

*The*  
*Concordia*  *Lutheran*

“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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“Justified  
freely by  
His grace”

— Romans 3:24

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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*.

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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.

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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.

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# The Pivotal Issue in the Reformation: *The Doctrine of Justification*

*“Being justified freely by His grace through  
the redemption that is in Christ Jesus.” —Romans 3:24*

There were **many vital issues** leading up to the 16<sup>th</sup> Century Reformation, issues which received much-needed attention during the period of the Reformation. **One such issue was the enforced celibacy of the priests**, depriving them of God’s institution of marriage, as revealed in Genesis 2: “*Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife, and they shall be one flesh*” (v. 24). One of the God-given purposes for marriage is made known in I Corinthians 7: “*To avoid fornication, let every man have his own wife, and let every woman have her own husband*” (v. 2). Mandatory celibacy — prohibition of marriage for priests and other clerics — brought about (and is still bringing about) fornication, adultery, scandals, and other horrible offenses. Four hundred years before the Reformation, the priests still had the freedom to enter into marriage. However, one of the Roman Catholic Popes, around the 12<sup>th</sup> Century, made a decree that all the priests, from that point in time forward, must lead a single life. The *Augsburg Confession* reports that, following the issuing of this ungodly decree, there was “such resistance that the Archbishop of Mainz, when about to publish the Pope’s decree concerning this matter, was almost killed in the tumult raised by the enraged priests. And so harsh was the dealing in this matter that not only were marriages forbidden for the future, but also existing marriages were torn asunder, contrary to all laws, divine and human” (*The Concordia Triglotta*, Article XXIII, Sections 12 and 13, page 63). **Other weighty issues during the years of the Reformation were the worship of saints (not only Mary), the Mass, forced private confession, traditions placed above the commandments of God, and the abuses carried out and often publicly displayed by those in the Papal office.**

However, **the pivotal, the chief, the most important issue in the Reformation was how are sinners justified before God** [how are sins forgiven before God]. John Tetzel’s selling of indulgences (written assurances that sins were forgiven for a certain payment of money) was a

Catholic-approved, unscriptural way of dealing with this issue. People needed to do something themselves (pay some money or do some “good work” prescribed by the priest) to earn forgiveness for their sins. This practice of selling indulgences (and other similar practices) sent the deceptive message to the people at that time that **they could** justify themselves before God, that **they could** buy their way into heaven, that **they could** lessen the suffering of their loved ones in “purgatory” (a fairy tale, a place that does not exist), and that **they could** do certain “good works” to earn favor before God. The message of **earning** forgiveness and justification before God was a terrible lie preached to the people; it gave the people a false comfort, an empty assurance, and a counterfeit hope. This fraudulent message profaned the name of God and blatantly contradicted what He clearly and repeatedly teaches in His Holy Word.

The Word of God, which, Jesus says, “*is [the] truth*” (John 17:17b), makes abundantly clear that no human being can earn forgiveness for even one sin; no person can do anything or contribute anything at all in order to be justified before God. This is why there are **NO** Bible passages (in the previous paragraph) to support the Roman Catholic answer to the question: “*What must I do to be saved?*” (Acts 16:30b). It needs to be remembered that the Law of God, the divine standard for all people, demands **perfect** compliance as Jesus Himself affirmed in Matthew 5: “*Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect*” (v. 48). When a man came to Jesus with the question, “*Master, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?*” (Luke 10:25b), the Savior said to him: “*What is written in the Law? How readest thou?*” (v. 26). The man came back with the right answer when he gave this reply: “*Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength, and with all thy mind; and thy neighbor as thyself*” (v. 27). This answer accurately set forth **what the Law of God required** in order “*to inherit eternal life.*” After hearing the man’s answer, Jesus told him: “*Thou hast answered rightly; THIS DO, AND THOU SHALT LIVE*” (v. 28). If people want to have everlasting life in heaven by **what they do (what they contribute)** according to God’s Law, God’s Commandments, then they must realize that this divine standard of the Law cuts them no slack; it demands total and constant obedience. An example of God’s demands in His holy Law is given to us in Leviticus 19, where the Lord God Himself declared: “*Ye shall be holy, for I the Lord your God am holy*” (v. 2). Even the slightest disobedience of God’s Law brings total guilt on the violator. James, in his Epistle, confirmed this truth in these words: “*Whosoever shall keep the whole Law and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all*” (2:10). The Apostle Paul, in Romans 3,

said: “Now we know that what things soever the Law saith, it saith to them who are under the Law, that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God. Therefore **by the deeds of the Law there shall no flesh be justified in His sight**, for by the Law is the knowledge of sin” (vv. 19-20). These truths from Scripture reject and condemn the premise that existed at the time of the Reformation in the Roman Catholic Church, that justification before God was attainable partially or completely by **human** “good deeds, good works.” So, at the time of the Reformation, there was a “head-on collision” between the Roman Catholic, false teaching on how sinners are justified before God and the Scriptural, true teaching on how sinners are justified before God.

