

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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“Ye shall be
witnesses
unto Me.”

— Acts 1:8



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STATEMENT OF PURPOSE:

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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New Year's Meditation



“Go to now, ye that say, ‘Today or tomorrow we will go into such a city, and continue there a year, and buy and sell, and get gain,’ whereas ye know not what shall be on the morrow. For what is your life? It is even a vapor that appeareth for a little time and then vanisheth away. For that ye ought to say, ‘If the Lord will, we shall live and do this or that.’” —James 4:13-15

These inspired words of the Apostle James tell us what the God-pleasing attitude should be of those who call themselves Christians. How necessary this is as we begin another year of grace. We dare not yield to the desires of our sinful flesh which would have us to believe that we are completely in control of every aspect of our lives. This is, of course, the attitude of the unbelieving children of the world. “People make their plans for journeys, for the expansion of their business, for the accumulating of wealth without taking the Lord into account” (P. E. Kretzmann, *Popular Commentary, N. T.*, II, p. 512). Unfortunately such an attitude is found even among some who would like to be known as Christians. I am reminded of the well-known scientist, Wernher von Braun (1912-1977), who was probably the most prominent rocket scientist and astronautic engineer in the development of the space program during the latter part of the 1940’s. As a youth he had been confirmed as a Lutheran in Germany and, at the end of World War II, was brought to the United States to apply his knowledge of physics and rocket design to our country’s ICBM program and later to its space exploration effort. He claimed a belief in God, but, at the same time, when questioned about man launching into space stated, “Don’t tell me that man doesn’t belong out there. Man can go wherever he wants to go.” His attitude was characteristic of so many today: “I can do whatever I set my mind to do!”

Note what is missing! The Apostle tells us: *“If the Lord will, we shall live, and do this, or that.”* The hymnwriter states it so nicely: *“All depends on our possessing God’s abundant grace and blessing”* (TLH, 425, 1). Here we have the God-pleasing attitude of everyone who is a true believing child of God through faith in Jesus, our only Savior. Whatever our plans may be for the time which the Lord has allotted to

us in our brief life span should always be motivated by our love to our dear Savior, who loved us and gave Himself for us. As the Apostle Paul confessed: *“The love of Christ constraineth us”* (II Corinthians 5:14). And the Apostle John says: *“We love Him, because He first loved us”* (I John 4:19).

Being sincere Christians, the plans which we make should begin with prayer. *“With the Lord begin thy task; Jesus will direct it. For His aid and counsel ask; Jesus will perfect it”* (TLH, 540, 1). We ask Him graciously to lead and guide us so that our plans may be for His glory and for the welfare chiefly of our souls. How can our plans be pleasing to God if, for example, they involve leaving the congregation where our souls are fed with the pure Word of God for what may appear to be mere temporal gain? The Lord Jesus warns: *“For what is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?”* (Matthew 16:26). Therefore, in all things, our first consideration must always be the Lord and His Word and never the serving of our flesh which would only lead to ruination. *“In all thy ways acknowledge Him, and He shall direct thy paths”* (Proverbs 3:6).

Having asked the Lord to lead us in the formulation of our plans, we then have the blessed assurance that He will also provide us with strength from on high and give us the necessary wisdom as we look to Him for counsel and aid. But, as we proceed to make and carry out our plans, we Christians often find that matters do not always take the turn we would like them to take. There are so many things which trouble and distress us. What are we to do? Again the answer comes from the Lord through the pen of the Apostle: *“If the Lord will, we shall live, and do this, or that.”*

We Christians should always bow to the gracious will of our dear heavenly Father, who loves us. Therefore *“I leave all things to God’s direction; He loveth me in weal and woe. His will is good, true His affection”* (TLH, 529, 1). We Christians always do the right thing in submitting to the will of our God! Look at the splendid example of Joseph. We have the revelation of God’s will for us in our Bible; but poor Joseph did not have that blessed advantage when his brothers so shamefully sold him into slavery. Nevertheless, do we read in the account that Joseph criticized the will of God? No, on the contrary, we hear Joseph tell his fear-ridden brothers: *“Fear not; for am I in the place of God? But as for you, ye thought evil against me; but God meant it unto good, to bring to pass, as it is this day, to save much people alive”* (Genesis

50:19–20). Look at the example of pious Job after he had been deprived of almost all of his possessions and his seven sons and three daughters. He declared: “*The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord.*” *In all this Job sinned not, nor charged God foolishly*” (Job 1:21–22). In the New Testament, we hear the Apostle Paul tell the members of the Christian congregation in Rome: “*For God is my witness, whom I serve with my spirit in the Gospel of His Son ... making request, if by any means now at length I might have a prosperous journey by the will of God to come unto you*” (Romans 1:9–10). And then, at the end of that same epistle, he once again tells them: “*That I may come unto you with joy by the will of God, and may with you be refreshed*” (15:32).

