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— John 20:31





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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.**

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

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

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

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

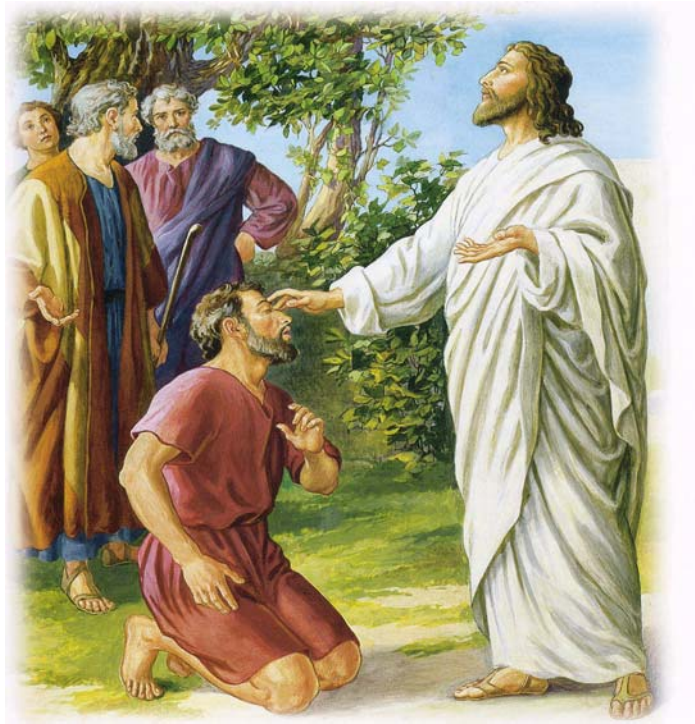
To set forth pertinent historical information which has a bearing upon the Church and to expose modern philosophical thought and the so-called scientific theories which contradict the Word of God.

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

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

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The Purpose of Christ's Miracles in His Epiphany

*“These [miracles] are written that ye might believe
that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that
believing ye might have life through His Name.”*

— John 20:31

The word ***Epiphany*** means “appearing” or “manifestation;” and the holy *Epiphany season* on our church calendar marks the Lord Jesus’ manifestation of Himself to men here in this world as the Son of God, the long-promised Messiah and the Redeemer of mankind. *The Epiphany of Our Lord* or *Epiphany Day* is a “fixed” festival in the church year, occurring on **January 6th** and commemorating specifically Jesus’ manifestation to the Wise Men from the East. “We have seen **His star** in the east and are come to worship Him,” they reported upon their arrival in Jerusalem (Matthew 2:2). This particular manifes-

tation to the Gentiles by means of a special star and the identification of THAT star in a prophecy of Holy Scripture (Numbers 24:17), a prophecy to which the Wise Men quite evidently gave heed for their information, is sometimes referred to as “the Gentiles’ Christmas.” — a manifestation of special significance to us who are non-Jews.

The remainder of the Epiphany season is devoted to other “manifestations” of our Savior in His office as our **Divine Prophet**, manifestations in which “He revealed Himself by word and deed” (*Catechism* Q/A 132a), that is, by His preaching and by His miracles, to be the Son of God and the Redeemer of the world. And so, in the standard Gospel lessons during the Epiphany season (one to six Sundays *after* the Epiphany of our Lord, depending upon the date of Easter), Jesus is *manifested* to us especially in narratives that, for the most part, center upon His miracles — culminating in the account of His glorious *transfiguration* (Matthew 17:1-9; Mark 9:2-9; Luke 9:28-36) witnessed by Peter and James and John “*in the holy mount*” (II Peter 1:16-18). There the Father Himself manifested His Son to the disciples in a voice from heaven, “*which [they] heard*” (as earwitnesses), saying: “*This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased. Hear ye Him.*” That transfiguration, as well as Jesus’ other miracles of which the apostles testified during the course of His public ministry among men, were not “*cunningly devised fables*,” but were the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth! The disciples saw what they saw as “*eyewitnesses of His majesty*,” and they heard what they heard as clear and certain manifestations of the Savior’s honor and glory as the Son of God and the Redeemer of the world (Luke 9:31).

We commonly define a *miracle* as a phenomenon which defies scientific explanation on the basis of natural law, a feat of which man is incapable without divine assistance or empowerment, or a work that only God Himself can do. [Because of his avowed enmity against God and his efforts to destroy God’s works, we do not regard as *true* miracles supernatural works done by Satan and at his wicked behest, such as those performed by false prophets (Matthew 7:22-23) and those claimed particularly by the Papacy (II Thessalonians 2:9).] Indeed, for the “*fool*” who denies the existence of God (Psalm 14:1), for the skeptic who questions the validity of anything that cannot be empirically verified, and for the rationalist who subjects everything to the test of reason, there is no such thing as a *miracle*, only an occasional “unexplained” and “unsolved mystery.” In this “scientific” and “enlightened” age characterized by the worship of “self,” the arrogance of human intellect, the philosophy of “secular humanism,” and the denial of a personal God, every *miracle* from the creation of the world to the resurrection of Jesus Christ is either rejected out of hand or is reduced to the status of mere myth or legend.

And for the sectarian, who, contrary to his profession of Christian faith, truly accepts and believes John Calvin's axiom that "the finite is not capable of the infinite" [*finitum non capax infiniti*], there is no *real* miracle either. The Reformed, therefore, categorically deny, for example, the *real presence* of Christ's true body and blood in the Lord's Supper, claiming that His body is locally enclosed in heaven and that His truly human, finite body is incapable of being really present "*at once in many places*" to be partaken of by countless communicants over twenty centuries. At the very same time, however, they show themselves to be grossly inconsistent by accepting as fact Jesus' feeding of five thousand people out of a child's lunch box containing a finite number of rolls and fishes and by acknowledging Jesus' "*beginning of miracles*," namely, the changing of over a hundred gallons of common wash water into high quality premium wine. "What difference does it make anyway whether Jesus *really* did such things?" some may ask. "Does the acknowledgment or denial of miracles constitute a 'fundamental' difference between Christians??"

The question itself reduces to the absurd the public ministry and prophetic office of Jesus Christ, as if His innumerable miracles (John 21:25) were meaningless, not only as to their effect upon those for whose immediate benefit they were performed, but also as to their salutary purpose *for US*, for whose benefit they were recorded (John 20:31). Was Jesus, in their view, the transparent side-show artist that King Herod Antipas regarded Him to be, who merely *entertained* people from time to time with "*some miracle*" (Luke 23:8)? Surely no one who holds such an opinion can be considered a Christian!