The Scriptural doctrine of justification, by God’s grace and mercy alone, was indeed wonderfully restored and most certainly, awesomely brought back to the people (to the whole world) during the time of the Reformation. We can never sufficiently and adequately thank our God for this great work of restoration; we owe Him unending praise and worship for bringing back, in its full splendor, with its everlasting comfort, this priceless gem of His teaching on justification.

This doctrine of justification is (and always has been and will ever continue to be) the chief, the pivotal, and the most important doctrine (teaching) in Scripture. All teachings of God’s Word are good and important, but the teaching on justification is **the most important teaching** of all. The doctrine of justification was the chief, the pivotal, and the most important teaching of God’s Word since the Scriptures were penned, also at the time of the Reformation, and it is still the chief, the pivotal, and the most important teaching of God’s Word in our time.

In this teaching of justification, **God** “*foreordained* [planned, determined] **before the foundation of the world**” (I Peter 1:20), **before** the creation of the world, that Christ as the Redeemer (vv. 18-19), as the Lamb of God “*slain from the foundation of the world*” (Revelation 13:8b), would be the “*propitiation*” [the ransom, the full payment] *...for the sins of the whole world*” (I John 2:2). This was, therefore, all **God’s work**, since there were no people existing before “*the foundation*,” before the creation, of the world. All of this was (still is and will always be) most certainly true as an objective fact and reality **outside of faith, prior to faith, and before** there were any human beings to accept and believe it. What a “strange,” yet marvelous teaching this was for the precious souls at the time of the Reformation to hear, announcing to them the “*good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people*” (Luke 2:10b), tidings which had been systematically hidden from

them for so many years! How wonderfully comforting **this** teaching was in comparison to the empty, opposite message to which these souls had been enslaved for hundreds of years!

This teaching of justification sets forth the fact that “**God was in Christ reconciling the world unto Himself, not imputing their trespasses** [not charging their sins] *unto them, and hath committed unto us the Word of reconciliation* [the precious news of the Gospel]. ... *For He* [God] *hath made Him* [Christ] *to be sin for us, who knew no sin* [Christ was sinless], *that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him* [in Christ]” (II Corinthians 5:19 and 21). God, out of His infinite grace and mercy, did not charge or impute the sins of the transgressors unto **them**, but instead charged them all to **Christ** as their Substitute, as the Prophet Isaiah declared in Isaiah 53, where we read that “*the Lord hath laid on Him* [on the Messiah, on Christ] *the iniquity of us ALL*” (v. 6b). Yes indeed, God gave the gift of forgiveness, the gift of the non-imputation of sin, to the world of sinful men, not on account of being paid a certain amount of *money* for an indulgence, but on account of the vicarious (substitutionary) sinless life and innocent suffering and death of Christ Jesus, “*the Just for the unjust*” (I Peter 3:18a), as the “*once for all*” (Hebrews 10:10b; see also vv. 12 and 14) payment that satisfied His justice, that cleared all the spiritual debts owed to Him by every sinner who has lived (including those living at the time of the Reformation), by every sinner who is living (including each of us), and for all sinners who will live up until the final day of this world). This is brought home precisely in Romans 3, where the Apostle Paul announces by inspiration of God that the “*all*” in verse 23 who “*have sinned and come short of the glory of God*” are the same “*all*” who are “*being justified freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus*” (v. 24).

In this teaching of justification, our gracious God has given certainty to the “*world*” (II Corinthians 5:19) of sinners that their sins have been totally pardoned, not because of anything which **they** have done, but solely and only because of what “**Christ Jesus**” (Romans 3:24b) has vicariously, as their Substitute, done for them, in their behalf, namely, having secured righteousness for every soul of man (Romans 3:21-22; 5:19) by His perfect obedience of God’s Law in their place, and having secured pardon for their sins by assuming their guilt and paying its penalty by His innocent suffering and death (I Peter 2:24a; 3:18). Christ became “*the Propitiation* [the perfect satisfaction] *for our sins, and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world*” (I John 2:2). Thus the foundation of the changeless teaching of justification is and always has been the active and passive obedience of Christ Jesus.

