

*The*  
*Concordia Lutheran*



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


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contend for  
the faith!”**

**Jude 3**





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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.

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# Steadfastness in these Latter Days of Apostasy

*“Earnestly contend for the faith which  
was once delivered unto the saints.” —Jude 3*

In the introduction to his commentary on the Epistle to the Romans, Luther famously describes justifying faith in this way: “Oh, it is a living, busy, active, mighty thing, this faith; and so it is impossible for it not to do good works incessantly” (translation by J. T. Mueller). Indeed, saving faith is not some inactive quality or condition of the heart that passively exists deep down inside without also affecting the way one thinks, talks, and acts. A true, *living* faith will produce good works (James 2:17, 20, 26). This is how a Christian shows his faith to others—“*I will show thee my faith by my works*” (James 2:18; see also Matthew 5:16)—as well as also providing evidence for himself that he is a genuine Christian—“*Hereby we do know that we know Him, if we keep His Commandments. He that saith, ‘I know Him,’ and keepeth not His Commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him. But whoso keepeth His Word, in him verily is the love of God perfected; hereby know we that we are in Him*” (I John 2:3–5). It is the Lord’s love, who first loved us (I John 4:19) that moves true Christians, out of love for Him, to serve Him gladly and willingly (I John 5:3; II Corinthians 5:14–15).

One of the fruits of a living faith is the willingness to do as the Lord, through the Apostle Jude, exhorts us, namely, “*earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints.*” Now “*the faith*” to which Jude here refers is *not the belief of the heart*—the subjective faith, or trust, of the individual believer (*fides qua creditur*), as in Romans 3:28—but is, instead, *that which is believed*—the objective teachings of the Christian faith (*fides quae creditur*), as in Galatians 1:23 and Ephesians 4:5. This faith, the body of Christian doctrine, had been delivered to “*the saints*” (the believers) through the prophets in the Old Testament and through the evangelists and apostles in the New Testament; and this faith has been preserved by the Lord down through the ages on the pages of Holy Scripture. However, “*the faith which was once delivered unto the saints*” was scarcely known at the time that Luther was born into the world. Why? For one thing, most of the people who thought that they were Christians had been utterly deceived by

their religious teachers to believe that forgiveness and salvation must be earned by the works and worthiness of men—the *exact opposite of what the faith that God delivered to the saints teaches*. Another thing that contributed to the general spiritual ignorance of that time was that the Bible was basically inaccessible to the common people. Bibles were not found in homes, but in universities and monasteries; and they were generally available only in the Latin translation (the Vulgate).

In contrast, we Christians of today are greatly blessed with having the Bible so easily accessible in various forms—being available (for free in many cases) in a wide variety of print, electronic, and audio formats. So then why must we “*contend*,” or fight, for those teachings of the Christian faith, as they are set forth so plainly in the Bible, when the Bible (as a book) is only becoming more and more accessible with time? There is, of course, a huge difference between having the Christian faith accurately *recorded* in a book as opposed to having that Christian faith accurately *taught, understood, and believed* by those who have access to that Book. Many simply use the Bible as a stage prop in their endeavors to make others think that they are good people; others refer to the Bible as if it were merely a collection of inspirational sayings; some think of it as a self-help guide to attain earthly prosperity; and still others think that the Bible shows man how he can get to heaven by doing good works, by following Jesus’ example of self-sacrificing love. All such people, no matter how thick their sheep’s clothing may be, and regardless of their fleshly appeals to the Bible, are in fact enemies of the faith (Cf. Philippians 3:18). Certainly there is a great need for us Christians of today to “*contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints*.”

*Contending earnestly* for the faith means *fighting* for it—*struggling vigorously* against all that would undermine it or distort it. While not physical in nature (II Corinthians 10:3–4), such contending for the faith is an intense and real battle to resist being drawn away from the truth into the ways of sin and false doctrine. The spiritual enemies against whom we must contend are the ones that the Lord consistently warns us about in the Scriptures, namely, our sinful flesh, Satan, and the opponents of the truth in the world around us. Concerning his ongoing battle with his own *flesh*, the Apostle Paul says: “*I keep under my body* [‘beat it up’—Greek], *and bring it into subjection, lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway*” (I Corinthians 9:27). Because the old man of sin is completely corrupt (Romans 7:18), the carnal mind naturally sets itself against God

(Romans 8:7) so that natural man neither understands nor values the saving doctrines of the Christian faith (I Corinthians 2:14). The Christian, therefore, must continually contend against anti-Scriptural thoughts and feelings arising out of his flesh, which would lead him away from the blessed teachings that God has delivered to His people for their faith and life (see Romans 7:14–23; Galatians 5:17).