Moreover, those who either deny or minimize the importance of Jesus' miracles seem to forget that Isaiah, over seven hundred years in advance, prophesied by inspiration of the Holy Ghost that the long-promised Messiah would be able to be positively identified by His preaching and by the very specific *miracles* which He would perform. Concerning the latter, Isaiah wrote: "*Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened, and the ears of the deaf shall be unstopped. Then shall the lame man leap as an hart, and the tongue of the dumb sing*" (Isaiah 35:5-6). Jesus pointed the disciples of John the Baptist to THIS POSITIVE IDENTIFICATION of **Himself** as the very Messiah of God, the Savior of the world, when He told them: "*Go and show John again those things which ye do hear and see: The blind receive their sight, and the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, and the deaf hear, the dead are raised up, and the poor have the Gospel preached to them. And blessed is he, whosoever shall not be offended in Me*" (Matthew 11:4-6). On another

occasion, shortly after His temptation by the devil, in a Sabbath-day sermon in a synagogue of Nazareth, Jesus read Isaiah 61:1 and 2, in which **the Messiah Himself** speaks of His God-anointed prophetic office and says: *“The Spirit of the Lord God is upon Me, because the Lord hath anointed Me to preach good tidings unto the meek; He hath sent Me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound; to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord....”* And, in His exposition of this text, Jesus stated for all to hear, to “bear witness,” and to “wonder at,” this identification of **Himself**: *“This day is this scripture fulfilled in your ears”* (Luke 4:16ff.).

The Jews of Jesus’ day could not refute this prophetic evidence of His Messianic office, for Nicodemus, *“a man of the Pharisees...a ruler of the Jews”* admitted on behalf of his colleagues: *“Rabbi, we know that Thou art a teacher come from God; for no man can do these miracles that Thou doest, except God be with him”* (John 3:1-2). Yet, in spite of this evidence, the Jews generally and especially their leaders rejected Him as the Messiah, rejecting also the word of the Gospel of which Peter reminded them in Acts 10:36ff, *“The word which God sent unto the children of Israel, preaching peace by Jesus Christ –He is Lord of all; that word, I say, ye know, which was published throughout all Judea, and began from Galilee, after the baptism which John preached; how God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Ghost and with power, who went about doing good, and healing all that were oppressed of the devil; for God was with Him ... to Him give all the prophets witness, that through His Name whosoever believeth in Him shall receive remission of sins.”* In fact, when the Jews challenged Jesus (John 10:24), *“How long dost Thou make us to doubt? If Thou be the Christ, tell us plainly,”* Jesus Himself answered them: *“I told you, and ye believed not. The **works** that I do in My Father’s Name, they **bear witness** of Me. ...If I do not the works of My Father, believe Me not. But if I do, though ye believe not **Me**, believe the **works**, that ye may know and believe that the Father is in Me and I in Him”* (v’s 25, 37-38).

This challenge of the Lord Jesus in His Epiphany to men, in His manifestation of Himself as the Son of God and the Redeemer of the world, is before us still today: *“Believe the works! They bear witness of Me!”* For in His miracles the Savior not only demonstrated His merciful kindness toward those for whose immediate benefit they were performed; He also *“manifested forth His glory,”* as He did at the wedding in Cana (John 2:11), for His disciples to behold, *“the glory as of the only-begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth”* (John 1:14b). And those miracles had the desired,

God-ordained effect, for “*His disciples believed on Him.*” The miracles are also recorded in the Scriptures for US, “*upon whom the ends of the world are come*” (I Corinthians 10:11). Jesus, of course, in His going about and doing good (Acts 10:38) during His public ministry, as a function of His prophetic office, did “*many other [miraculous] things*” than those written down in the Gospels, “*which,*” says John, “*if they should be written every one, I suppose that even the world itself could not contain the books that should be written*” (John 21:25). That fact, in and of itself, is truly amazing! [Of bogus “saints,” whom the Roman Antichrist “canonizes” as mediators between God and men in direct competition with and contradiction of Christ’s High Priestly office, only **two** “documented” miracles— only **two** “*signs and lying wonders*”— are required by the “Holy Father” to take advantage of the “*strong delusion,*” created by God Himself in those who reject justification by grace alone, for Christ’s sake alone, through faith alone, “*that they should believe a lie*”! (II Thessalonians 2:9-12).]

But **the purpose of CHRIST’S miracles** recorded in Holy Writ is clear and indisputable: “*These are written that ye might BELIEVE that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing ye might HAVE LIFE through His Name*” (John 20:31), the most salutary purpose of all. For His miracles have, for OUR sakes, validated Jesus of Nazareth not only as “*the Mighty God*” but as “*the Prince of Peace,*” (Isaiah 9:6), “*the Holy One of Israel, [our] Savior*” (Isaiah 43:3). The record of His miracles has thus been made a functional part of the **Gospel** message, “*the power of God unto salvation,*” through which the Holy Spirit operates in our hearts to “*make [us] wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus*” (II Timothy 3:15). May we therefore treasure the holy record of our Savior’s miracles, value the manifestation of His glory to us, cling to the validation of His office as our anointed Redeemer, and ever confide in the forgiveness of all our sins by virtue of His perfect vicarious atonement!

*Manifest at Jordan’s stream,
Prophet, Priest, and King supreme,
and at Cana Wedding-Guest
in Thy Godhead manifest;
manifest in power divine,
changing water into wine,
anthems be to Thee addressed:
God in man made manifest!*

(TLH 134, 2)

— D. T. M.

*“Living Water”
— Perfect Refreshment
for the Sin-Parched Soul*



“Whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life.” — John 4:14

As our blessed Savior manifested Himself to the world in His holy Epiphany as the long-promised Messiah, as the God-appointed and God-anointed Redeemer of sinful men, He often identified Himself as such in **picture language**. Each picture portrayed Him in His relationship to poor sinners here in this world. Some were “*a shadow [picture] of things to come*” (Colossians 2:17), painted, as it were, by God’s prophets in the **Old** Testament, hundreds and even thousands of years before Jesus’ incarnation.

Some of those images include Jesus pictured as the “**Light of the Gentiles**” (Isaiah 42:6), as “**the Dayspring from on high**” of whom Zacharias sang (Luke 1:78), that is, the dawning light of spiritual day, “*to give light to them that sit in darkness and in the shadow of death*” (v. 79), as “**the Lamb of God**” to whom John the Baptist pointed (John 1:29), portrayed already in the Jewish Passover (Exodus 12:3, 13) as the perfect sacrifice to rescue poor sinners from bondage and from the plague of death, and as “**the Sun of Righteousness**” (Malachi 4:2), casting His bright and warming rays on a sin-darkened world.