Why was the *active obedience* of Christ necessary for our justification? God, in His Law, demands perfect obedience of all people (Matthew 5:48; Luke 10:28b; James 2:10); and since Adam, Eve, and all of their descendants failed to meet and carry out that divine demand, God, “*full of compassion ...and of great mercy*” (Psalm 145:8), “*anointed*” (Isaiah 61:1; Luke 4:17-21) Jesus of Nazareth to “*fulfill*” (Matthew 5:17) His Law in the place of sinners. This perfect, *active*, substitutionary obedience by Christ for every single sinner resulted in God’s declaring the world of sinners righteous in His sight, as the Apostle Paul sets forth this glorious teaching in Romans 5, where we find these priceless words: “*As by the offense of one [Adam] judgment came upon all men to condemnation, even so by the righteousness [the perfect obedience] of One [Christ Jesus] the free gift came upon all men unto justification of life. For as by one man’s [Adam’s] disobedience [the] many were made sinners, so by the obedience of One [Christ Jesus] shall [the] many be made righteous*” (vv. 18-19). This is the revelation of the *active obedience* of Christ Jesus, His work of **perfectly obeying** all the commandments of God for all transgressors of His Law.

For the people at the time of the Reformation, who were held by Rome to the obedience of the Law for their forgiveness and salvation, this teaching of the *active obedience* of Christ for the world of sinners **gave them the certainty** that God’s Substitute and Savior for the world completely and totally fulfilled God’s Law *for them* and gave them the rich blessing of righteousness before God on account of that perfect fulfillment of the demands of God’s Law. This Gospel, these “*good tidings of great joy*” (Luke 2:14), brought special “*comfort*” (Isaiah 40:1) to those during the Reformation who, before hearing of this Gospel, had been troubled in their minds because of their sins and burdened with their guilt at not being able to do enough to secure salvation by the works of the Law.

Why was the *passive obedience* of Christ necessary for our justification? God, in His justice and holiness, hates “*all workers of iniquity*” (Psalm 5:5b) and reveals His “*wrath ...from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men*” (Romans 1:18a). Therefore all sinners are truly deserving of nothing but God’s hatred and wrath on account of their sins, that is, God’s punishment, both in this life and in the life hereafter, deserving of all of this from the time of their conception and birth (Psalm 51:5). St. Paul teaches in Romans 6:23a, that “*the wages of sin is death,*” eternal death, “*everlasting punishment*” (Matthew 25:46a). But our God, “*not willing that any should perish*” (II Peter 3:9b) in the “*torments*” (Luke 16:23) of hell, out of “*the multitude of*

*His lovingkindnesses*” (Isaiah 63:7b) and His “*tender mercy*” (Luke 1:78a), gave to “*the world*” (John 3:16a) “*His only begotten Son*” (v. 16b), who “*once [only once] suffered for sins, the Just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh*” (I Peter 3:18a). This “*Jesus*” (Luke 1:31b), as the Apostle Paul assures us, “*made Himself of no reputation, and took upon Him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men; and being found in fashion as a man, He humbled Himself and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross*” (Philippians 2:7-8), all out of “*the multitude of His lovingkindnesses*” (Isaiah 63:7b) and His “*tender mercy*” (Luke 1:78a). The Prophet Isaiah reports that “*the Lord hath laid on Him [the Messiah, the Savior] the iniquity of us all. He was oppressed and He was afflicted, yet He opened not His mouth. He is brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so He openeth not His mouth*” (53:6b-7). This was the *passive obedience* of “*the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world*” (John 1:29).

Again, the blessed Gospel of what Christ **perfectly suffered** for poor sinners to pay for all of their sins brings real comfort to those who are troubled in their minds because of their guilt before God. For the people at the time of the Reformation, who were taught that they had to turn away God’s anger from themselves and to earn His forgiveness by doing good works and making sacrifices of their own to merit His favor, the *passive obedience* of Christ came as “good news,” “*for by one offering He hath perfected forever them that are sanctified,*” the writer to the Hebrews assures us (10:14); “*there is no more offering for sin*” (v. 18). “*The redemption of their soul is precious,*” the Bible tells us in Psalm 49:8. No one can redeem himself to God; no one can “*redeem his brother*” (v. 7) to God. Only Christ, God’s Son and the Redeemer of the world, could pay that ransom and buy us back from the curse of the Law (Galatians 3:13).

This active and passive obedience by Christ for “*all*” (Romans 3:23) sinners, this “*redemption that is in Christ Jesus*” (Romans 3:24), brought about God’s objective, universal justification of “*all*” (Romans 3:23-24) as a priceless gift of His grace, that gift which God earnestly wants “*all men*” (I Timothy 2:4a), all people of all ages, to know about and to receive for their subjective, personal justification, as St. Paul makes clear in Romans 3, verse 28: “*Therefore we conclude that a man is justified by faith, without the deeds of the Law.*” Now, whoever receives and believes in this Savior “*is not condemned*” (John 3:18a) for their sins, but has and enjoys the everlasting gift of “*peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ*” (Romans 5:1b).