With regard to our fight against *the devil*, we Christians are told in Ephesians 6: “*Put on the whole armor of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places. Wherefore take unto you the whole armor of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand. Stand therefore, having your loins girt about with truth, and having on the breastplate of righteousness; and your feet shod with the preparation of the Gospel of peace; above all, taking the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked. And take the helmet of salvation, and the Sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God*” (vv. 11–17). It is imperative for us to use that spiritual armor and weaponry; for when we contend for the faith against Satan, we are not wrestling against a flesh and blood opponent (v. 12), but against a vicious adversary who is far more powerful than man, who invisibly stalks us Christians looking for opportunities to deceive us (I Peter 5:8–9; John 8:44). His cunning “*Yea, hath God said*” (Genesis 3:1) has been used over and over again through the centuries to pull men away from the faith once delivered to the saints (Revelation 12:9); but with the grace and power of God on our side (Romans 8:31–32; 37), we can successfully resist this deadly enemy and put him to flight (James 4:7).

So also against the unbelievers—the children of the devil (John 8:38, 44), the children of this world (Luke 16:8)—God wants us to contend earnestly for the one true Christian religion based upon His Word. Such contending includes rebuking errorists who violate the teachings of the Bible (Ezekiel 33:8–9; Ephesians 5:11), turning away from their lies (Romans 16:17; I Timothy 6:20), and, in spite of their opposition, holding firmly to the faith once delivered to the saints (II Timothy 1:13). It is not surprising that we would have to contend for the faith against open blasphemers of the Lord. But it might surprise some Christians to learn that there are times when they should also contend for the faith *against other Christians*. Even our spiritual brethren (because they too have the sinful flesh) may be used by the devil in his efforts to pull us away from

the Savior and His holy Word, as Satan caused Peter to be his messenger in tempting Jesus (Matthew 16:21–23). Thus it is important for us to work at maintaining “*the unity of the Spirit*” (Ephesians 4:3) in our fellowship by using “*the Word of Christ*” in “*teaching and admonishing one another*” (Colossians 3:15–16). Of course we would expect erring brethren to receive the correction of God’s Word and to remove any offenses they have given. But what about those who steadfastly refuse to be corrected with the Scriptures, but still represent themselves as being Christians? The way that the Bible tells us to contend against them is to “*reject*” them (Titus 3:10) and “*shun*” their teachings (II Timothy 2:16), “*withdraw*” ourselves from them (I Timothy 6:3–5), “*mark*” and “*avoid*” them (Romans 16:17). This, however, is the exact opposite of what the vast majority of people in outward Christendom today do when faced with such opportunities to contend for the teachings of the faith delivered by God to the believers of old.

The *sin of unionism*—the joining in religious work and/or worship with those who adhere to or tolerate false doctrine—is so common nowadays; and contending for the full truth and purity of God’s holy Word is typically regarded as being *futile* and even *contrary to the spirit of Christian love* and brotherly toleration. *Futile*, because it is believed that purity of doctrine and oneness of faith are impossible to attain (despite what the Bible says in John 8:31–32, I Corinthians 1:10, etc.); *unloving*, because it is believed that Christian charity would be tolerant of false opinions (despite what the Bible says in Matthew 16:6–12, I Corinthians 13:6, etc.). In fact, it is generally regarded to be unloving and judgmental even to label opposing doctrinal views as being “false,” instead of accepting them as legitimate differences of interpretation. What lies at the root of such unionistic opinions is a denial of the perspicuity of Scripture (that the Bible is clear and easy to be understood, as we read in Psalm 119:130), as well as a failure to distinguish between *Godly unity* among spiritual brethren and *sinful unions* among and with the heterodox. The *unity* that God desires and commands His people to have is oneness in doctrine and practice (John 17:20–21; I Corinthians 1:10)—not an outward *union* with those who hold to or tolerate false doctrine, which the Lord forbids in His Word (II Corinthians 6:14–18).

But can the full truth of the Christian faith ever really be known? **Absolutely**; but this knowledge can only come through the Scriptures. Jesus declares: “*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*” (John 8:31–32). This passage reminds us who is the Author and

Giver of *“the faith which was once delivered unto the saints”*—our God and Savior, Jesus Christ—and it describes the spiritual blessings that are conveyed to us through His doctrines: We are brought to a knowledge of the truth through which we are freed from doctrinal error, as well as from the slavery and consequences of our sins (I Timothy 2:4-6). If we understand these points, we should have no trouble understanding the importance of clinging to the doctrines of the Christian faith, defending the same, and fighting to keep them pure and uncorrupted by fleshly errors, which would only hide the truth from us and take from us the blessed freedom that Jesus gives through the Gospel (John 8:31–32; 36) .