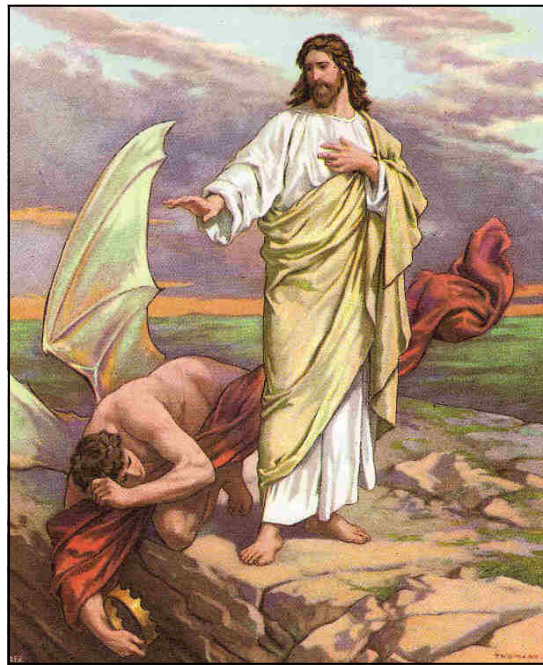
What a wonderful comfort this is for us Christians as we enter upon a new year of grace: The will of God is always best — God never makes a mistake! We sing in that fine Scriptural hymn: “*The will of God is always best and shall be done forever; and they who trust in Him are blest; He will forsake them never. He helps indeed in time of need; He chastens with forbearing. They who depend on God, their Friend, shall not be left despairing*” (TLH, 517, 1). We do not know what the future holds for us as a Conference of local congregations or as individuals. That God alone knows. We observe how the economical situation in our country continues to deteriorate. Daily the news media report that many businesses are being forced to close because of the poor economy. This means, of course, that the unemployment rate rises. In fact, there are those in our congregations who have already lost their jobs and are having difficulty finding another one. Such times serve as a testing of our trust in the Lord and His promises. “*Whom the Lord loveth He chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom He receiveth*” (Hebrews 12:6).

We Christians must remind ourselves that we do not rest in the hand of an angry Father, but rather in the hand of Him who loves us in His dear Son. He always has our welfare at heart. Has He not proven this beyond a shadow of a doubt? When we were on our way to everlasting destruction because of our sins, “*for the wages of sin is death*” (Romans 6:23), He sent His only-begotten Son into the world to redeem us from sin, death, and hell. “*For God so loved the world that He gave His only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life*” (John 3:16). And even more than that! He has had this message of salvation preached to us; and through this life-giving Word the Holy Ghost has worked the saving faith within our hearts so that we have been born again, “*not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the Word of*

God, which liveth and abideth forever” (I Peter 1:23). Dressed in the spotless, all-sufficient atoning blood of the Savior, “there is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus” (Romans 8:1).

Come what may during this new year, we should cheerfully commend ourselves willingly into the hands of our dear Lord, knowing that He does not hate us but that He loves us. Whatever affliction there may be for us during this coming year, we know that it must be for our good (Romans 8:28), that He thereby intends to purify our faith so that we learn to turn our gaze more and more away from this life to the everlasting life in our heavenly home. We therefore declare with the Psalmist: *“I delight to do Thy will, O my God” (40:8).*

—M. L. N.



The Temptation of Christ

Matthew 4:1-11

The Temptation of Christ— For Our Comfort and Salvation

*“For in that He Himself hath suffered being tempted,
He is able to succor them that are tempted.”*

—Hebrews 2:18

The account of Jesus’ temptation by the devil in the wilderness has been recorded “*for our learning*” (Romans 15:4) in Matthew 4:1–11, Mark 1:12–13, and Luke 4:1–13. This Bible narrative is often used merely to give important instruction, by way of the Savior’s own example, as to how we too can resist the devil and cause him to flee from us (James 4:7), namely, by using the Word of God as our spiritual armor and weaponry (Ephesians 6:11–17), as Jesus did. However, in the above-quoted verse of Holy Scripture (Hebrews 2:18), the temptation of the Savior is not mentioned as an admonition to follow His example, but is rather here cited to be of comfort to us when we are subjected to Satan’s temptations. That Christ is able to “*succor*” us simply means that He is able to *help* us. Because Jesus suffered real temptations as a *true human being*, He is able to relate to us in our spiritual struggles against the devil; and because Jesus is also *true God*, He is able to give us the aid that we need the most when we are assailed by the devil’s temptations. But is it not true that, because Jesus is God and since it is impossible for God to sin (Isaiah 6:3), it was really impossible for Jesus to give in to the temptations of the devil and to transgress any part of God’s holy Law? Yes, it is true that it was impossible for Jesus to sin and to violate His holiness, just as it is impossible for God to violate any of His divine attributes (II Timothy 2:13). This, however, does *not* mean that the temptations that Jesus endured were not real temptations. When the devil tempted Him, saying: “*If Thou be the Son of God, command that these stones be made bread*” (Matthew 4:3)—thus calling into question Christ’s divine sonship, as well as the Father’s providential care of Him—it was an impossibility for Jesus to obey Satan and thus to sin. But this was still a real and serious temptation because, being in His state of humiliation, Jesus’ true human body experienced real, serious, intense *hunger*, with all of the pains and cravings that go along with it—since Jesus kept food from His body for a period of “*forty days and forty nights*” (Matthew 4:2).

Certainly, Jesus, as a true Man, knows what it is like to be tempted by the

devil; and, thankfully, He is also able to help us in every time of temptation in ways that no mere human can. As our exalted Lord God in the heavens, He keeps Satan in bounds and restricts what he is capable of doing against us. Just as the Lord set specific limits to what the devil could do to Job (Job 1:12; 2:6), even while He was allowing Job to suffer much at the Tempter's hand, so He also restrains the devil in his attacks against us. Through the new man that we received when the Holy Ghost brought us to faith, the Lord has given us the ability to "*resist the devil*" (James 4:7)—though our sinful flesh would rather yield to him (Matthew 26:41; Romans 7:15–23). For our comfort, God has promised that He will not allow any temptation to come upon us that is greater than our ability to resist—the ability He has given us by the working of His Spirit through the Gospel. "*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*" (I Corinthians 10:13). The Lord, who abides faithful to His Word at all times (II Timothy 2:13), here promises that He will always "*make a way to escape*" whatever temptation He allows to beset us. Sadly, and to our shame, we do not always take the provided "*way to escape*"; but this is certainly not the fault of our gracious Lord—it does not mean that He was unfaithful to His promise of not allowing too great a temptation to befall us. If and when we fall, the fall is of our own making (James 1:13-15). The devil can only operate within the confines that God sets for Him; and, thankfully, Christ, our God and Lord, is on our side and will help us in all of our spiritual battles—knowing exactly what we are enduring, having Himself endured the devil's temptations. "*For in that He Himself hath suffered being tempted, He is able to succor them that are tempted*" (Hebrews 2:18).