The gratitude of those in Reformation times who were brought to know, to accept, to believe, and thus to receive the benefits of justification moved them willingly to sacrifice their reputations, their earthly possessions, and their very “*lives*” (I John 3:16) to demonstrate their love for Him who “*first loved [them]*” (I John 4:19) and to “*show forth the praises of Him who [had] called [them] out of darkness into His marvelous light; which in time past were not a people, but [were] now the people of God; which had not obtained mercy, but now [had] obtained mercy*” (I Peter 2:9b-10).

Since the Scripture doctrine of justification presents the only true way to everlasting salvation, it is the most important teaching of the Christian religion, the only true and saving religion, which teaches what God has graciously and mercifully done for the world of sinners “*through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus*” (Romans 3:24b). All other religions, including Roman Catholicism, teach what sinners must do, partially or completely, to earn God’s favor in order to get into heaven. Let us, therefore continue to hold fast to and boldly confess (John 8:31-32; Hebrews 10:23; II Timothy 3:14; I Peter 3:15) the Scripture doctrine of justification “*without wavering,*” defend it against its enemies, ever support it as a precious treasure restored unto us in the Lutheran Reformation and preserved for us yet today, and continue to grow in gratitude to our gracious God for this priceless doctrine which gives us “*the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ*” (I Corinthians 15:57) — victory over “*the curse of the Law*” (Galatians 3:13), victory over “*death [and the] grave*” (I Corinthians 15:55), victory over “*all sin*” (I John 1:7b) and over “*the devil*” (I John 3:8b).

As believers in this most precious doctrine of justification, we can confidently declare with the Apostle Paul: “*If God be for us, who can be against us? He that spared not His own Son but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him also freely give us all things? Who shall lay anything to the charge of God’s elect? It is God that justifieth. Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, ye rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us. Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? ... We are more than conquerors through Him that loved us. ... [Nothing] shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus, our Lord.*” (Romans 8:31b-35a; 37; 39b).

— R. J. L.



## **SAME-SEX MARRIAGE**

### A Political Issue or a *Moral* Issue?

*“Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife; and they shall be one flesh.”*

— Genesis 2:24

Our country today is literally ablaze with the emotionally-charged debate, not only about whether to *legalize* so-called “same-sex marriage” but whether to *re-define* “marriage” *essentially* as to what it **IS**. The issue is not whether to extend legal rights, social privileges, financial benefits and even protection under the law equally to all who live together in a “committed relationship,” in a permanent, life-long, intimate, conjugal association with one another. In many if not most cases *those* rights have already been extended by states, by other jurisdictions, and by many employers.

The “committed relationship” referred to involves more than being mere “friends with benefits.” The latter term, of course, is a socially sanitized euphemism for what used to be called “living together” — cohabiting in a joint residence with *fornication* as the assumed “fringe benefit” of sharing the same apartment, the same room, and the same bed, but maybe not the same toothbrush. The practice is widespread nowadays, even quite common, and is regarded as socially-acceptable by the world with no “hush-hush” stigma attached to it. Not surprisingly, the latest programming on television, from soap operas to dramatic series to situation comedies, features “living together” — whether by heterosexual couples or by homosexual couples — as a commonplace arrangement. Those who engage in the practice do not want to be regarded as “married” because their relationship is admittedly temporary, an arrangement of convenience, an uncommitted relationship from which they are entitled to back out at any given time “with no strings attached;” and they want to keep it that way. And so the re-definition of “marriage” does not apply to them. The issue that we as Christians have with their “arrangement” is that it violates God’s holy **Sixth Commandment**, which prohibits sexual intimacy outside of Holy Marriage

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**Note:** The same-sex marriage logo debuted on *Facebook*, March 25, 2013, by the *Human Rights Campaign*.

—whether in thought (Matthew 5:28), word (Ephesians 4:29; 5:4) or deed (Ephesians 5:3; I Corinthians 6:18)— and that the “benefits” they want outside of marriage are reserved by God Himself to the “*marriage bed*” wherein intimacy is “*undefiled*” (Hebrews 13:4).

The demanded legalization of “**same-sex** marriage” is the ultimate “in-your-face” assault upon society by the gay and lesbian community, which insists that its “lifestyle choice” be recognized as *legitimate*, as *moral*, and as a completely *normal* expression of “love” between “consenting adults.” It also has powerfully manipulated the concept of “political correctness” so that any criticism or denunciation of homosexuality is now branded as “homophobia” — literally an *unfounded fear* of homosexuality — which it is NOT, and “hate speech,” which again it is NOT. The **GLBT** (or **LGBT**) community — the gay, lesbian, bi-sexual and transgendered alliance — has established such a powerful social and political agenda and lobby in the world, and particularly in our country, that not only social agencies and politicians, but also common everyday “straight” citizens are literally terrified of opposing it for fear of being branded as blindly-prejudiced “hatemongers,” “homophobes” and “bigots”! Interestingly, the matter of “same-sex **marriage**” is a 21st Century issue, with the real push for recognition coming only within the past ten years! As of August, 2013, only fifteen (15) countries allow same-sex couples to “marry.” It is represented by its adherents as a “political” issue, a “social” issue, a “human rights” issue, a “civil rights” issue, but also a “moral” issue.