True Christians, as a fruit of the faith worked in their hearts by the Holy Ghost, respect and love the words of their Lord and Savior (John 8:47; 14:23). It may seem strange, therefore, to see so many who call themselves Christians tolerating other so-called Christians taking liberties with and even perverting the doctrines recorded in the Bible—putting private interpretations upon passages of Scripture contrary to II Peter 1:20. Due to the influence of the devil, the world, and their flesh, many have been deceived into thinking that the only errors that really need to be fought against are the ones that directly undermine the grace of God in Christ or that deny the doctrine of the Trinity and other primary fundamental doctrines—thinking that errors in other points of Scripture can be safely permitted. The Apostle Paul, however, warns of the danger of even the smallest amount of false doctrine, which will spread and bring dangerous consequences if Christians neglect to contend for the true faith. *“A little leaven leaveneth the whole lump”* (Galatians 5:9). *“Shun profane and vain babblings, for they will increase unto more ungodliness. And their word will eat as doth a canker”* (II Timothy 2:17).

The thing that really motivates a Christian to fight for the pure doctrines of Holy Scripture *in all points* is *“the love of Christ”* (II Corinthians 5:14)—the Gospel of God’s grace in Christ Jesus. Appreciation for the Word of Grace is what moved Luther to contend so vigorously against the Romanists, who sought to destroy the blessed comfort of the Gospel by getting people to trust in things that could in no way save them—things such as their own works, the intercession of the saints (especially Mary), plenary indulgences purchased with money, and a host of rituals invented by the Roman Catholic Church to give false comfort to consciences burdened by sin. Perhaps the most famous example of Luther contending for the faith is the courageous stand that he took at the diet in Worms, Germany—boldly declaring his God-wrought intention to

cling firmly to the doctrines of Scripture no matter what the earthly consequences of such a stand might be. Also at the Marburg Colloquy, Luther showed his willingness to fight for the doctrines delivered to the saints when he refused to yield even the smallest amount on one single word of Christ—the word “is” in His institution of the Lord’s Supper, “*This IS My body...this IS My blood.*” Furthermore, on a regular basis, Luther contended for the faith in the sermons that he preached, in the classes that he taught, and in the many books and pamphlets that he wrote. “For [Luther], theology, in addition to being instruction, also was and remained a battle for the truth and a defense against the assaults of the devil. In one of his final speeches at the opening of a disputation, he lapsed from Latin into German: ‘It will always be this way; we will always have to fight’ [WA 39:266, lines 15–16]” (Brecht, *Martin Luther: The Preservation of the Church*, p. 133).

You and I are greatly blessed to have the faith that was once delivered to the saints, in its full truth and purity, taught in the Bible classes and proclaimed from the pulpits of each congregation of the Concordia Lutheran Conference, and of those congregations in fellowship with us. Just consider what a great treasure that is! Consider also how *rare* that treasure is nowadays! However, just because we have this correct faith set forth in our churches does *not* mean that we have no need to “*contend for the faith*” as Jude exhorts us, because of the continuous attacks of the devil, the world, and our flesh. Now if we really value the doctrines of the Christian faith—in response to God’s awe-inspiring love for us in the Gospel of Christ—then we should certainly be willing to fight vigorously to preserve it. May the Lord graciously bless us as we earnestly contend against our spiritual enemies to maintain each and every blessed doctrine of the Christian faith in its full truth and purity—in the same pristine form in which it was delivered by God to the saints of old!

— P. E. B.





## A Reformation Prayer

*“God is our refuge and strength,  
a very present help in trouble.”*

Psalm 46:1

O Lord of Hosts, we thank Thee for Thy lovingkindness to us and to our fathers, in that, through Thy servant, Martin Luther, Thou didst restore to Thy church on earth the precious truth of Thy Word and the pure doctrine of Thy saving grace in Christ Jesus. What shall we indeed render unto Thee for these Thy gracious benefits toward us? For, without the light of Thy precious Gospel, so long hidden under the Papacy, we would still be ignorant of Thy grace, languishing in spiritual darkness, and trembling in the shadow of eternal death. But, through Thy Word, Thou hast shined into our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ, our Savior; and for this undeserved, gracious favor, we are humbly and eternally grateful. Through the power of that same Word, dear heavenly Father, cause us, who are the heirs of that Reformation and Thine adopted children by faith in Christ Jesus, ever to value Thy Word in its purity as a lamp unto our feet and a light unto our path, the only sure foundation of our faith, and the only reliable standard of Christian practice. By Thy Holy Spirit, Keep us steadfast in Thy Word, so that the devil, the world, and our old sinful flesh do not deceive us nor seduce us into misbelief, despair, and other great shame and vice; and though we be assailed by them, grant us Thy grace finally to overcome and obtain the victory through our Champion on the battlefield of this world, Christ Jesus, the Lord of Hosts, our only mediator and advocate at Thy Throne. For His sake, forgive us all our trespasses, grant us a blessed end, and graciously take us from this vale of tears to Thyself in heaven. Amen..

—D. G. R.