Later in this Epistle to the Hebrews, the fact that Christ endured all manner of temptation is again stressed together with an exhortation to come boldly to the Lord for help in every time of need. "*For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities, but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin. Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need*" (Hebrews 4:15–16). Though He never gave in to any of the devil's temptations, the Lord Jesus was truly tempted just as we are. He can, therefore, completely sympathize with us and provide us with the exact help we need as we "*wrestle...against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places*" (Ephesians 6:12). Therefore, in times of temptation, let us not attempt to fight Satan alone (in which endeavor we would most certainly fail); but let us come boldly

in the name of Christ to the throne of grace—seeking the aid that He has promised us in our ongoing battles against the devil and his cunning temptations, and being assured of the Lord’s mercy and grace in granting us the help that we so desperately need when Satan seeks to devour us (I Peter 5:8; II Thessalonians 3:3).

Though it is through such prayers that Christ wants us to seek His help for spiritual strengthening at all times of temptation, and though He certainly will grant us the promised “*succor*” in answer to our prayers, yet it is important to remember that it is *not through the prayers themselves* that we receive His aid. Rather, God has given us the means of His Word and Sacraments to build up our spiritual defenses. In His high-priestly prayer for His disciples on the night of His betrayal, Jesus besought His heavenly Father to increase their ability to resist the devil and to walk in holiness, saying: “*Sanctify them through Thy truth: Thy Word is truth*” (John 17:17). It is specifically the *Gospel* of God’s love for us in Christ Jesus that moves us to love Him in return and to show that love by following His Commandments and shunning the devil’s temptations (I John 4:19, 5:3). Accordingly, the Apostle Paul writes to the Romans: “*I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service*” (12:1).

In addition to the *written Gospel*, the Lord has also graciously given us what is sometimes called the “visible Gospel,” namely, the *Sacraments*, for the strengthening of our faith and for the ability to resist the temptations of Satan. Every time we receive the true body and blood of Christ—given and shed for us “*for the remission of sins*” (Matthew 26:28)—offered to us in the *Sacrament of the Altar*, we should “*show the Lord’s death*” (I Corinthians 11:26), namely, “remember and proclaim His death,” as Luther puts it, and as Christ Himself says: “*This do in remembrance of Me*” (Luke 22:19). And though the *Sacrament of Baptism* (unlike the Lord’s Supper) is received only *once* in a Christian’s life, yet its Gospel-effects are on-going and beneficial as we daily remember and ponder in our hearts the gracious promises of the Lord concerning Baptism (such as I Peter 3:21, Acts 22:16, Galatians 3:27, Romans 6:3) and respond to God’s grace in Christ Jesus by daily renewing our Baptismal vow of serving only the Triune God and renouncing the devil with all his wicked works and ways. Thus we receive the edifying power of the Gospel in the *Sacraments*, through which Christ succors, or helps, us to stand fast against the devil’s crafty devices.

There is actually Gospel comfort and strengthening for us in Christ's own resisting of the Tempter, since He overcame every temptation of the evil foe *in our place*. This was part of His *active obedience* (His life of perfect holiness), which was accomplished by the Lord Jesus *vicariously*—as the Substitute for all mankind. We share in the victory of Christ over Satan, which frees us from the condemnation that resulted from Satan's victory over Adam and Eve. Our first parents were unsuccessful in resisting the temptation of the devil, and thus they brought upon themselves and all of their offspring the consequences of sin and death. As we are born into this world, we are *spiritually dead*, our bodies are subject to *temporal death*, and we are worthy of *eternal death* in hell. In this condition by nature we could only follow the devil and provoke God's wrath. Writing to the Ephesian Christians, St. Paul says: “[Ye] were dead in trespasses and sins; wherein in time past ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air [the devil], the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience, among whom also we all had our conversation in times past in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and were by nature the children of wrath, even as others” (Ephesians 2:1–3). Thankfully, though Adam and Eve willingly yielded to Satan's temptation in the Garden of Eden and plunged themselves and us into this horrible condition, *Christ's victory over the devil's temptation has secured for all mankind salvation*. By virtue of the perfect active obedience of the Savior, every sinner on earth has been graciously *justified*, or declared righteous and forgiven. “For if by one man's [namely, Adam's] offense death reigned by one, much more they which receive abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness shall reign in life by one, Jesus Christ. Therefore as by the offense of one judgment came upon all men to condemnation, even so by the righteousness of One [Christ] the free gift came upon all men unto justification of life. For as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of One shall many be made righteous” (Romans 5:17–19).

Now it might be thought that this glorious message of the Gospel would cause people to become *less* concerned about resisting the devil themselves since Christ has overcome the devil in their place. And it is true that the carnally-minded in this very way abuse the Gospel of God's grace—thinking that they are safe to live in unrepented sin. However, with true Christians, the exact opposite is the case—the grace of God in Christ Jesus is that which “*constrains*” them in their new man to live in His service rather than in the service of the devil. “*The love of Christ constraineth us, because we thus judge, that if One died for all, then were*

all dead; and that He died for all, that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves but unto Him which died for them and rose again” (II Corinthians 5:14–15). The active obedience of Christ (His holy life), as well as His passive obedience (His suffering and death), as set forth in the Gospel, are what move the Christian, according to his new man, to respond in love and gratitude to the grace of God by following His Commandments and gladly shunning what displeases Him. Accordingly, the knowledge of Jesus’ conquering of the devil in our behalf, for the eternal salvation of our souls and for the great comfort that this brings to the heart of a penitent sinner, gives us Christians the “*succor*,” the help, to become stronger in our own battles against the devil and better at resisting his crafty devices. Therefore we should, most certainly, take to heart, as our example, the way Jesus answered and rejected each temptation of the wicked one with the power and authority of the Scriptures; and we should apply this method in our own conflicts with the devil.