The fact of the matter for *Christians* is that **homosexual behavior** (unlike differences in race, national origin and culture) is *condemned* by Holy Scripture, in both the Old and New Testaments, as a *perversion* of God’s natural order of things, as unnatural, as indecent, and as a particularly abominable form of fornication in His sight. We read, for example, in Leviticus 18:22, “*Thou shalt not lie with mankind, as with womankind; it is abomination.*” To God, this and other perversions are a **moral outrage** concerning which He says without equivocation: “*Whosoever shall commit any of these abominations, even the souls that commit them shall be cut off from among their people. Therefore shall ye keep Mine ordinance, that ye commit not any one of these abominable customs which were committed before you, and that ye defile not yourselves therein. I am the Lord your God*” (vv. 29–30).

But this was not merely an Old Testament “ceremonial” or “political” prohibition which was abrogated in the New Testament, for the Apos-

the Paul reiterates it in Romans chapter one, saying by inspiration of the Holy Ghost that “*God also gave them [the heathen] up to UNCLEANNESS through the LUSTS of their own hearts, to DISHONOR their own bodies between themselves, who changed the truth of God into a lie and worshiped and served the creature more than the Creator, who is blessed forever. Amen. For this cause God gave them up unto VILE affections; for even their women did change the natural use into that which is AGAINST NATURE. And likewise also the men, leaving the natural use of the woman, burned in their lust one toward another, men with men working that which is UNSEEMLY [i.e., indecent, shameful], and receiving in themselves that recompense of THEIR ERROR which was meet. And even as they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, God gave them over to a REPROBATE MIND, to do those things which are not convenient [i.e., appropriate];...without natural affection, ...who, knowing the judgment of God, that they which commit such things are WORTHY OF DEATH, not only DO the same, but HAVE PLEASURE in them that do them*” (24–28, 31–32). In Holy Scripture the description of homosexuality and its activity is unmistakable; the judgment of it as unnatural, as a perversion, as indecent and shameful, and as inappropriate is unequivocal; and the condemnation of it is unquestionable.

We also note that, in the apostle’s last words, not only those who “*commit such things,*” not only those who “*do the same*” — including the other gross sins mentioned in vv. 29–31 — but also those who “*have pleasure in them that do them,*” those who **approve** of their sinful actions, those who **validate** them, those who would **legitimize** them, those who, in the context of “same-sex marriage” would grant the same **status of definition** to homosexual “unions” as to heterosexual “marriage” as instituted by God, fall under His condemnation.

To be completely clear, it should be recognized that the argument in society today is NOT merely to grant “equal **rights,**” “equal **justice** under law,” or even “equal **benefits**” under *civil* law to same-sex “unions” or “couples.” It is to legitimize the **moral status** of same-sex “unions” by **re-defining** “marriage” to include them. This is by no means a “closed debate” in human society as evidenced by the fact that **only fifteen countries** out of all the countries of the world allow “same-sex marriage.” Moreover, the fact that, in addition to the opposition of the Roman Catholic Church, the Eastern Orthodox churches, and many main-line Protestant churches, the majority of Muslims, Hindu nationalists, orthodox Jews, and traditional Buddhists also reject same-

sex marriage shows that this is not merely a “Judaeo-Christian” issue. In the United States, only 28% of those polled in 2005 replied that they supported same-sex marriages; by 2013 the number had reached 50%; but the matter is far from being “settled” even **politically** in our own country. In Illinois, for example, the recognition of same-sex marriage was enacted by *a one-vote margin* in the General Assembly on November 5<sup>th</sup> as Illinois became only *the fifteenth state* out of fifty to pass such legislation.

The GLBT lobby is not satisfied that “committed” homosexual relationships, such as they are, are called and are granted the status of legally-recognized “civil unions” with equal protection under the law from discrimination (as is granted to racial, religious, cultural and national minorities). It demands that its “unions” be recognized and sanctioned as the establishment of “families,” **the same** basic unit of society that **God established** in the beginning for good order in the world, its core relationship being the civil estate of “**marriage**,” instituted **by God** for mutual companionship and love (Genesis 2:20b–24), for the lawful procreation of children (Genesis 1:28; 9:7; Psalm 127:3–5; etc.), and as an aid against unchastity (I Corinthians 7:1–2). Same-sex relationships, though they be “committed,” “permanent,” “life-long,” and even “sincerely and freely” established,” are NOT **holy** in the sight of God, as His Word clearly teaches. They are NOT what **He instituted** in the beginning. They are not the “mutual companionship” that **He approves**, nor are they the “love” that **He ordained** between husband and wife (Cf. Ephesians 5:22-33). Their appearance that they are intimate, committed, more-or-less permanent, and mutually established by “consenting adults” only makes them *caricatures* of marriage, not *real* marriages. Simply to **re-define** “marriage” to include them is as ludicrous as re-defining “fatherhood” to include females or “motherhood” to include males.