# Luther's Ninety-five Theses

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## The Open Door to the Reformation

*“In vain they do worship Me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men.”*

Matthew 15:9

Dr. Martin Luther, born on November 10, 1483, roughly ten years before Columbus discovered the “New World,” was raised by his parents in the Roman Catholic faith — in the only Christian “faith” then known in Western Europe, from Italy and Spain in the south to England in the north, from France in the west to Poland and Czechoslovakia in the east. The Eastern Church and the Byzantine Empire had been largely *decimated* in the onslaught of Mohammedanism by the Saracens and by the Turks; the social and technical progress of the eastern empire was essentially set back to “zero;” and the Turks were now “knocking on the back door” of Europe, hoping to add the entire continent to the Ottoman Empire. But the Western Church and the “Holy” Roman Empire were united against the Turks and were undergoing a welcome change-for-the-better, politically and socially, which set the stage *positively* for intellectual and technical progress in its “secular” world and for what would eventually become known as “The Reformation” in its “spiritual” world.

There was growing “nationalism” in the countries that constituted the Holy Roman Empire, so that its central, largely arbitrary, *temporal* power, vested in the Emperor, was gradually being eroded away. Even the Pope of Rome, with his claim of absolute *spiritual* power, had been openly challenged by Occam (1280-1349), Wyclif (1320-1384), Hus (1369-1415), Hieronymus (1379-1416), Savonarola (1452-1498) and others — to their own personal peril and martyrdom; and abuses in the church, both in the system itself and on the part of its princes, were be-

ing discussed and protested even by common laymen. The feudal, two-class system of the Middle Ages was failing with the rise of the merchant class and of capitalism in which cash often trumped real estate and heritage in the establishment of power. The common people, formerly no better than slaves under the old system, began to enjoy personal identity and some individual freedom. And the *Renaissance* or “rebirth” of things *intellectual* — of learning from the classical past, of curiosity born of the inquisitive mind, of exploration beyond the known shores of civilization, and of zeal to search for, to question, and even to challenge the basis of authority, both of the state and of the church — was changing the way people thought about things.

This new zest for learning in the freed-up human spirit, this new “humanism,” was being championed by scholarly men like Reuchlin (1455-1522), Erasmus (1467-1536), Colet (1467-1519), and Thomas More (1478-1536). Even Emperor Maximilian I and Henry VIII of England supported this cause and fostered this new thinking — as long as challenges did not come too close to questioning *their* authority. And strangely enough even the Papacy, for the sake of scholarship, the arts, and increased interest in the classical languages, seemed to be a Renaissance institution. The time was indeed ripe for “*the everlasting Gospel*” (Revelation 14:6) to be restored to the people from whom it had been systematically hidden for a thousand years in the “Dark Ages.”

But all of these changes in society — some good, and some not-so-good — did nothing for man’s *natural* condition, his totally depraved state, in the sight of God. Man was still by nature, as he was born into this world, morally bankrupt, ruined in body and soul, without righteousness, inclined only to evil, spiritually blind, dead, and an enemy of God. His conscience bore imperfect witness to that fact, being his natural but unreliable spiritual compass beclouded by sin after the fall of Adam and Eve; God’s written Law, as recorded in Holy Scripture, confirmed that fact in clear and undeniable pronouncements of guilt, of God’s wrath, and of impending damnation; and the church constantly reminded its people of their deplorable condition, and even compounded their guilt, by adding to their charge countless “sins” against the “*commandments of men*” (Matthew 15:9). As a result, people either denied their guilt outright according to their new-found humanistic “freedom” and lived even more wantonly in sin than they had before, **or** they lived in utter despair of God’s mercy, in perpetual grief, and in hopelessness of ever escaping the wrath to come.



And, while Luther should have been able to find in visible Christendom, marked by the Gospel and the Sacraments, **comfort** in the for-giveness of sins and **peace** with God through Christ, no **rest** for his conscience and no **peace** for his tortured soul was to be found in the church of the Roman Antichrist. The Gospel had been so masked with the teachings of work-righteousness, infused grace, the exercise of free will, human merit, temporal punishment, and the intercession of saints, that salvation by grace for the sake of Christ's merit alone was effectively suppressed (though it still existed "on paper" in the written Gospel); and "faith" was characterized as obedience to Holy Mother Church rather than confidence of the heart in the mercy of God to poor sinners for Christ's sake without the deeds of the Law. The Sacraments, too, were perverted so as to obscure the Gospel: Baptism was represented as being effective for the remission of "original sin" and of only those actual sins committed before its administration; and the Lord's Supper was changed into "a real, though unbloody, sacrifice of the body of Christ for the sins of the living and the dead."

To be sure, Luther had sought forgiveness in contrition, in works of penance, in subjecting his body to abuse, in obedience to church law, yea, in devoting his life to the church's service in a monastic order to which he pledged faithfulness in poverty, chastity and obedience. He had sought it "*by the deeds of the Law*" (Romans 3:20); but nothing that he was able to **do**, nothing that he thought he would be able to **accomplish**, nothing to which he had been **directed** by "Holy Mother Church" brought him peace of mind, release from guilt, the assurance of forgiveness, reconciliation with God, the anticipation of salvation, and real joy in being a child of God.