May we never fall prey to the lie (which Satan promotes) that there is no point in trying to resist his temptations because it is impossible for us to avoid sin completely. This is a tactic used by the father of lies (John 8:44) to get us to follow him without even putting up a fight — regarding sin to be inevitable. While it is a sad truth, as the Scriptures clearly teach, that it is impossible for us to rid ourselves of the influence of our flesh in leading us into all manner of wickedness (Romans 7:14–23; Galatians 5:17), it is *not* true that we are powerless to resist Satan’s temptations. The Lord tells us in His Word that we can “*resist the devil*” and cause him to “*flee from [us]*” (James 4:7) by the power of the Spirit working in our hearts through the Gospel. And, thankfully, even in our most private struggles against the devil, we do not have to face him alone. The Son of God, who Himself endured the devil’s temptations, provides us with the help that we need when we are being tempted, setting limits to what the devil can do to us and increasing our ability to resist him through the power of the Gospel.

*Jesus Christ, be Thou our Stay; oh, let us perish never!
Cleanse us from our sins, we pray, and grant us life forever.
Keep us from the Evil One; uphold our faith most holy.
Grant us to trust Thee solely with humble hearts and lowly.
Let us put God’s armor on, with all true Christians running
our heavenly race and shunning the devil’s wiles and cunning.
Amen, Amen, this be done; so sing we, Hallelujah!*

(TLH 247, v. 2)

—P. E. B.

Focus on Personal Christian Missionwork

“Ye shall be witnesses unto Me.”

—Acts 1:8



The holy Epiphany Season is traditionally that time on our Christian church calendar during which we focus particularly on **mission work**. Jesus, our Divine Prophet, is of course our perfect example in this effort as we witness in the Gospels His *epiphany* or manifestation of Himself to men by His preaching and by His miracles. During His public ministry here on earth in His *State of Humiliation*, He testified and demonstrated irrefutably that He is the Son of God and the Redeemer of the world. However, also in His *State of Exaltation* at the right hand of God, Christ CONTIN-

UES to function as our Divine Prophet as He sends men, as incumbents of the Pastoral Office, to proclaim and to teach His Word — as His mouthpieces (Luke 10:16), as His ambassadors (II Corinthians 5:20), as His stewards (I Corinthians 4:1), and as undershepherds and bishops over His local flocks (Acts 20:28; I Peter 5:2-4).

But **mission work** is not only the task and privilege of Christian pastors. “Getting the Word out” — “*the Word of Reconciliation*” (II Corinthians 5:19) that God “*in Christ*” —in view of, that is, in consideration of, Christ’s perfect and all-sufficient *vicarious atonement* (Isaiah 53:4-6; II Corinthians 5:21) which satisfied God’s justice with respect to sinful mankind (Romans 3:25; I John 2:2)— forgave the sins of the whole world, no longer charging to sinners their trespasses but declaring all men righteous in His sight— getting that “Word” out requires no specialized theological training. But it does require, on the part of those who would spread it

faithfully and sincerely, true faith in Jesus Christ as the Son of God, as the Redeemer of the world, and as the Propitiation for the sins of all mankind. It does require childlike confidence of the heart in His merits alone for salvation and in the blessings of forgiveness and everlasting life as God's free gift for Jesus' sake. And it does require humble gratitude to the God of all grace for thus manifesting His love and mercy to all the world in His only-begotten Son (I John 4:9). For it is "*the love of Christ [that] constraineth us*" (II Corinthians 5:14) to speak up boldly about Him; "*out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh,*" Jesus says (Matthew 12:34); and the Savior Himself makes confession of Him before men both the evidence and a test of true faith (Matthew 10:32). And so we ask ourselves with the hymnwriter:

*"Can we whose souls are lighted with wisdom from on high,
can we to men benighted the Lamp of Life deny??"*

(TLH 495, 3)

And then we gladly answer that obviously rhetorical question with the apostles in Acts 4:20, "*We cannot but speak the things which we have seen and heard!*" The grateful shepherds did it (Luke 2:17)! The early Christians did it (Acts 8:4)! And we too, motivated by the precious Gospel "*both to will and to do of His good pleasure*" (Philippians 2:13), can be witnesses unto our Savior, offering our voices, our gifts, our talents, and even our funds in the cause of Christian mission work, saying with Isaiah, "*Here am I; send ME!*" (Isaiah 6:8).

Jesus Himself is, of course, our perfect example in this noble cause; and He gives us in John chapter four, in a marvelous *Epiphany* narrative, the record of *His own* personal mission work as a sort of *prototype* after which to pattern our efforts. He shows us how to "break the ice" with a prospective mission target, opening the door, as it were, to a potentially fruitful "conversation." He shows us how to direct that conversation from the temporal to the spiritual. He shows us how to "create the need" for salvation in the mind of an otherwise secure soul by showing in the mirror of God's Law the sinner's wretchedness in the sight of God and his helplessness to save himself. He shows us how to deal effectively with objections from those who are quite satisfied with a "religion of their own." And He shows us how to demonstrate the superiority and surety of justification by God's grace over the futility and impossibility of justification by the Law. But THAT is as far as our mission work can go. We "*plant;*" we "*water;*" but God gives "*the increase*" (I Corinthians 3:6).

If we want to get any mission work done (which, after all, is our **priority task** as His disciples according to our title-text), 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, of course, even on a one-to-one basis; and Jesus Himself, in His *State of Humiliation*, often became weary and worn out from preaching and teaching, from exhorting and beseeching. In John 4, where we find Jesus “on the road again,” *en route* from Judea to Galilee, He takes a break at noontime, sits down on the edge of Jacob’s well just outside the city of Sychar in Samaria, and waits for His disciples, who had gone into town to pick up something for lunch. Having no pitcher with which to draw water, He puts His thirst on “hold” and just rests (vv. 4-6, 8).