In His institution of marriage as the basic building-block of society, God first of all created a “*female*” (Genesis 1:27), “*a woman*” (Genesis 2:22), as a suitable companion, “*an help meet for him*” (Genesis 2:18, 20), for His heretofore solitary “*man*” (“*It is not good that the man should be alone*,” v. 18a). He then instituted the relationship between the man (male) and the woman (female) in which the two would be united in “*one flesh*” (Genesis 2:24). From thenceforth, “*a man*” would “*leave*” the family unit established by “*his father and his mother*” (v. 24a) and would “*cleave unto*,” adhere in a new relationship with, “*his wife*,” literally, his “**woman**” according to the Hebrew of the

text. **God's definition** of "marriage" according to **His** institution of that estate in the beginning, **Christ's** citation of that institution in the Gospels (Matthew 19:5 and Mark 10:7), and that of the **Apostle Paul** in Ephesians 5:31, is **completely clear, unequivocal, and unaccommodating of revision.**

Where does all of this leave US as Bible-believing, Scripture-confessing Christians? Where does the effort not only to validate homosexual behavior but to re-define marriage as the union between any two persons regardless of gender leave US, who, motivated by God's great love for us in Christ Jesus, earnestly desire to continue in His Word (John 8:31-32), to hold fast the form of sound words (II Timothy 1:13), to contend for the faith once delivered to the saints (Jude 3), and to testify to our faith in clear and certain words, easy to be understood (I Corinthians 14:9)? Thankfully, the so-called "world-view" of those who reject Holy Scripture as the only source and norm of spiritual truth, of Christian doctrine, and of orthodox practice does not determine what WE believe, teach and confess. Neither does the legislation of civil governments nor judicial opinion rendered by their courts determine what is true or false, right or wrong, just or unjust in *spiritual* matters; for in all such cases where civil authorities command us to do or to observe what God in His Word forbids, or where they forbid us to do, or to judge, or to condemn what God in His Word commands us to do, to judge, and to condemn, "*we ought to obey God rather than men*" (Acts 5:29). Accordingly, as consistent Christians whose consciences are bound by the Word of God (II Corinthians 10:5),

- We dare not deny but are compelled to recognize that homosexuality is condemned by God as an abomination in His sight.
- We dare not deny but are compelled to recognize that homosexuality is described in Holy Scripture as a perversion of the natural order that God Himself established for the intimacy of human beings within holy marriage.
- We dare not minimize the sinful character of homosexuality by reducing it to a mere "lifestyle" or "preference" which people may legitimately choose without incurring the wrath of God.
- We dare not validate homosexuality by speaking approvingly of it or by refraining from any judgment or condemnation of it.
- We dare not regard homosexual intimacy as a proper expression of conjugal love, as heterosexual intimacy is within holy marriage.

- We dare not legitimize a “committed relationship” between persons of the same gender as being at all salutary in the eyes of God, since it expresses deliberate continuance in a particularly abominable form of fornication.
- We dare not presume to re-define what God Himself has defined and to change the essence and the parameters of marriage to include what He has expressly prohibited.
- We dare not recognize what God has prohibited between human beings as being tantamount to what He has joined together and therefore to judge that God is the author of what is currently referred to as “same-sex marriage.”
- “*We ought to obey God rather than men*” (Acts 5:29) if and when we are ever required by our civil government or by authorities in the workplace to transgress the Word and will of God regarding these matters and thus to accommodate ourselves to the wicked world and to the commandments of men who would deceive us and seduce us into misbelief and other great shame and vice.
- We dare not yield to “political correctness” when it pressures us to “*call evil good and good evil; [to] put darkness for light and light for darkness; [to] put bitter for sweet and sweet for bitter; [to be] wise in [our] own eyes and prudent in [our] own sight*” (Isaiah 5:20-21).
- We should, moreover, not be surprised when the world regards us as “*strange*” because we, having been redeemed by Christ and now being Christ-minded, do not want to “*live the rest of [our] time in the flesh to the lusts of men, but to the will of God,*” and people “*speak evil of [us]*” because we do not join them in their sinful “*excess of riot,*” as they seek to legitimize and even to praise what God has judged to be wicked and abominable (I Peter 4:1-4).