As a beneficiary of the new interest in learning, Luther became an avid student. He earned his bachelor's degree at the University of Erfurt in 1502 and his master's degree in 1505. He originally intended to become a lawyer. But a series of catastrophic events in his life, including a brush with death, the death of a close friend, a pestilence in the city of Erfurt, and the well-known lightning strike that could have killed him — all of these made him more conscious of his own mortality, more uncertain of his relationship with God, and more fearful of his eternal lot. It was then in 1505 that he decided to suspend his plans for

law school and to enter an Augustinian monastery to become a monk — hopefully closer to God, hopefully able by a consecrated life to merit God’s favor, hopefully to gain peace with God and rest for his guilty conscience.

But such was not to be. In fact, Luther himself wrote that he still did not know the grace of God in Christ, the forgiveness of sins that God granted to the world for Christ’s sake, the righteousness that is personally imputed to the believer by faith in His merits — even when he earned his Doctor of Theology degree in 1512! Only by his further study of Holy Scripture, particularly of those Gospel truths disguised by Rome under heaps of false teachings, did Luther finally “*come unto the knowledge of the truth*” (I Timothy 2:4) and to saving faith in Christ’s vicarious satisfaction as having purchased the forgiveness he so earnestly sought — even though he still had much to learn, to accept, and to confide in concerning God’s grace to sinful men.

One can easily understand, therefore, why John Tetzel’s preaching and sale of indulgences was so troubling to Luther, as he saw many of his own flock surging after Tetzel, purchasing his worthless papers, and then claiming that, since they has “plenary indulgence” from all of their *sins*, they did not need to repent of anything, they did not need to confess anything, they needed no forgiveness, and they certainly did not need to amend their sinful lives out of gratitude to God for His forgiveness. Tetzel’s preaching did NOT limit indulgences to the remission of *temporal* punishments imposed by the church — the limitation that Rome says Tetzel exceeded when he claimed that his indulgences absolved the purchasers from ALL punishments and granted to them salvation. To grant absolution and salvation *for money*, to *merchandise* the grace of God, to set the *coinage of the realm* and the *blood of Christ* at parity in their ability to purchase the forgiveness of sins, was to Luther an outrageous blasphemy.

Luther’s original intention was not to ignite a conflagration with Rome; it was not to be an “in-your-face” effrontery or insult to the Pope and a challenge to his authority; and it was not to be the gauntlet of confrontation laid down by Luther in preparation for his establishment of a new church in competition with “the one holy catholic church” that Rome fancied itself to be. Luther’s theses were simply an orderly, respectful, and quite ordinary call for the scholarly debate of “theses” or propositions arising from the system of granting indulgences as rewards for acts of dedication, for acts of piety and mercy, for acts of support for

God's Church, and eventually for contributions of monetary support for the building of St. Peter's in Rome, and for granting indulgences as blanket absolution for sins even before-the-fact and the guarantee of heaven to the bearer.

Luther's questions and propositions about indulgences included the following: Were such indulgences legitimate? Did the church have the authority to grant them? Were indulgences for the remission of *sins* or only of *temporal* punishments? Just how far did the power of indulgences extend? Should indulgences be earned and/or purchased, or should they be granted freely? Why should especially the poor be solicited for money when they can least afford it and when what they have is necessary for the provision of their families? Are the indulgences the "greatest graces" distributed by the Church, or do they merely promote the financial gain of the Church's princes and funding for the Church's projects? — And then, putting the "best construction" possible upon the Pope, whose legitimacy he then still acknowledged, Luther stated: "If, therefore, pardons were preached according to the spirit and mind of the Pope, all these doubts would be readily resolved; indeed, they would cease to exist." Surely the Pope could not countenance nor would he support the current *abuse* and *fraud* in the sale of indulgences for the remission of sin and guilt!

Luther not only had a lot to learn at that point of the teachings of Scripture regarding all those things; he also was soon to discover that the forces of Rome would be consolidated against him in defense even of the *abuses* that he questioned, challenged, and of which he begged relief for God's people.

Luther's *Ninety-five Theses* were scarcely a solid theological product! This is why few Lutherans have ever seen them and why few Lutheran pastors distribute them on Reformation Day for their people to read. Few of the theses set forth the principles of God according to His Word in its truth and purity! Few of them set forth the truth without the admixture of error! Few of them really challenged the Pope to stop "cold" the trafficking in indulgences. The theses were NOT Luther's "*Declaration of Independence*" from Rome as some historians have characterized them! And Luther's hammer with which he posted those theses in the customary way of attaching documents to his "bulletin board" was NOT *really* the oft-romanticized "gavel" whereby he called the Church to order on the basis of God's Word. Luther's *Theses* were merely his "foot-in-the-

door,” as it were, his “toe-in-the-water” to gauge whether the Church of Rome would heed the Word of God; whether it would repent of its abuses; whether, truly penitent for the false doctrine it had taught, defended, and forced upon poor consciences for a thousand years, it would cling to the merits of Christ alone for forgiveness; and finally whether it would bring forth appropriate fruit by correcting its position, removing its offenses, and holding fast the form of sound words in full accord with Holy Scripture as the only source and standard of divine truth.