Soon the solitude is broken, however, as “*there cometh a woman of Samaria to draw water. Jesus saith unto her: ‘Give me to drink’*” (v. 7). Jesus uses 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**. We rather easily talk about the weather, road conditions, our children, economic conditions in our country, sports, and even health situations. And we can make use of any of those things — and even many more — as starting points for a conversation that we eventually want to turn into a discussion about what is **most important** to us in our lives and what makes us **truly happy** and **content** in time and for eternity.

“*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’*” (v. 9). The conversation is barely off the ground, and they hit a snag! And what is it, but plain old prejudice — historical prejudice, social prejudice, ethnic and racial prejudice! “You Jews think that we Samaritans are the scum of the earth, unclean, not worth a second glance —just because five-hundred 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 you ask *me* to pour *you* a cup of water?? What’s with you anyway?” That is exactly where the conversation stops for many people. They avoid confrontation “at any cost,” and

they'd rather just go on their way than take up the challenge of engaging a person with an "attitude problem." But is that what Jesus did?? —Is that what He did, is that what He does, in *your* case and *mine*??

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 (vv. 17-18). She was a "slut" by reputation —the women of the city had nothing to do with her, just the men (v. 28)— and her religion was a hodgepodge of truth and error, of faith and superstition, of Messianic Old Testament Christianity and plain paganism (vv. 20-26)! 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 to-day, in our fleshly arrogance, would give such a person the "cold shoulder" and look for a more up and coming prospect.)

But 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; also Ecclesiastes 7:20). 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*" —everlasting death in the fire of hell! Yes, it is our **guilt**, as we see ourselves in the mirror of God's 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 (cf. Luke 16:24)! And Jesus did not hesitate to show the woman her sins, to embarrass her with His knowledge of them, and to create the thirst of **guilt** in her heart!

*"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 angels 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 now stilled for Jesus' sake, and He has now 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 how Jesus identified it to the Samaritan woman: "*The **GIFT** of GOD,*" free for the taking! "*Living water,*" life-giving, thirst-quenching water poured out by Jesus, the **Fountain of Salvation!**

But the woman 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.*" "*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?'*" (vv. 11-12). She's looking for the wrong water, isn't she? She's looking for water she can **see**, water she has 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 IS TO THE TRUTH when she asks Jesus: "*Art Thou greater than our father, Jacob?*" Why, it was the patriarch, **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'*" (vv. 13-14). Spiritual thirst brought about by guilt before God cannot be relieved by water dug by men, 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 it 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 the sinner to God and bring back that awful thirst of guilt (Romans 8:1). For Jesus promised the woman of Samaria, and promises you and me: "*Whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him in no wise shall thirst **forever***" (v. 14a), the Greek original says, shall not suffer the **eternal** thirst, the shame and contempt and **everlasting** estrangement from God **in the fire of hell** (Cf. Matthew 25:41; Luke 16:24; Isaiah 66:24; Mark 9:43-44).

And Jesus, our **Fountain** of *living water*, will not dry up on us like the wells of this world —will not let us down like the assurances of this world in which people trust day by day — the assurances of God’s favor for those who live “on the level and the square,” who “do a good turn daily,” who are “downright upright” in their dealings, and who serve the “social gospel” of philanthropy by their humanitarian and altruistic deeds. 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*” (v. 14). The **perfect refreshment** for sin-parched souls will never run out (Romans 5:20-21; Psalm 118:1). **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 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! We talk about these things every day: The value of **money** fluctuates on a daily basis, **stocks** go up and down, **companies** fail —even insurance companies— **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! That’s the “**hard** news” that we need to share with people in order to make them long for something **more**, something **better**, something more **valuable** than temporal relief, something that **lasts** into eternity!

Unbelievers will not have the “*gift of God*” (cf. also Ephesians 2:8) 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 offered by

Him 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 12:48).

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 citizenship, bought and paid for by our Savior, is 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 in it enduring comfort and refreshment for our souls unto everlasting life and also **share with others** its saving message, “*the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ*” (II Corinthians 4:6)! 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!*

(TLH 264, 5)

— D. T. M.

Why Preach Christ to Those Who Have a "Religion" of Their Own?

“At that time ye were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world. But now in Christ Jesus, ye who sometimes were far off are made nigh by the blood of Christ.”

— Ephesians 2:12 and 13

The key word for the proper consideration of our question is “religion.” We need to know the proper definition of that key word. “Some propose to define ‘religion in general’ as ‘the personal relation of man to God.’ This definition is widely accepted in our day. ...Luthardt offers the same definition: ‘Though the designations of what we call religion may be different, all of them express a relation to the deity of a more or less internal and personal nature. And this I think we may call the general concept of religion’” (F. Pieper, *Christian Dogmatics*, Vol. I, p. 11).

Longman’s English Dictionary defines religion as “belief in one or more gods,” and adds that “almost every country has some form of religion.” The commentary is true. But the heathen create and worship idols and deities which are fashioned after *creatures* of God—both man and the animals— worshipping and serving “*the creature more than the Creator, who is blessed forever*” (Romans 1:23 and 25), quite contrary to the reason behind the creation of man by God in the first place, to His own glory.

There are only two essentially different religions in the world. They are the Christian and heathen religions. Both use the term “religion” derived from a Latin word, *religio*; but the two are quite opposite to each other and can never be compromised in any way because they are absolutely contradictory to each other.