And Jesus Himself provided many other such pictures in the **New Testament Scriptures**, to remind us constantly of our utter dependence upon **Him** for salvation. He pictured Himself, for example, as “**the Bread of Life**” for starving souls (John 6:35), “**the Door**” by which we enter into heaven itself (10:7), “**the Vine**” into which we have been grafted as tender branches and from which we receive life and strength to bear good fruit in abundance (15:5), and so on.

In Jesus’ Epiphany or manifestation of Himself to the Samaritan woman at Jacob’s well, we find another such picture of our Savior and His relationship to poor sinners. The setting in which this encounter takes place is used to full advantage by Jesus, as He pictures Himself, both to the woman and to US, as a **fountain** —a fountain of “*living water*” (John 4:10) — perfect refreshment for the sin-parched soul. This water, which only He can provide, relieves the sinner’s guilty thirst, as he staggers under the searing wrath of God; and it endures as an inexhaustible refreshment to the very gates of heaven itself.

In the narrative presented in John chapter 4, we encounter Jesus as our perfect example in Christian missionwork. In fact, as we read and analyze Jesus’ *method* in how He approached the woman at Jacob’s well, we see in Him the perfect “textbook” on personal mission work, which we would do well to emulate in our search for mission prospects and in our way of approaching and engaging them. Jesus shows us first of all that, if we want to get any mission work done, which, after all, is our **priority task** as His disciples (Acts 1:8; Matthew 28:19; Mark 16:15; etc.), we have to be up-and-doing, not just sitting back and waiting for prospects to come to **us**. Jesus was constantly “on the move” as our Good Shepherd, seeking the lost and retrieving them for His flock. Mission work is no easy job, even on a one-to-one basis; and even our Savior, in His *State of Humiliation*, often became weary and worn out from preaching and teaching, from exhorting and beseeching. In John’s narrative we observe Him taking a break at noontime, sitting down on the edge of Jacob’s well just outside the city of Sychar, and

waiting for His disciples, who had gone into town to pick up something for lunch. Having no means of getting water out of the well, He put His thirst on “hold” and just rested.

Soon the solitude was broken, however, as a woman of Samaria with pitcher in hand arrived on the scene to draw water; and “*Jesus saith unto her: ‘Give me to drink.’*” Jesus used both His own thirst and the woman’s obvious ability to help Him out as a sort of “ice-breaker” by which to engage her in conversation— a technique that you and I can easily learn from His example as we set out to be missionaries for Him. It doesn’t require a lot of talent and special training to talk even to a **stranger** about the *ordinary* things of life, does it? And so that’s often a good place to *start*.

“Then saith the woman of Samaria unto Him: ‘How is it that Thou, being a Jew, askest drink of me, which am a woman of Samaria? For the Jews have no dealings with the Samaritans.’” The conversation was barely off the ground, and they hit a snag! And what was it but plain old prejudice! “You Jews think that we Samaritans are the scum of the earth, unclean, and not worth a second glance —just because 500 years ago many of our people escaped the Babylonian Captivity, intermarried with heathen tribes round about us, and now have both a mixed race and a mixed religion. Normally speaking, you wouldn’t even touch my pitcher, much less drink out of it! And now you want me to draw you a drink of water? What’s with you anyway?”

Here indeed was a lost soul —a five-time loser in marriage (as we learn later on in this chapter), now living with a sixth man in an adulterous relationship. She was a “slut” by reputation —the women of the city had nothing to do with her, just the men— and her religion was a hodge-podge of truth and error, of faith and superstition, of Messianic Old Testament Christianity and plain paganism! No one who valued his good name in the community and in the church would have anything to do with the lady! (Perhaps even we today would give such a person the “cold shoulder” and look for a more up-and-coming prospect. Indeed, because of our rotten sinful flesh, we too find ourselves being rather “selective” in the people we target for our mission work; and in this incident the Lord Jesus shows us the very opposite example!)

The Lord Jesus, who, as the omniscient Son of God, knew all those things about the woman and even more, was interested in her, just as He is interested in **you** and **me**, who, by the perfect standards of God’s holy Law, are certainly no better! “*For all have sinned and come short of the glory of God,*” the Bible tells us (Romans 3:23). “*There is NONE that doeth good, no, NOT ONE!*” (v. 12). Indeed, if **we** were judged according to **our** worth

by nature and by the deeds **we** do, we would have more “heat” coming from God than the scorching heat of the Middle East at noon time! For the Bible says: “*The wages of sin* [what we have earned as sinners] *is death*” (Romans 6:23) —everlasting death in the fire of hell! To be sure, it is **our guilt**, as we see ourselves in the mirror of God’s holy Law, that parches our spiritual throats with the searing heat of God’s anger and makes us thirst for even one drop of cooling, soothing water to relieve our anguish!

*“Jesus answered and said unto her: ‘If thou knewest the Gift of God and who it is that saith to thee, ‘Give me to drink,’ thou wouldest have asked of Him, and He would have given thee **living water**’”* (John 4:10). Jesus knew just what this poor wretched sinner needed: The pure and “*living water*” of His Gospel —the good news of salvation for helpless good-for-nothings —the glad tidings of the Christmas angel that the Savior, “*Christ the Lord*,” had made peace between man and God —that by His perfect life in our place and by His innocent suffering and death in our stead, Christ paid the ransom price demanded by His Father in heaven, so that God’s anger is stilled for Jesus’ sake, and He has declared His “*good will toward men*” (Luke 2:14). In other words, God has given us **a pardon**—as His **free gift** undeserved by us. And that’s precisely what Jesus calls it here in verse ten of John 4: “*The **GIFT** of GOD*,” free for the taking! “*Living water*,” life-giving, thirst-quenching water poured out by Jesus, our **Fountain of Salvation**!

But the woman of Samaria was skeptical —as are so many in our world today, who mistakenly think that **they can** and somehow must earn their way to heaven, and that salvation is NOT “*the Gift of God*” (Ephesians 2:8). “*The woman saith unto Him, ‘Sir, Thou hast nothing to draw with, and the well is deep. From whence then hast Thou that living water? Art Thou greater than our father, Jacob, which gave us the well, and drank thereof himself, and his children, and his cattle?’”* She was looking for the wrong water, wasn’t she? She was looking for water she could **see**, water she had to **draw** with her pitcher, water from the well that Jacob **dug** by his own works and **drank out of** as the result of his own labor! —And, oh, HOW CLOSE SHE WAS TO THE TRUTH when she asked Jesus whether He was greater than the patriarch Jacob (v. 12). Why, it was **Jacob** who confessed to the Lord, Genesis 32:10, “*I am not worthy of the least of all the mercies and of all the truth which Thou hast showed unto Thy servant.*” **He himself** was saved **not** by his works but by the mercy of God in Christ.

