 723-7418
E-mail: revworley@comcast.net

NOTE: Services are also held in **Victoria, British Columbia** on the 1st and 3rd Sundays. Please call the Pastor for current location.

Worship Service 7:00 p.m.

Adult Bible Class 4:30 p.m.

Adult Catechism Class 8:30 p.m.

ST. MARK'S EV. LUTHERAN CHURCH

22012 S. Torrence Avenue

Sauk Village, IL 60411 *Telephone: (708) 758-6222*

Sunday School & Bible Class 8:45 a.m.

Worship Service 10:00 a.m.

The Rev. PAUL E. BLOEDEL, Pastor

22012 S. Torrence Avenue

Sauk Village, IL 60411 (708) 757-6859

E-mail: revbloedel@yahoo.com

TRINITY EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH

300 North Ridgeland Avenue

Oak Park, IL 60302 *Telephone: (708) 386-6773*

Sunday School & Bible Class 9:00 a.m.

Worship Service 10:15 a.m.

The Rev. ROBERT J. LIETZ, Pastor

233 North Cuyler Avenue

Oak Park, IL 60302 (708) 386-4145

E-mail: robertjlietz@yahoo.com



Orthodoxy and Heterodoxy

We rightly confess in full accord with Holy Scripture that Christians must distinguish carefully between ***orthodox*** and ***heterodox*** churches, and that therefore they must test *teachers of religion* as well to determine whether they are true or false prophets. This is not merely a “divine advisory,” as many regard it who have made up their minds that they, personally, are simply unqualified to make such judgments; but this is a *solemn charge* laid upon **every** believer to exercise with due diligence for his **own** spiritual safety **and** for the safety of his spiritual brethren.

Orthodox Doctrine AND Practice

The *orthodox application* of *orthodox* doctrine is **absolutely vital** if what the Lord our God sets forth in His Holy Word is not to be merely “taught” mechanically and “preached” with lip service as meaningless “theory.” The “*doctrine which is according to Godliness*” (I Timothy 6:3) is not only to be *taught* and *consented unto* “in theory,” but that doctrine is both the **standard** and the **vehicle** whereby God’s precepts are to be *applied* or *put into practice* as having been written for our learning (Romans 15:4), as well as for our steadfastness (I Peter 5:9 and II Peter 3:17) and for our being properly equipped [“*thoroughly furnished*”] for a life of Christian sanctification (II Timothy 3:17) according to “*the will of the Lord*” (Ephesians 5:17).

Excerpts from article, see page 111