The religion of the heathen is man’s own endeavour to placate the deity through his own effort, works, worship, sacrifices, moral exercises, etc. Such religion is nothing but the religion of the **Law** and therefore cannot save. The Word of God in Romans 3:20 says: “*Therefore by the deeds of the Law there shall no flesh be justified in His [God’s] sight; for by*

the Law is the knowledge of sin;” and also in Galatians 2:16, God’s Word says: “*Knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the Law, but by the faith of Jesus Christ, even we have believed in Jesus Christ, that we might be justified by the faith of Christ, and not by the works of the Law; for by the works of the Law shall no flesh be justified.*” The heathen religion doesn’t give the despairing man any hope for forgiveness, salvation and eternal life because it is “*without Christ.*” God’s infallible Word says: “*That at that time ye were **without Christ**, being **aliens** from the commonwealth of Israel, and **strangers** from the covenants of promise, having **NO HOPE**, and **WITHOUT GOD** in the world*” (Ephesians 2:12). The verse describes the estrangement of the Gentiles before coming to faith in Christ as being “*without the Messiah,*” making their worshiping or so-called religious activities hopeless and futile and therefore unable to save. There can be no doubt about that result because Jesus says in clear and simple words: “*I am the way, the truth, and the life. No man cometh unto the Father, but by Me*” (John 14:6). And the Apostle Peter said the same to the leaders of the Jews: “*Neither is there salvation in any other; for there is none other name under heaven, given among men, whereby we must be saved*” (Acts 4:12).

The heathen religion therefore gives false hope to the foolish natural man, who cannot discern the things of God, according to the Apostle Paul in I Corinthians 2:14, where he says, “*But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness unto him, neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.*” Those sacrifices purportedly offered to God by the heathen in order to gain His favour are offered to devils (I Corinthians 10:20). The heathen religion therefore is nothing but IDOLATRY forbidden by our God as found written in Exodus 20:3-6 (the *First Commandment*), and in many other passages such as Matthew 4:10, where Jesus Himself quotes Scripture, saying: “*It is written: Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and Him only shalt thou serve.*” (Cf. Exodus 34:14; Psalm 81:9-10; etc.).

On the other hand the *Christian* religion, or the religion of the *Gospel*, is the only religion that is perfect and unsurpassable because its source and norm is not the word of men but God’s own Word, which is perfect and beyond criticism. Its perfection is so absolute that it requires no supplementation or improvement and cannot be developed to any other higher degree or level of perfection. The Christian religion is therefore the worship of the only true and living God (Jeremiah 10:10) according to the doctrines and words taught to men by the Holy Ghost (I Corinthians 2:13) by divine inspiration (II Timothy 3:16). And the only true and

saving faith, based alone on that Word (Ephesians 2:20) is the belief divinely wrought and engendered by the Holy Ghost through the means of grace (Romans 10:17; II Thessalonians 2:14; etc.). It is the only religion that brings out and teaches as its central doctrine the true fact that God has been reconciled to the sinner without any works on the part of man but through the vicarious satisfaction (atonement) of Christ Jesus, and that forgiveness and salvation is a free gift from God to man, appropriated by the sinner through faith in the Saviour Jesus Christ.

This is the reason for the Lord's Great Commission clearly stated in Mark 16:15-16: "*Go ye into all the world and preach the Gospel to every creature [that is, to all mankind]: He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved, but he that believeth not shall be damned.*" The Christian religion gives hope to the poor wretched but penitent sinner because it brings to him the Saviour, Jesus Christ, and His finished work of atonement; it conveys the love of God and the forgiveness of sins to him, purchased by Christ in satisfaction of God's justice (I John 4:9). In Acts 26:16-18, our Lord said to the Apostle Paul: "*But rise, and stand upon thy feet; for I have appeared unto thee for this purpose, to make thee a minister and a witness both of these things which thou hast seen and of those things in the which I will appear unto thee, delivering thee from the people, and from the Gentiles, unto whom now I send thee; to open their eyes, and to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins, and inheritance among them which are sanctified by faith that is in Me.*" What a GREAT Commission this is!!

It is therefore the Lord's command that only the Christian religion be preached to all the people in the world, because He wants "*all men to be saved and to come unto knowledge of the truth*" which is in Christ Jesus (I Timothy 2:4-5), and it is the only saving religion (Acts 4:12). Any other religion or form of worship, libation, rituals or sacrifices, works, etc. outside the Christian religion is entirely an abomination in the sight of God, the very opposite of the true worship, and is man-made not of God. Anyone or nation without the only true Christian religion is still in darkness (Isaiah 42:7; Luke 1:79) and must be enlightened by the Holy Ghost through the Gospel to see the Light of God, which is Christ Jesus (II Corinthians 4:6).

Hence in the 13th verse of Ephesians 2, the Christians at Ephesus, having heard from Paul and believed the Gospel of the true Christian religion, having come to faith and been made alive in Christ Jesus, the Saviour of mankind, everything in their lives now turns from death unto life,

from the awful consequences of sin unto salvation, and from HOPELESSNESS unto everlasting PEACE and JOY. This will always be the benefit of all those who believe the only God-approved religion, the religion of the Gospel, the religion of grace without works. Any other religion dishonours God; and from such we should run away and reject, always observing only those things the Saviour has commanded us (Matthew 28:20). May the Lord continue to be with us according to His promise as we, by His grace and nourished by His Word, strictly abide in His true and only saving religion!

—N. B. F.

*See the blindness of the heathen,
strangers to Thy glorious Light,
straying hopeless in the darkness,
wandering aimless in the night.*

*See their pitiful condition!
Lo, gross darkness covers all,
and no ray of hope refreshes
nor dispels the dreadful pall.*

*Knowing Thee and Thy salvation,
grateful love dare never cease
to proclaim Thy tender mercies,
gracious Lord, Thy heavenly peace!
Sound we forth the Gospel tidings
to the earth's remotest place,
that in Christ all have been pardoned
as the gift of Thy free grace!*

TLH 498, 2 and 4 (adapted)

Interim Report of the Committee on Missions

*“Continue thou in the things which thou hast learned
and hast been assured of, knowing of
whom thou hast learned them.”*

—II Timothy 3:14

The Committee on Missions’ primary concern for our dear brethren in Nigeria and Russia is that they, by the grace of God alone (I Corinthians 15:10), “*continue*” in the orthodox doctrine and practice which they have learned and have been persuaded of from the only source of all God-pleasing doctrine and practice, that is, the Holy Scriptures (Psalm 119:105; John 8:31-32; II Timothy 3:16). In accord with this primary concern of the Committee, we attempt, with God’s help and strength (Psalm 46:1-5; 121:1-4; Isaiah 41:10, 13), to keep “in touch” with the Russian and Nigerian brethren as much as possible. Our main mode of communication with them at present is the amazing and wonderful “tool” of e-mail.