*“Jesus answered and said unto her: ‘Whosoever drinketh of **this** water [this **earthly** water] shall thirst again; but whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst.’”* Spiritual thirst brought about by

guilt before God cannot be relieved by water dug by men or drawn by men. It gives only temporary relief, false relief, as sinners look away from the mirror of God's law to **themselves**. But when sinners are forced to look back and face their corrupt reflection, they "*thirst again*," Jesus says,—and again! Only the **perfect refreshment** of the Gospel of salvation by God's grace, God's **gift** in Christ, can relieve the thirst — as long as one **drinks** it and doesn't just **look** at it — as long as one **accepts** that Gospel *by faith*, by real **confidence of the heart**. For then, no one, not even Satan himself, can any longer successfully accuse us to God and bring back that awful thirst of guilt. For Jesus promised the woman of Samaria, and promises us as well: "*Whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall not thirst forever*," the Greek original says — shall not suffer the **eternal** thirst, the shame and contempt and **everlasting** estrangement from God **in hell**.

And Jesus, our **Fountain** of "*living water*," will not dry up on us like the wells of this world —He will not let us down like the assurances of this world in which people trust day by day. For Jesus tells the woman concerning His precious Gospel: "*The water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water* (or better from the original language, "*a fountain of water*") *springing up into everlasting life*." The **perfect refreshment** for sin-parched souls will never run out. **That** water is not lying stagnant, as it were, at the bottom of some hole in the ground, with a limit on how much of it can be drawn off in a period of "spiritual drought." For, while that is often the case with shallow, hand-dug wells here in this world, our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, is the eternal, unchangeable, almighty Son of God —a veritably **inexhaustible supply** of "*living water*," as from an active **artesian** well, bubbling up and overflowing in abundance "*into everlasting life*" —a supply that will last until we have crossed over the barren wilderness of this sin-ridden world to the very gates of Heaven itself!

Earthly comforts and assurances can't make and stand behind such a claim! The value of **money** fluctuates on a daily basis, **stocks** go up and down, and even the value of the **gold** that we are urged to have in our safes as a hedge against inflation rises and falls, so that the Bible calls it "*gold that perisheth*" (I Peter 1:7). **Companies** fail; **health** declines; **friends** desert us at the drop of a hat; and the "**good times**" are gone —dried up, evaporated into thin air like a shallow pool of water in the desert! And people who cling to **such things** for comfort, and live for such things their whole life long, will find themselves with parched, burning throats when they stand one day at death's door; and their dry, brittle voices will be unable to make one "peep" in their own defense before the judgment throne of God!

They will not have the "*gift of God*" to rely on, because they rejected it in

unbelief; they will not have Christ's "*living water*" to quench their burning guilt, because they refused to drink of it when it was offered to them; they will not have "*everlasting life*" to look forward to, because they despised it in favor of the here-and-now. Oh, how foolish such people are who ignore the indictment of God's Law and then wantonly cast aside the free pardon granted by Him to all men in the Gospel! And how *doubly* tragic the day of reckoning will be for those who once tasted the "*water of life*," bathed their parched souls in its blissful refreshment, rejoiced in its comfort and assurance, and then, for the sake of some carnal gain or satisfaction, spued it out of their mouths, as if it had not been worth drinking in the first place! For "*unto whomsoever much is **given**,*" says Jesus, "*of him shall be **much required***" (Luke 12:48b).

And how about you and me, beloved fellow-sinners, wandering yet for an undetermined time in the wilderness of this wicked and perverse world? Are our spiritual canteens filled to the top with living, life-giving, and life-sustaining water? Do we drink from them regularly to keep up our vital spiritual strength? Do we fill them up at every opportunity at the bubbling fountain of our Savior's precious Word? Are we constantly on the alert against those who would snatch those canteens from our hands and turn us on to other refreshment? Do we call out to fellow travelers and point them to the Fountain of Grace, so that they too can drink of the "*living water*" of the Savior's Gospel? — Oh, my dear brethren, that sounds like a mighty long list of questions, doesn't it? Sure it is! But it's the ongoing inventory we must take of ourselves every day of our lives —without let-up— as we plod along as pilgrims in a barren land on our way to the heavenly Canaan above, where our true citizenship is, the inheritance bought and paid for by our Savior and received alone by faith in Him as our Redeemer. Continuance in His precious Word of life is **crucial** to our spiritual **survival**! Sacrificing it for **any** earthly consideration is spiritual suicide, more **deadly** than tossing away a full canteen on a Death Valley crossing!

Let us therefore implore our Lord and Savior to keep the fountain of His precious grace freely bubbling **among us** in the years to come, that, holding fast to His Word, we may never thirst but find enduring comfort and refreshment for our souls unto everlasting life! To that end we pray:

*Preserve Thy Word and preaching, the truth that makes us whole,
the mirror of Thy glory, the power that saves the soul.
Oh, may this **living water**, this dew of heavenly grace,
sustain us while here living until we see Thy face. Amen.*
(TLH 264, 5)

— **D. T. M.**

The Bearing of Chastisements Is *a Privilege for the Christian!*

*“For whom the Lord loveth He chasteneth
and scourgeth every son whom He receiveth.”*
— Hebrews 12:6

The crosses of a Christian are inextricably linked to the cross of his dear Savior—in their **nature**, in their **purpose**, and in their **effect**—so that only a true believer in the Lord Jesus and in His vicarious atonement for the sins of the world has crosses laid upon him, recognizes their salutary purpose at the hand of his heavenly Father, and profits from them in accordance with His good and gracious will.

The unregenerate person finds it *ironic* that Christians, who claim to be at peace with God through faith in Christ’s merits (Romans 5:1), have to **suffer** so much here in this life, and that they regard it as a **privilege** and actually **rejoice** when they are called upon to bear tribulations, trials, pain and scorn because of their faith! The blasphemer throws up his hands, as it were, in mock dismay and shouts, “Why, Christians appear to be just as sadomasochistic as the Christ, whose name they bear!” Indeed, scoffers treat the Christians’ attitude with ridicule and disdain, and, at the instance of Satan, delight therefore in compounding the sufferings with additional persecutions!