The real and enduring work of the *Reformation* came a bit later when God’s Word was recognized to be the authority over the Pope, when



thetical statements were written and set forth on the basis of Scripture, not as “discussion points” but as take-it-or-leave-it declarations of Divine Truth. THAT confrontation of error and of errorists by stalwart confessors of Scripture — who refused to back down, refused to compromise the truth, refused to accommodate error, refused to recant God’s inerrant truth even at their own peril — came later: At Worms, at Marburg, at Augsburg, at Coburg, at Schmalkalden, at Leipzig — as well as everywhere the true Gospel was assailed and perverted, every-

where the power of men was pitted against the power of God, everywhere “*the doctrine according to Godliness*” (I Timothy 6:3) was supplanted by “*the doctrines of men*” (Matthew 15:9). The *Reformation* was a movement; it was a process; it took time; and it took growth in grace, in knowledge, in spiritual understanding, and in courage on the part of its footsoldiers — all granted by the Holy Spirit through the means of His Word, “*the power of His might*” — to “*put on the whole armor of God*” for the ability to “*stand against the wiles of the devil*” (Ephesians 6:11).

The REAL *Reformation* was not embodied in the *Ninety-five Theses* of Luther but in the stalwart declaration of the confessors in 1580 — a declaration that Luther by God’s grace would have gladly and humbly subscribed with his own hand, a declaration that he had already made poetically as a paraphrase of Psalm 46 in his *Battlehymn of the Reformation* (TLH 262):

“We have no intention of yielding aught of the eternal, immutable truth of God for the sake of temporal peace, tranquility, and unity (which, moreover, is not in our power to do). Nor would such peace and unity, since it is devised against the truth and for its suppression, have any permanency. Still less are we inclined to adorn and conceal a corruption of the pure doctrine and manifest, condemned errors. But we entertain heartfelt pleasure and love for, and are on our part sincerely inclined and anxious to advance, that unity according to our utmost power, by which His glory remains to God uninjured, nothing of the divine truth of the Holy Gospel is surrendered, no room is given to the least error, poor sinners are brought to true, genuine repentance, raised up by faith, confirmed in new obedience, and thus justified and eternally saved alone through the sole merit of Christ.” (*Triglotta, Formula of Concord, Thorough Declaration XI, p. 1095.*)

— D. T. M.



***Our sincere apology...***

„,for the late appearance of this issue of the *CONCORDIA LUTHERAN!* Local conditions for your editor in particular made a timely publication impossible, and we regret your not having the content of this issue in time for your use during the months for which it was intended. God-willing we will be able to adjust our publication schedule in the future so that our paper appears in a more timely fashion. Thanks for your patience!



## Official Announcement

On October 24th and 25th, the Plenary Pastoral Conference of the *Concordia Lutheran Conference* met in Oak Forest, Illinois, in a special Fall Session for the chief purpose of colloquizing our theological students on the material covered in their third year of study at our seminary. This annual *colloquy* or comprehensive oral examination is customarily held in conjunction with our annual Conventions in June; but this past year the colloquy was postponed to the fall because a special summer session was required to finish up the third year coursework with our students.

After two days of rigorous discussion, conducted chiefly by the chairman of our Committee on Theological Education and its second pastoral member but participated in also by the other pastors present, the Pastoral Conference unanimously recognized that all three students had successfully passed their third year colloquy.

The colloquy, together with the final examinations written by the students at the close of each semester and the final grades issued by their professors, determines whether and to what extent the students have mastered the material content of the courses taken.

We praise and magnify the Lord of the Church for His grace in motivating our students to “*study*” zealously and diligently to become “*workmen that need not to be ashamed*” (II Timothy 2:15), so that, at the conclusion of their theological training in our seminary program, they will be fit and prepared to undertake the Pastoral Office and the Ministry of the Word and Sacraments upon the call of the Holy Ghost mediately through one or more of our local congregations (Acts 20:28). To that blessed end we commit both professors and students to the Lord’s gracious keeping, to prosper their work, and to bless abundantly all their faithful labors.

— The Rev. Edward J. Worley, Chairman  
Committee on Theological Education





## A Look Ahead on the New Seminary Year

*“And the things that thou hast heard of me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also.”*

— II Timothy 2:2

This directive of the Apostle Paul to Timothy is the directive that is ours as theological professors in these latter days of sore distress. We are to commit to our students what was once committed to us, namely in particular, the pure doctrines of God’s precious Word, the teachings set forth by *“the apostles and prophets”* (Ephesians 2:20) in clear and certain *sedes doctrinae* (Bible prooftexts), correctly understood and sincerely embraced in the course of our own theological training and subsequent pastoral work. And this we are to do so that they, in turn, are able to teach them, first of all, *“to all the flock over the which the Holy Ghost [will have] made [them] overseers”* when they are, God-willing, called into the pastoral ministry, but secondly then also to other *“faithful men”* who, in the future, may *“desire the office of a bishop”* (I Timothy 3:1) and need to be trained for such work (II Timothy 2:15).