First of all, we bring to you an interim report on our **RUSSIAN** brethren:

- Pastor Schurganoff has been supplying us with **monthly reports** on his work in his congregation. Worship services have been held each Sunday (except for December 7, when he was sick) during the months since the convention, including January of this new year. He has Bible classes on Sunday and on Wednesday. Twice a month he lectures in the local library, where he presents various truths from the Word of God. In his flat (his home), he meets with individuals at different times for Scriptural instruction. Also, as needed, he makes home visits. He has two shut-ins, whom he visits twice a month. The amounts of the congregation’s offerings each Sunday are also included in these reports.
- Earlier this month (February), an anonymous donor graciously bought and then we sent to Pastor Schurganoff all three levels of the **Rosetta Stone Learning the English Language** course. (*Rosetta Stone* has an excellent reputation in teaching people to read, speak, and write a new language. They offer this instruction in thirty different languages.) This course uses both sound (audio) and sight

(visual) stimuli in its tried and true “direct method” approach. For example, the instruction starts out with saying a single word, such as “book.” A book will then appear on the computer screen, and a voice will distinctly say the word “book.” The person learning the language has to repeat the word correctly and will not be able to go on to other words until the target word is spoken properly (in this case, in English). Beginning with this month’s report, we will ask Pastor Schurganoff to update us on his progress with this language course.

Secondly, we bring to you an interim report on our **NIGERIAN** brethren:

- After Pastor Fyneface’s arrival back home after his June/July trip to America, he wrote the following: “I was overwhelmed seeing those good, but strange faces, and I enjoyed everything about the Convention and Conference.” Yes, *“how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity”* (Psalm 133:1).
- The considerable outlay of our Conference at last summer’s Convention in purchasing up-to-date equipment to improve our communication with the brethren in this far-off land of Nigeria was a very profitable investment of our funds. For example, in preparing this report, there was certain information which I needed to have from Pastor Fyneface. I e-mailed him one night, and the next morning I had from him all the requested information. Formerly, we relied on the phone or on regular mail. The phone was and still is very unpredictable; sometimes you could get through, and sometimes not. If you did get connected, you often got abruptly disconnected from the Nigerian end for a variety of reasons. The mail, whether air-mail or even certified, usually took from 3 to 7 weeks one way. At the present, Pastor Fyneface is the only one of the Nigerian Pastors whom we can communicate with via e-mail. (His “address” is). —At first, he could “pick up” his e-mail only at a local cyber café. However, about one month ago he wrote: “I am now receiving all e-mails at home. No need to go to cyber café. I do check my mails on daily basis. Although there are days the network is not friendly, but right now the device I installed is working very well.”
- All seven of the current Nigerian pastors can communicate, read, and write in English. This is a big “plus” when it comes to sharing materials with them, such as the *Concordia Lutheran*, “The Full Support of the Public Ministry —the Pastoral Office” (the Pastoral Con-

ference paper given by Pastor Bloedel last June at Seattle), and the tract, “The Scriptural Principles of Christian Giving.” These last items were used by Pastor Fyनेface as the basis for a thorough review with the other Nigerian pastors, who then were to go over these same materials with their own congregations. For the literate members of these sister congregations, 2000 copies of the Pastoral Conference paper on the full support of the Pastoral Office and the tract on Christian Giving were printed out for their study and review. *“Through Thy precepts I get understanding; therefore I hate every false way. Thy Word is a lamp unto my feet and a light unto my path”* (Psalm 119:104-105).

- All mail to the seven congregations (except St. Matthew’s, Port Harcourt) needs to go to St. Paul’s, Abonnema, and then be picked up at that location. This is due to the very poor postal system in Nigeria. Therefore, one of our goals for improved communication between these seven congregations, as well as for our communication from the United States to each of their locations, is to look into the possibility of getting a computer for each of the pastors in the coming years, with the hope, by God’s grace, of eventually being connected from America with each of them, and each of these Nigerian brethren with each other via e-mail. *“As we have therefore opportunity, let us do good unto all men, especially unto them who are of the household of faith”* (Galatians 6:10).

- One of the seven congregations is now lacking its own pastor since our wise and gracious God took His servant, the Rev. Robinson Dodo, from this earthly life to Himself in heaven last month (Revelation 14:13). Pastor Dodo’s obituary is in this issue of the *C.L.* The congregation which he had served, Holy Trinity, Idama, is about forty minutes away from Abonnema by speed boat. This congregation, which has 156 members, is, at present, in the process of building a new, bigger church building.

- Currently, Pastor Fyनेface has the responsibility of training four seminary students: Mr. Biobele Aaron and Mr. Levi Wariboko from St. Clement’s, Elem Sangama; Mr. Afonyaa Ibama from St. Paul’s, Abonnema; and Mr. Senibo February from Holy Trinity, Idama. The fifth seminary student, Mr. Tamunotonye from St. Paul’s, Kula, is being trained by his own spiritual overseer, Pastor Onengiye Wariboko.

- The newest congregation, at Lagos, was meeting for its worship services in their Pastor's apartment. Recently, however, the landlord, who is a Muslim, objected to the noise of their singing in the worship service. The congregation has been looking for another location; but, until they find some other place for worship, they are still at the Pastor's apartment. However, they have temporarily at least ceased singing the hymns, and, as much as possible, carry on as best as they can under the present circumstances (II Corinthians 4:8-9; I Peter 3:13-16). We rejoice with Pastor Ekele and his new wife at the anticipation of the birth of their first child.