The crosses that the Christian bears are, in and of themselves, manifestations of God’s holy **Law** by which He “*chastens*” His children, that is, **whips** them, as does an earthly father when he spans his own son or daughter (Hebrews 12:9-10; cf. Proverbs 13:24). Indeed, His chastenings are often so “*grievous*” (v. 11a) that He characterizes them in our title-text as “*scourges*” (v. 6). They are His “*rebuke*” and “*correction*” (v’s. 5 and 9), which are functions of the **Law**. But these crosses are laid upon the Christians by their heavenly Father, not because He **hates** them, not because He desires their **hurt**, but because, in Christ Jesus, He dearly **loves** them (v. 6) and deals with them “*as with sons*” (v. 7). Thus, contrary to one’s initial, carnal reaction, unaided by God’s Holy Spirit, there are **no contradictions in these sacred truths**, but rather a blessed and reassuring comfort “*unto them which are exercised thereby*” (v. 11).

But this matter of cross-bearing must be well-understood, yea, *properly* understood, by every Christian, lest in time of trial and temptation he lose heart, despair of the love of God, despise the chastening of the Lord, and end up a “*bastard*” child (Hebrews 12:8), giving up his birth-right, his legitimate claim to the heavenly Father’s inheritance. For such are they “*who for a while believe, and in time of temptation fall away,*” Jesus tells us in the Parable of the Sower, Luke 8:13. “From this preserve us, Heavenly Father!” we pray with Luther in the 1st Petition of the Lord’s Prayer.

Thus in considering the **nature** of our crosses, namely, those things which we are called upon to bear because we are Christians, we recognize among them **perils** we have to brave, **trials** we have to endure, **temptations** we must overcome, the **onslaughts of Satan** we must resist and survive, and **afflictions** we have to suffer—all of which are again, properly-speaking, manifestations of God’s holy Law by which He **disciplines** us—rebukes, corrects, chastises and instructs us. These crosses are “*grievous*” to the Old Adam and difficult to bear; but they are laid upon us, not because God **hates** us or is **angry** with us, but because He dearly **LOVES** us in Christ Jesus and wants to deal with us as with dear children.

There is therefore a special **purpose** which our crosses serve, namely, to “*yield the peaceable fruit of righteousness unto them which are exercised thereby*” (Hebrews 12:11). We note, however, that the Law—to which God’s chastenings properly belong—cannot work anything in and of itself except grief, terror and death (Galatians 4:15; II Corinthians 3:6). Nevertheless, the Law **serves the Gospel** by driving us into God’s Word, “*bringing us unto Christ*” (Galatians 3:24). And it is then **the Gospel** that comforts, consoles and reassures suffering Christians with the knowledge that they “*are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus*” (Galatians 3:26) and the objects of His special love to the “*heirs of salvation.*” Thus it is the Gospel that turns our “*grievous*” chastisements into the “*peaceable fruit of righteousness*” including patience in adversity, increase of faith, humility before God and one another, strength to do battle with the enemy, Christian resignation to the all-wise and gracious will of God, and joy in being counted worthy to suffer with our Savior.

How then should we Christians **regard** the crosses laid upon us, and how we are to muster the **strength** necessary to bear them after our Lord Jesus? Knowing the purpose of our crosses, whatever they may

be; knowing the blessed relationship between God's Law and His precious Gospel in yielding "*the peaceable fruit of righteousness unto them which are exercised thereby*;" we Christians now face the prospect of approaching and bearing the crosses that are set before us and laid upon us by our heavenly Father. What shall be our attitude toward our afflictions, trials, tribulations, chastisements, discouragements, doubts and fears? And how shall we muster the strength to shoulder them and to bear them with courage, "*considering them an honor and precious adornment*" (General Prayer)?

If we Christians, since our regeneration, were completely rid of the Old Adam of sin, chastisements would not be necessary at all; for we would be perfect in every respect and in need of no improvement whatsoever. But we must confess in all humility with the Apostle Paul: "*I know that in me, that is, in my flesh, dwelleth no good thing*" (Romans 7:18). It is our **flesh** that **NEEDS** the cross to convict it, rebuke it, curb it and chastise it; yet it is our **flesh** that **RESISTS** the cross, chafing under its weight, and would have us despise it, escape it, and, if forced to bear it, murmur against it.

Therefore, Solomon writes in the Proverbs, chapter three, verse eleven: "*My son, despise not the chastening of the Lord, neither be weary of His correction.*" The Christian dare not let his flesh rule over him in its DESPISAL of the heavenly Father's heavy hand — the flesh which rebels at the very thought of cross-bearing, whining, "What did I do to deserve this?" The answer to that tempting question of Satan through our flesh should be obvious from the proverb cited: We NEED correction, LOTS of it, because of our many sins; and we should be HAPPY to receive it at the hand of Him who loves us, our dear heavenly Father, who wants to treat us like "*sons*" (v. 7).

Moreover, that same flesh, when faced with chastisements, rears up within us like a horse refusing bit and bridle, and tries to ESCAPE the cross, to run away like Jonah of old, like the disciples in the Garden of Gethsemane, like many in our own day and time who would sacrifice the truth of God's Word rather than suffer any inconvenience, endure any trial, bear any persecution, or make any sacrifice for the sake of the Gospel! They would rather be "*bastards*" than "*sons*," the writer to the Hebrews tells us in verse 8 of chapter 12! To them the Lord Jesus speaks an urgent warning concerning the magnitude of the **consequences** of their evasion: "*Whosoever doth not bear his cross and come after Me, cannot be my disciple*" (Luke 14:27). *Escape* the cross?? At what COST??!

Yet, even with such warnings in great abundance in the Holy Scriptures, the flesh continues to “*lust against the spirit*” (Galatians 5:17). If not permitted by our New Man of faith to “*despise*” chastenings, if not allowed to slough them off and *escape* them, our flesh then whines and complains “beneath the chastening rod” (TLH 396, 2), murmuring against the Lord like the Children of Israel in the wilderness, concerning whom the Apostle warns us in I Corinthians 10:10, “*Neither murmur ye, as some of them also murmured, and were destroyed of the Destroyer!*” Nevertheless the flesh, in the service of Satan, persists: “Why ME, Lord? Why do I always come out on the short end? Why do I have to suffer tribulation?? I always seem to get more than my share!” Our New Man of faith never speaks like that! That’s the Old Adam of sin talking out of our own mouths! “Upon thy lips then lay thy hand,” sings Paul Gerhardt in his hymn of Christian exhortation and admonition. Silence the murmuring flesh; and, walking in the spirit, “trust His guiding love” (TLH 535, 9).

Sometimes the flesh “surprises” us, seeming to make a positive step in the right direction. But don’t be fooled, brethren! Remember that in the flesh “*dwelleth NO good thing.*” As the willing tool of Satan, bent on “deceiving us and seducing us into misbelief, despair, and other great shame and vice” [Luther: Sixth Petition], the flesh will sometimes actually *welcome* crosses—but for the wrong reasons! *Self-chosen* crosses are not really crosses at all, but represent the effort of a “work-saint” and a “devil’s martyr” [Luther] to gain favor with God through works of merit—an effort that leads straight to hell and damnation!! **God** chooses our crosses — **we don’t!** Again the beloved Christian poet and hymnist, Paul Gerhardt, declares: “By anxious sighs and grieving and self-tormenting care, God is not moved to giving....” (TLH 520, 2). God cannot be “bought off” by efforts to pay for His favor, not when His blessings are *free for the taking*, offered to all in the precious Gospel “*without money and without price!*” (Isaiah 55:1).