What **can** and **should WE DO** as Christians in these last and perverse days to be “*the salt of the earth,*” as Jesus calls us in Matthew 5:13? Throughout history, salt has been used as a cleansing agent in tending to open wounds, a drawing agent against pockets of infection, and a preserving agent to protect meat and fish against spoilage. “*But if the salt have lost his savor, wherewith shall it be salted? It is thenceforth good for nothing but to be cast out and to be trodden down under foot*”

*of men,*” Jesus tells us. That’s the difference between the power of **salt** and the neutrality of white **sand**, though they may look similar.

God swears upon His own existence that He has no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but that the wicked turn from his way and live (Ezekiel 33:11); and He has given **to us** the responsibility of “getting the word out” about His primary will that “*all men be saved and come unto the knowledge of the truth*” (I Timothy 2:4). We Christians, observing the proper distinction between the Law and the Gospel, **have the duty** to engage the children of this world with regard to this pernicious evil. Using God’s Law in all its fierceness, we are to make known God’s own condemnation of homosexuality as a heinous sin in His sight (Romans 3:20), to convict those who practice and validate it as being “*worthy of death*” (Romans 1:32), to bring them to terrors of conscience and humble contrition before God for their abominable behavior (Romans 2:15; Psalm 51:3–4, 17), so that they do not seek to justify themselves by the Law (Romans 3:20; Galatians 2:16; 3:11b). And then, when such manifest sinners have been “hammered” by the Law (Jeremiah 23:29) and are troubled in their minds because of their sins (Acts 2:37; 16:30), **it is our great privilege**, as those who have been redeemed from and forgiven for *our* many heinous sins and transgressions, to bring to the brokenhearted the blessed news of the Gospel, namely, that Christ perfectly satisfied God’s justice on behalf of and in the stead of ALL men (I John 2:2), and that God, for His sake, reconciled the world of the ungodly unto Himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them (II Corinthians 5:19). For it is by that blessed “*Word of reconciliation*” that a poor sinner is brought to confide in its message of forgiveness, so that the righteousness of Christ and God’s forgiveness are personally applied to him for his own **comfort** (Isaiah 40:1-2), for **peace** with God (Romans 5:1), for **joy** in God’s rescue of wretched sinners (Psalm 51:8, 12), and for the ultimate **salvation** of their souls (Acts 4:12).

Brethren, we have been “*bought with a price,*” St. Paul writes to the Corinthians (I, 7:23a). Christ Himself purchased us to be His own, “not with gold or silver but with His holy, precious blood and with His innocent suffering and death (cf. I Peter 1:18-19), that [we] may be His own, and live under Him in His kingdom, and serve Him in everlasting righteousness, innocence and blessedness” (Luther). Therefore we are no longer, nor should we be, “*the servants of men*” (I Corinthians 7:23b), following after and serving the agenda of the children of this world who by virtue of unbelief are still in slavery to sin and in bond-



age to Satan, “denying the Lord that bought them and bring[ing] upon themselves swift destruction” (II Peter 2:1). Instead, we as God’s children should treasure His institution of Holy Marriage as an image of Christ’s relationship with His “bride,” the Church, which He has sanctified and cleansed “that it should be holy and without blemish” (Ephesians 5:26-27), espoused and presented unto Him “as a chaste virgin” (II Corinthians 11:2). Therefore, let us “not henceforth live unto [our]selves but unto Him which died for [us] and rose again” (v. 15), gladly conforming also our mind, our judgment, and our confession to His holy Word (I Corinthians 1:10) to the praise of His grace!

**D. T. M.**

*Soli Deo Gloria!*



## **The Sixth Commandment**

Since this commandment is aimed directly at the state of matrimony and gives occasion to speak of the same, you must well understand and mark, first, how gloriously God honors and extols this estate, inasmuch as by His commandment He both sanctions and guards it. Therefore He also wishes us to honor it, and to maintain and conduct it as a divine and blessed estate; because, in the first place, He has instituted it before all others, and therefore created man and woman separately (as is evident), not for lewdness, but that they should [legitimately] live together, be fruitful, beget children, and nourish and train them to the honor of God.

Excerpt from Luther’s *Large Catechism*

# Announcement

On October 29th and 30th, 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 (David and Daniel Mensing) on the material covered in their fourth 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 summer the colloquy was postponed to the fall.

The topics included Objective and Subjective Justification, the Means of Grace, Law and Gospel, the Sacrament of Holy Baptism, and the Sacrament of the Altar (The Lord's Supper). In addition, the Pastoral members of the C. T. E. met with each student individually to discuss his work and progress in preaching (homiletics and sermon preparation, delivery and related matters). 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 both students had successfully passed their fourth 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 Monday, August 26th, our seminarians, David J. Mensing of Oak Forest, Illinois, and Daniel P. Mensing of Tinley Park — *full-time* students thanks to the consecrated offerings of our people to support them

— embarked upon their fifth and presumably final year of study in our theological curriculum, both of them carrying a class load of seventeen credit hours per semester, involving intensive academic work more typical of graduate study than of undergraduate work.