It is therefore our “job description,” solemn duty and great privilege, both moved and enabled by the power of the Gospel (Romans 1:16; II Corinthians 5:14; I John 4:19; II Corinthians 3:6), to declare unto our students *“all the counsel of God,”* as St. Paul exemplified the fulfillment of this responsibility in his preparation of the pastors in Ephesus (Acts 20:27). And, since Scripture, and not merely church tradition, makes this a priority for us, thorough theological training is the  fifth object  of our Concordia Lutheran Conference according to its *Constitution* (Article III).

On September 17th, following a special summer session to complete the work of the previous spring semester, our seminarians, Jason A. Mabe and David J. Mensing, both of Oak Forest, Illinois, and Daniel P.

Mensing of Tinley Park — all three of them *full-time* students thanks to the consecrated offerings of our people to support them — embarked upon their fourth year of study in our theological curriculum, all of them carrying a class load of sixteen credit hours per semester, involving intensive academic labor more typical of graduate study than of undergraduate work.

This year, the academic load includes two courses taught by Professor Lietz: *Dogmatics IV* (Sanctification through the Lord's Supper) and *Symbolics II* (the study of the *Lutheran Confessions*, notably, the Formula of Concord) — and three taught by Professor Mensing: *Church History III* (Pietism and Enlightenment through the Nineteenth Century), *Homiletics II* (the construction, outlining, writing and delivery of sermons), and *Liturgics and Hymnology*. In addition, there is the *Practicum* or internship in the local congregation under the supervision of Pastor Mensing (2 credit hours per semester).

Professor Lietz's classes meet on Monday, Wednesday and Friday mornings from nine o'clock until noon. Professor Mensing's classes meet on Monday, Wednesday and Friday afternoons from one until two o'clock, and on Tuesdays and Thursdays from 10:00 a.m. until 2:00 p.m. There is also a *Practicum* Consult scheduled on Saturday mornings as needed. All the classes meet at Peace in Oak Forest, since that is the area where the students and their families live; and Professor Lietz very graciously accommodates this plan by driving 34 miles each way from his home in Oak Park three times a week to teach his courses — for which we all are very grateful in the Lord.

We eagerly look forward to our student's *initial sermons* during the first semester, as they put to practical use virtually ALL of the knowledge they have been accumulating over the past three years and more in the art and skill of producing with due care and delivering with power textual, orthodox, and edifying sermons with the help of God (*cum auxilio Dei*) and in the name of Jesus (*in nomine Iesu*)! All three students will deliver their *initial* sermons between Advent and the close of the Epiphany season. Then, in the second semester, all three students will write and deliver two sermons (in addition to their regular coursework): One **Lenten** sermon to be delivered in one of the seven midweek Lenten services at Peace, and one **festival** sermon thereafter (Easter, Ascension, Pentecost or Trinity Sunday). They may also be assigned to write and deliver a sermon during their summer hiatus (to keep them active in their homiletical skill). Then, in their fifth and final year, they will be

preaching on a regular schedule, probably twice a month, delivering those sermons in the pulpits of all three congregation in the area, at the invitation and with the approval of the respective pastors and their congregations. This will hopefully broaden their experience also with respect to the venues in which they preach and increase their comfort in different pulpits. We ask our people to keep the students in their prayers, specifically concerning their preaching, that the Lord grant them joy and gladness in the undertaking of this great privilege and the chief duty of the pastoral office (II Timothy 4:2a)!

— **Professor David T. Mensing**

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*From our cherished past...*

## **RESOLUTION OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS**

**April 8, 1964**

Re: Brotherly Cooperation in Our Conference Work

In connection with the C. L. U. report, with overtures being made to other Lutherans, and in connection with plans for the annual convention, we reminded one another that internal strife frequently within our own midst during the past 12 years had often hindered progress in these and other areas of the Lord's work. Therefore, the brethren believed it of urgent importance at this time mutually to reaffirm their earnest intention as Christians to strive against any concession to this particular sin of the flesh in the future.

It was therefore resolved that

“Whenever there seems to be a disagreement, either with official procedures or personally between brethren, we urge that the following guidelines be observed among us, in the fear and love of God, to help us in a practical way to attain this goal more perfectly:

1. Begin with brotherly questions for further information, rather than with a statement of disagreement.
2. Where disagreement is plainly evident, do not press for an immediate settlement, but allow time for quiet and sufficient consideration.
3. Strive to be as objective or impersonal as possible, both in presenting and receiving each other's views.
4. Keep all unpleasant matters as private as possible, according to God's Word, striving not to let others become involved unless necessary.
5. In love toward our Lord and one another, follow the order mutually agreed upon among us, the highest law, of course, ever being our Savior's Law of Christian Love."