And a particularly sad self-deception is borne by a person whose flesh *pretends* willingly to *accept* crosses, chastisements and afflictions; yet, finding none of particular discomfort at his door, takes it into his mind that, because of his “superior character” as a Christian, the Lord doesn’t deem crosses a necessity for HIM. “*Be not deceived! God is not mocked!!*” (Galatians 6:7a). For such a person suffers already from a severe affliction, a “*messenger of Satan to buffet [him]*” (II Corinthians 12:7), namely, a **delusion** that can only increase his **carnal security** and make him into a proud **Pharisee**! The real tragedy, of course, is

that he doesn't realize the danger to his immortal soul!!

Before we leave the **negative** examples of how we should **NOT** approach our crosses, let us note yet one particularly vicious ploy of Satan which he uses to drive troubled Christians to hopelessness and despair: Sometimes a child of God is hounded by the idea that God somehow **overestimated** his strength as a Christian, **underestimated** the burden that the weight of a certain cross would be for him, and **laid upon his back** a chastisement **much GREATER than he could bear**. The devil perpetuates this myth by keeping the suffering Christian's eyes **away** from the Holy Scriptures; for he knows full well that the believer can find no comfort apart from the Gospel. Fortunately for us, we have by God's rich grace in His Holy Word a most wonderful **assurance**, of which the Apostle Paul writes, I Corinthians 10:13, "*God is faithful, who will NOT suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able, but will, with the temptation, also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it.*" Here the Lord links this gracious assurance with His ultimate purpose in sending the Christian crosses: If the heavenly Father did not truly love us in Christ Jesus our Savior, He would simply "hang us out to dry," as it were, and forget about us altogether! Instead He does just the **opposite!** He assures us ahead of time that He and He alone determines and measures the severity of our trials, tailor-makes them to fit our needs for our ultimate benefit, and provides an "end" or termination for them. What a gracious and loving Father we have by faith in Christ Jesus, our Savior!

*What **God** ordains is always **good!**
Though I the cup am drinking
which savors now of bitterness,
I take it without shrinking.
For after grief God grants relief,
my heart with comfort filling
and all my sorrow stilling.
(TLH 521, 5)*

Now, to conclude our discussion regarding our approach to the cross and our regard for it, we move to the **positive** exhortations of the Lord's Word to see in them just how we Christians **should** view our crosses, shoulder them confidently at the bidding of our heavenly Father, and willingly bear them after our dear Savior.

Though the flesh is weak, "*the spirit indeed is willing*" (Matthew 26:41). What the Old Adam in us, in the service of Satan, abhors, de-

spises and rejects, the New Man of faith is *ready, willing, yea, eager* to do, prompted by the Holy Spirit by means of the Gospel. Thus, the Christian's **NEW Man** says with the Psalmist: "*It is good for me that I have been afflicted*" (Psalm 119:71), an acknowledgment worked in him by the testimony of the Spirit of God that he is indeed a child of God, his heavenly Father, by faith in Christ Jesus, and that he earnestly desires to be dealt with as such, as a "*son,*" as a legitimate "*heir of God through Christ*" (Galatians 4:7).

Our New Man rejoices in the cross, knowing both its divine Source and gracious purpose, as Eliphaz declares to Job: "*Behold, happy is the man whom God correcteth,*" but then also adds a word of admonition because of the flesh and its melancholy under the cross: "*Therefore despise not the chastening of the Almighty!*" (Job 5:17). Thus it was the New Man in the Apostle Paul who said: "*I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses for Christ's sake*" (II Corinthians 12:10). And yet Paul was not without the same flesh that constantly plagues you and me; for he readily admits: "*The good that I would I do not; but the evil which I would not that I do... for I delight in the Law of God after the inward man, but I see another law in my members warring against the law of my mind and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members.*" That constant battle between the spirit and the flesh makes us too cry out in utter frustration: "*O wretched man that I am!! Who shall deliver me from the body of this death??"*" (Romans 7:19-24). Fortunately for Paul (and for us as well), this cry of anguish is not without its answer, the answer of **God's grace**, proclaimed to us in **the Gospel** to which our crosses drive us: "*I thank GOD, through Jesus Christ our Lord!*" (v. 25a). God, our dear heavenly Father for Jesus' sake, has already delivered us from **eternal** death and from the sting of **temporal** death as well; and He will surely deliver us at length also from the wretchedness of this battle with the flesh when He calls us to His heavenly home. Then we shall forever be rid of the Old Adam, the corrupt and plaguing "albatross" which we now still must carry about with us, and yet, at the same time, mortify by daily contrition and repentance.

In the meantime, however, we must "*endure chastening*" (Hebrews 12:7) "*now for a season*" (I Peter 1:6), as God sees fit in His perfect wisdom and according to His loving purpose, being "*in heaviness through manifold temptations, that the trial of [our] faith, being much more precious than of gold which perlsheeth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise and honor and glory at the appearing of*"

Jesus Christ” (I Peter 1:6-7). The purpose is *good*, because it flows from God’s **love** for us as His children; and it is that *good* and *salutary purpose* upon which we must keep our eyes of faith focused so that, though they be clouded over at times by tears of weakness, according to our New Man we may be “*always rejoicing*” (II Corinthians 6:10), singing with the hymnwriter:.

*Be patient and await His leisure
in **cheerful hope**, with heart content
to take whate’er thy Father’s pleasure
and His discerning **LOVE** hath sent,
nor doubt our inmost wants are known
to Him who chose us for His own.*

(TLH 518, 3)

This is a “tall order” indeed, and an impossibility for us without the comfort and assurance of the Gospel. Therefore we go to our dear heavenly Father in prayer and ask Him (as dear children here in this world ask their dear father) with all boldness and confidence: “*Lord, I believe; help Thou mine unbelief!*” (Mark 9:24). “Give me, according to Thy great love and mercy to me in Christ my Savior, a rich measure of Thy grace, which is sufficient for me; *‘for [Thy] strength is made perfect in [my] weakness’*” (II Corinthians 12:9).