This year, the academic load includes two courses taught by Professor Lietz: ***Dogmatics V*** (Church and Ministry, Election, and Eschatology) and ***Comparative Symbolics*** (comparing the doctrine and practice of sectarian Christian churches and of non-Christian sects and cults with the true teachings of the Lutheran Church) — and two taught by Professor Mensing: ***Church History IV*** (the Lutheran church bodies in particular during the Twentieth Century and up to the present time) and ***Homiletics III*** (the construction, outlining, writing and delivery of sermons). In addition, Professors Lietz and Mensing are co-teaching ***Pastoral Theology*** (the practical application of Christian doctrine in the work of the Pastoral Office of the local congregation). All of these courses earn three credit hours per semester and meet three class-hours per week. Then there is also the ***Practicum*** or internship in the local congregation under the supervision of Professor Mensing (2 credit hours per semester).

Professor Lietz's classes meet on Tuesday and Thursday mornings from nine o'clock until 12:30 p.m. in Oak Park. Professor Mensing's classes meet on Monday, Wednesday and Friday mornings from nine o'clock until noon and from three until four o'clock in the afternoon in Oak Forest. The co-taught ***Pastoral Theology*** class meets in Oak Park from 1:15 until 2:45 in the afternoon on Tuesdays and Thursdays. The ***Practicum*** is fitted in at unscheduled hours with a *Practicum* Consult arranged for Saturday mornings as needed. Between these hours scheduled for seminary work, the professors schedule their congregational work, including instructional classes and meetings, and prepare for their seminary classes. Needless to say, it is a full day, seven days a week, for everybody.

We eagerly look forward to our students' *preaching* during this fifth year, as they put to practical use virtually ALL of the knowledge they have been accumulating over the past four years and more, preparing and delivering with power textual, orthodox, and edifying sermons in the name of Jesus (*in nomine Iesu*) and with the help of God (*cum auxilio Dei*)! In the first semester, Mr. Daniel Mensing will preach at Peace and at St. Mark's on the first Sunday of each month and at Trinity on the third Sunday. Mr. David Mensing will preach at Trinity on the second Sunday of each month and at Peace and St. Mark's on the fourth Sunday.

In the second semester, additional sermons will be preached in the mid-week Lenten services. 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)!

Finally, our people can look forward even now to the tentative schedule planned for the end of this final year of theological training: God-willing, **final examinations** will be held the week of May 19 through May 23, followed by a **Special Pastoral Conference** on May 29 and 30 for the *exit colloquy* of our students, and then the **GRADUATION SERVICE** at Peace in Oak Forest on **Sunday, June 1, at 4:00 p.m.** with a dinner reception immediately thereafter. Our Conference brethren, as they are able, are cordially invited to attend the graduation festivities! Upon their graduation, the men will be certified *candidates of the reverend ministry* (*c.r.m.*'s), fit and prepared to undertake, at the call of the Holy Ghost, the Pastoral Office of a local Christian congregation. In the meantime, as they complete their remaining coursework, we ask all the brethren to beg the Lord's continued blessings upon our joint work in this important endeavor to the praise of His grace!

— **Professor David T. Mensing**

*Sorry...*

...that our September-October issue appeared so late this year. All of our articles are written by the pastors of our Conference, and occasionally local circumstances arise which prevent them from devoting time to matters of lesser priority than the work given to them by the Holy Ghost (Acts 20:28). Happily such conflicts do not occur frequently, and we appreciate our readers' understanding and patience in bearing with an occasional glitch in our publishing schedule.

—**Ed.**

## 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. PAUL E. BLOEDEL, Pastor**

483 Tangent Street, Lebanon, OR 97355 (541) 258-2941

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

### 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

**Adult Bible Class** ..... 3:00 p.m.

**Worship Service** ..... 4:00 p.m.

**The Rev. DAVID T. MENSING, Pastor**

17151 South Central Avenue, Oak Forest, IL 60452-4913 (708) 532-9035

**E-mail:** pastormensing@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

# Justification

In this teaching of justification, our gracious God has given certainty to the “*world*” (II Corinthians 5:19) of sinners that their sins have been totally pardoned, not because of anything which **they** have done, but solely and only because of what “*Christ Jesus*” (Romans 3:24b) has vicariously, as their Substitute, done for them, in their behalf, namely, having secured righteousness for every soul of man (Romans 3:21-22; 5:19) by His perfect obedience of God’s Law in their place, and having secured pardon for their sins by assuming their guilt and paying its penalty by His innocent suffering and death (I Peter 2:24a; 3:18). Christ became “*the Propitiation* [the perfect satisfaction] *for our sins, and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world*” (I John 2:2).

(Excerpt from *Justification* article, p. 122)