The above resolution was adopted unanimously by the Board, and all joined in the singing of the Common Doxology. (Present were: Pastors E. L. Mehlberg, A. J. Cordes, O. W. Schaefer, and H. David Mensing; Mr. Lloyd D. Martin, Board Member-at-Large; Mr. David T. Mensing and Mr. E. Bloedel.)

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These same guidelines were adopted again in a resolution of concurrence by the 22nd Annual Convention of the CONCORDIA LUTHERAN CONFERENCE, Wilmot, SD, June 22-24, 1973, as reported in the official *Proceedings*, pp. 44 and 45.



## Churches in Fellowship

### **ORTHODOX LUTHERAN CHURCH OF EKATERINBURG**

Ekaterinburg, Russia

**The Rev. Roman G. Schurganoff, Pastor**

P. O. Box 27

620039 Ekaterinburg, RUSSIA

**E-mail:** lutheran@r66.ru

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### **CHRIST LUTHERAN CHURCH**

Olu-Ama (Kula), Nigeria

**Pastoral Vacancy at present**

### **ST. PAUL'S LUTHERAN CHURCH**

Abule Egba, Lagos, Nigeria

**The Rev. Onesimus Ekele, Pastor**

### **HOLY TRINITY LUTHERAN CHURCH**

Idama, Nigeria

**Pastoral Vacancy at present**

Holy Trinity Lutheran Church

Idama, Rivers State, NIGERIA

### **SALEM LUTHERAN CHURCH**

Abalama, Nigeria

**The Rev. Elison B. Agborubere, Pastor**

Thompson Compound Abalama

Abalama, Rivers State, NIGERIA

### **ST. CLEMENT'S LUTHERAN CHURCH**

Elem-Sangama, Nigeria

**Pastoral Vacancy at present**

St. Clement Lutheran Church,

Elem-Sangama Arch-Deaconry

Elem-Sangama, Rivers State, NIGERIA

### **ST. MATTHEW'S LUTHERAN CHURCH**

Port Harcourt, Nigeria

**The Rev. Allenson Karibi Asawo, Pastor**

76 Abba Street, Mile 1 Diobu

Port Harcourt, Rivers State, NIGERIA

### **ST. PAUL'S LUTHERAN CHURCH**

Kula, Nigeria

**Pastoral Vacancy at present**

St. Paul's Lutheran Church

Kula, Rivers State, NIGERIA

### **ST. PAUL'S NYEMONI LUTHERAN CATHEDRAL**

Abonnema, Nigeria

**The Rev. Nimi B. Fyeface and**

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

P. O. Box 123

Abonnema, Akulga, Rivers State, NIGERIA

**E-Mail:** njohnfyeface@yahoo.co.uk



## Directory of Member Congregations

www.concordialutheranconf.com

### GOOD SHEPHERD EV. LUTHERAN CHURCH

4090 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@q.com

### PEACE EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH

Central Avenue at 171<sup>st</sup> 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 Telephone: (541) 258-2941

**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 EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH

22012 Torrence Avenue, Sauk Village, IL 60411 Telephone: (708) 757-6859

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

**Worship Service** ..... 10:00 a.m.

**The Rev. PAUL E. BLOEDEL, Pastor**

22012 Torrence Avenue, Sauk Village, IL 60411 (708) 757-6859

**E-mail:** revbloedel@gmail.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

## *Contending for Truth and Purity*

*Contending earnestly* for the faith means *fighting* for it—*struggling vigorously* against all that would undermine it or distort it. While not physical in nature (II Corinthians 10:3–4), such contending for the faith **is an intense and real battle** to resist being drawn away from the truth into the ways of sin and false doctrine.

...You and I are greatly blessed to have the faith that was once delivered to the saints, in its full truth and purity, taught in the Bible classes and proclaimed from the pulpits of each congregation of the Concordia Lutheran Conference, and of those congregations in fellowship with us. **Just consider what a great treasure that is! Consider also how rare that treasure is nowadays!** However, just because we have this correct faith set forth in our churches does *not* mean that we have no need to “*contend for the faith*” as Jude exhorts us, because of the continuous attacks of the devil, the world, and our flesh. Now if we really value the doctrines of the Christian faith—in response to God’s awe-inspiring love for us in the Gospel of Christ—then **we should certainly be willing to fight vigorously to preserve it.** May the Lord graciously bless us as we earnestly contend against our spiritual enemies to maintain each and every blessed doctrine of the Christian faith in its full truth and purity—in the same pristine form in which it was delivered by God to the saints of old!

Excerpts from *Steadfastness in these Latter Days of Apostasy*