And has He not already heard our plea, before we even called upon Him and before we were done speaking (Isaiah 65:24), all for the sake of His fatherly love for us in Christ Jesus?? Has He not already assured us: “*Fear not, for I have redeemed thee; I have called thee by thy name; thou art Mine! When thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee; and through the rivers, they shall not overflow thee; when thou walkest through the fire, thou shalt not be burned, neither shall the flame kindle upon thee. For I am thy God, the Holy One of Israel, thy Savior!*” (Isaiah 43:1-3a)??

Indeed, “*whom the Lord LOVETH, He chasteneth.*” And that great, yea, immeasurable and unfathomable love for us moves Him to pour out abundantly of His enabling grace, that we, **by Him**, can bear the crosses that He in **love** has laid upon us! “*Hath He spoken, and shall He not make it good?*” (Numbers 23:19). Thus, when we in faith confidently accept the cross to mortify the Old Adam, to be disciplined, exercised and instructed by the heavenly Father for our ultimate good and blessing, our New Man boldly declares with Paul: “*I can do all things*

through Christ, which strengtheneth me” (Philippians 4:13); “for it is God which worketh in [me] both to will and to do of His good pleasure” (2:13).

*What God ordains is always good;
His will abideth holy.
As He directs my life for me,
I follow meek and lowly.
My God indeed in every need
doth well know how to shield me.
To Him then I will yield me.*

(TLH 521, 1)

Let this then be our **comfort**, our **joy**, our **hope**, our **confidence**, and our never-failing **source of strength** to bear the crosses He has laid upon us, the crosses which are evidence of His fatherly LOVE to us, His dear children in Christ our Savior:

Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? As it is written, “For Thy sake we are killed all the day long; we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter.” Nay, in all these things we are MORE THAN CONQUERORS through Him that LOVED us! For I am persuaded that neither death nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from THE LOVE OF GOD which is in Christ Jesus our Lord. —Romans 8:35-39

How firm a foundation, ye saints of the Lord,
is laid for your faith in His excellent **Word**
What **more** can He say, than to you He hath said,
who unto the Savior for refuge have fled??

And then the beloved hymn-writer paraphrases our loving heavenly Father’s blessed assurance to us, as we languish beneath the cross:

“When through fiery trials thy pathway shall lie,
My grace all-sufficient shall be thy supply.
The flames shall not hurt thee; I only design
thy dross to consume and thy gold to refine.

“The soul that on Jesus hath leaned for repose,
I will not, I will not desert to his foes!
That soul, tho’ all hell should endeavor to shake,
I’ll never, no never, no NEVER FORSAKE!”

(TLH 427, 1, 5, 7)

May God grant to each of us, as He lays upon us His chastening hand, true confidence in His fatherly love for us, His adopted children by faith in Christ Jesus, that in our weakness, His grace shall be our strength to bear the cross after our Savior, yea rather, HIS strength made perfect in our weakness, until at length He removes our cup of suffering from us — *“the sufferings of this present time, [which] are not worthy to be compared with the glory that shall be revealed in us.”* (Romans 8:18). “This grant us, dear Father in heaven” [Luther, First Petition] for Jesus’ sake!

— D. T. M.

(Excerpted and adapted from the author’s convention essay on this topic, 1990)



Interim Report of the Committee on Missions

Epiphany is the season of the Church Year when we preach, teach, and bear witness to the one and only Savior for sinners, that Savior who revealed Himself in John 8 as *“the Light of the world,”* and then declared: *“He that followeth Me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life”* (v. 12). Because we were conceived *“in sin”* (Psalm 51:5b), we were in *“darkness”* (Ephesians 5:8a) at our conception and birth. No mere human being has ever been born a Christian, a child *“of light”* (v. 8b), for *“that which is born of the flesh is flesh”* (John 3:6a). This is *“the natural man”* (I Corinthians 2:14a), that is, the person conceived and born in sin, who needs to be *“born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the Word of God, which liveth and abideth forever. ... And this is the Word which by the Gospel is preached unto you”* (I Peter 1:23 and 25b). It is through this Gospel, this precious means of grace, that our gracious God has *“called [us] out of darkness into His marvelous light”* so that, in gratitude to Him, we believers, His children of light, are equipped to bring *“praises”* (I Peter 2:9b) to Him by letting our *“light [the light of our saving faith in His Gospel] so shine before men, that they may see [our] good works, and glorify [Him, our] Father which is in heaven”* (Matthew 5:16).

One of the great privileges which we, the children of light, have in the work of our Conference is willingly to support and help, as we are able, our dear brethren who are in need of our assistance (Galatians 6:2, 10; I John 3:17; James 2:15-16).

First of all, we want to report to you concerning our dear brethren at **St. Mark’s Evangelical Lutheran Church**, Sauk Village, Illinois.

- This small and economically impoverished congregation has been subsidized by our Conference ever since its membership was decimated by a sizeable defection on the part of those who forsook its confessional position and followed a *“false prophet”* (Matthew 7:15) who tickled their ears with what they wanted to hear (II Timothy 4:3). In the earnest desire fully to support their faithful pastor in accordance with God’s Word (I Corinthians 9:14; Luke 10:7; etc.), the congregation sought and received financial assistance from their Conference brethren. A monthly subsidy was again requested for the 2013-2014 Fiscal Year (June 1 – May 31), and such was granted by the 2013 Convention.

- Pastor David T. Mensing, since last July, is the called, full-time Pastor of St. Mark’s inasmuch as Pastor Paul Bloedel, in June of last year, accepted the divine call to serve as the Pastor of St. John’s Lutheran Church

in Lebanon, Oregon. Pastor Bloedel had faithfully served St. Mark's for nearly ten years. Pastor Mensing is also the called, full-time Pastor of Peace Evangelical Lutheran Church, Oak Forest, Illinois.

- Since Peace, Oak Forest, has its scheduled services on Sunday *mornings*, the Adult Bible Class at St. Mark's is on Sunday *afternoons* at 3:00 p.m., with the Worship Service following at 4:00 p.m. On Sunday evenings at 6:30, Pastor Mensing teaches an Adult Instruction Class for prospective communicant membership with three students; and on Wednesday evenings, he also teaches a Mid-week Bible Class (except during Lent, when the members of St. Mark's attend Peace's Mid-week Lenten Services).

- The voters' assembly of St. Mark's meets on the third Sunday evening of each month. Currently the voters are evaluating the feasibility of St. Mark's being able to call a **resident** Pastor, that is, one who would live in its parsonage, located on the same property as the church building, and thereby being more readily at hand to shepherd the flock, thus also relieving Pastor Mensing of his taxing double-duty.

Let us remember these dear brethren at St. Mark's in our prayers and petitions to "*the throne of grace, that [they] may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in [their] time of need*" (Hebrews 4:16b).

Secondly, we want to report to you concerning our dear brethren in far-away **Nigeria**.

- Although the nine Nigerian congregations are in fellowship with our Conference, they do not receive any monthly subsidy from our Conference, nor have they requested regular, on-going assistance, even though we are willing, as God grants us the ability, to help our dear brethren (Galatians 6:2, 10).

- However, when there is a special need, such as the debt burden of the pastors and their helpers, our United States congregations, as they are able, have provided financial assistance to these needy brethren. Let us "*be careful for nothing [not worry about our Nigerian brethren], but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let [our] requests [for these brethren in Nigeria] be made known unto God; and the peace of God which passeth all understanding, shall keep [our] hearts and minds through Christ Jesus*" (Philippians 4:6-7), confident that as we pray according to the will and Word of our gracious God, "*He heareth us; and, if we know that He hear us, whatsoever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we desired of Him*" (I John 5:14b-15).

Our **third** report is concerning our dear brethren in far off **Russia**.

- Pastor Roman Schurganoff and his flock in Ekaterinburg continue to express their gratitude for the monthly subsidy provided to them by our Conference.

- We are happy to report that the health of Pastor Schurganoff is much improved, allowing him regularly to carry forward the work of faithfully ministering to his dear flock, as well as doing mission work outside of his congregation.

- Brother Schurganoff is using and happy with the Rosetta Stone English course, especially with its emphasis on proper pronunciation when speaking the English words.

- The delegates to the 2013 Convention of our Conference provided Pastor Schurganoff with a special monthly stipend to assist him in lowering his family's past medical debt. This has been a big help in decreasing this burden. We thank our gracious God for enabling us to assist him in this effort.

- The average attendance at his twice-a-month library lectures has greatly increased in recent months. Some who attend these lectures have also been attending the congregation's Sunday worship services. In fact, two of those library attendees have now become members of the Ekaterinburg congregation.

- Pastor Schurganoff speaks highly of the fruits of his people as they share their Christian faith more and more with their relatives and friends.

Let us remember that "*the eyes of the Lord are over the righteous, and His ears are open unto their prayers*" (I Peter 3:12a), also unto our prayers as we intercede for our brethren in Russia.

As we ponder the future work of our Conference in assisting and encouraging our dear brethren in their on-going, important work in the Lord's kingdom of grace, let us take careful note of the Apostle Paul's instruction in Galatians 6: "*As we have therefore opportunity, let us do good unto all men, especially unto them who are of the household of faith*" (v. 10). Why ought we continue to do good to our brethren, especially those who are in need? We should continue to look upon helping our needy brethren as a blessed *privilege* because of how our merciful God has marvelously helped us by His "*grace, . . . not of [our] works, lest any man should boast*" (Ephesians 2:8-9), graciously helped us through the perfect, completely satisfactory, and finished work of His dear Son, our only Savior, "*who gave Himself for us, that He might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto Himself a peculiar [special] people, zealous of good works*" (Titus 2:14), ever living for "*Him [who] died for [us] and rose again*" (II Corinthians 5:15).

Pastor Robert J. Lietz,
Chairman of the Committee on Missions

Churches in Fellowship

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Ekaterinburg, Russia

The Rev. Roman G. Schurganoff, Pastor

P. O. Box 27

620039 Ekaterinburg, RUSSIA

E-mail: Schurganoff@mail.ru

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

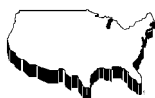
The Rev. Nimi B. Fyeface and

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

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Directory of Member Congregations

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GOOD SHEPHERD EV. LUTHERAN CHURCH

On the Web at:

4090 S. Melpomene Way, Tucson, AZ 85730 GoodShepherdLutheranChurchTucson.com

Worship Service 9:30 a.m.

Telephone (520) 721-7618

Sunday School & Bible Class 10:45 a.m.

The Rev. DAVID G. REDLIN, Pastor

4050 South Melpomene Way, Tucson, AZ 85730

Pastor: (520) 721-7618

E-mail: david.redlin@q.com

PEACE EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH

On the Web at:

Central Avenue at 171st Place, Oak Forest, IL 60452-4913 PeaceEvLutheran.com

Sunday School & Bible Class 8:30 a.m.

Telephone: (708) 532-4288

Worship Service 10:00 a.m.

The Rev. DAVID T. MENSING, Pastor

17151 South Central Avenue, Oak Forest, IL 60452-4913

Pastor: (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

Pastor: (541) 258-2941

E-mail: revbloedel@gmail.com

ST. LUKE'S LUTHERAN CHURCH

On the Web at:

5350 South Fountain Street, Seattle, WA 98178

StLukes-CLC.com

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

Telephone: (206) 723-1078

Worship Service 10:30 a.m.

The Rev. EDWARD J. WORLEY, Pastor

9658 – 54th Avenue South, Seattle, WA 98118

Pastor: (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

On the Web at:

22012 Torrence Avenue, Sauk Village, IL 60411

StMarksEvLutheran.com

Adult Bible Class 3:00 p.m.

Telephone: (708) 757-6859

Worship Service 4:00 p.m.

The Rev. DAVID T. MENSING, Pastor

17151 South Central Avenue, Oak Forest, IL 60452-4913

Pastor: (708) 532-9035

E-mail: pastormensing@yahoo.com

TRINITY EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH

On the Web at:

300 North Ridgeland Avenue, Oak Park, IL 60302

TrinityEvLutheran.com

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

Telephone: (708) 386-6773

Worship Service 10:15 a.m.

The Rev. ROBERT J. LIETZ, Pastor

233 North Cuyler Avenue, Oak Park, IL 60302

Pastor: (708) 386-4145

E-mail: robertjlietz@yahoo.com

Christ's Miracles

The purpose of CHRIST'S miracles recorded in Holy Writ is clear and indisputable: "*These are written that ye might BELIEVE that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing ye might HAVE LIFE through His Name*" (John 20:31), the most salutary purpose of all. For His miracles have, for OUR sakes, validated Jesus of Nazareth not only as "*the Mighty God*" but as "*the Prince of Peace,*" (Isaiah 9:6), "*the Holy One of Israel, [our] Savior*" (Isaiah 43:3). The record of His miracles has thus been made a functional part of the Gospel message, "*the power of God unto salvation,*" through which the Holy Spirit operates in our hearts to "*make [us] wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus*" (II Timothy 3:15). May we therefore treasure the holy record of our Savior's miracles, value the manifestation of His glory to us, cling to the validation of His office as our anointed Redeemer, and ever confide in the forgiveness of all our sins by virtue of His perfect vicarious atonement!

(Excerpt from *The Purpose of Christ's Miracles in His Epiphany*, pg. 7)