- As a result of the violence by militants in Abonema and the surrounding area since last summer, the Nigerian Army came to Abonema early this year to restore peace and good order. On February 11, Pastor Fyneface wrote that "the army is still in Abonemma, and they will remain for quite a long time as the militants are still disturbing some parts of the State [Rivers State]. Last Sunday (the 8th), there was shooting between them [the militants] and the army." We commit our dear brethren to the Lord's gracious protection for Jesus' sake (Isaiah 43:1-3a; Psalm 91:10-12; Ephesians 3:20-21).

- Pastor Fyneface's goiter has been decreasing at a very, very slow rate. He has discovered that cutting down on water with chlorine in it has helped to **bring down** the size of his goiter. We are grateful to the Lord for any and all improvement in Pastor Fyneface's condition! (Hebrews 12:6, 11).

Let us remember these dear brethren in Russia and in Nigeria before *the throne of grace*" (Hebrews 4:16a), that the Lord God, in His changeless grace and mercy for Jesus' sake, would continue to help them in their "time of need" (Hebrews 4:16b), all "according to His will" (I John 5:14), working out all things for their temporal and eternal "good" (Romans 8:28), that they may "grow in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. To Him be glory both now and forever. Amen" (II Peter 3:18).

For the **Committee on Missions**,

Pastor Robert J. Lietz, Chairman



a Pastor Robinson Dodo a

“To every thing there is a season, and a time to every purpose under the heaven: A time to be born and a time to die.”

—Ecclesiastes 3:1-2



It hath pleased Almighty God in His all-wise providence and at the time appointed by Him according to His grace in Christ Jesus, to summon out of this vale of tears to Himself in heaven the soul of our dear brother, the beloved Pastor of **Holy Trinity Lutheran Church** in Idama, Rivers State, Nigeria, the Rev. Robinson Dodo.

Pastor Dodo, by God’s grace alone His humble and faithful servant, was born in 1936 into the family of Dodo of Idama Community in the Kalabari Kingdom, Rivers State, Nigeria. He attended the St. Paul’s Nyemoni Primary School in Abonema; and, at the end of his elementary education, his father took him to Lagos, where he spent most of his life as a youth. As an adult, he worked in several offices and served in various capacities, finally retiring in 1990 at the age of 54 years from the Shell Petroleum Development Company as a senior staff in his department.

Upon his retirement, Robinson Dodo decided to come home to serve his people. Having being baptized into the name of the Triune God and having confirmed his faith in the Lord Jesus, he was among the second batch of students who were recommended in 1996 for pastoral training by the Fellowship of Lutheran Congregations – Nigeria; and, after completing his theological studies under Pastor Fyनेface and being recognized as a qualified *candidate of the reverend ministry*, he received a Divine Call into the Pastoral Office and was ordained a Lutheran Pastor in 1999.

By the grace and with the help of God, Pastor Dodo faithfully served the Holy Trinity Lutheran Church - Idama as its shepherd from 1999 to the day he received the great call to be with his Saviour, January 13, 2009.

Pastor Dodo was married to his dear wife, Florence, who survives him, and left behind also five grown children: Three daughters, a son, and a step-son. His funeral service will take place on Saturday, the 25th of April, at Holy Trinity Lutheran Church in Idama. Pastor Nimi B. Fyneface will officiate and preach the sermon based on I Corinthians 15:55-58. Pastor Dodo's presence among us, his family, his brother pastors, and the members of his flock, will be greatly missed; but at the same time we rejoice in his salvation by grace, for Christ's sake, through faith, and look forward to a happy reunion with him and all true believers in heaven.

*“Remember them which have the rule over you,
who have spoken unto you the Word of God,
whose faith follow,
considering the end of their conversation.”*

—Hebrews 13:7

—N. B. F.

Churches in Fellowship with the Concordia Lutheran Conference

Orthodox Lutheran Church of Ekaterinburg

Ekaterinburg, Russia

The Rev. Roman G. Schurganoff, Pastor

P. O. Box 62

620088 Ekaterinburg, RUSSIA

E-mail: lutheran@r66.ru

Holy Trinity Lutheran Church

Idama, Nigeria

The Rev. Robinson Dodo[†] (Vacant as of 1/13/09)

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

The Rev. Luckyn Kaladokubo, Pastor

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 Nyemoni Lutheran Cathedral

Abonnema, Nigeria

The Rev. Nimi B. Fyनेface and

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

P. O. Box 123

Abonnema, Akulga, Rivers State, NIGERIA

E-mail: njohnfyneface@yahoo.co.uk

St. Paul's Lutheran Church

Kula, Nigeria

The Rev. Onengiye C. Wariboko, Pastor

St. Paul's Lutheran Church

Kula, Rivers State, NIGERIA

Christ Lutheran Church

Olu-Ama (Kula), Nigeria

The Rev. Onengiye C. Wariboko, Pastor

St. Paul's Lutheran Church

Abule Egba, Lagos, Nigeria

The Rev. Onesimus Ekele, Pastor

Directory of Member Congregations

www.concordialutheranconf.com

GOOD SHEPHERD EV. LUTHERAN CHURCH

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

PEACE EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH

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

ST. JOHN'S LUTHERAN CHURCH

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

ST. LUKE'S LUTHERAN CHURCH

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

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

Worship Service 7:00 p.m.

Adult Bible Class 4:30 p.m.

Adult Catechism Class 8:30 p.m.

ST. MARK'S EV. LUTHERAN CHURCH

22012 Torrence Avenue

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

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

Worship Service 10:00 a.m.

The Rev. PAUL E. BLOEDEL, Pastor

22012 Torrence Avenue

Sauk Village, IL 60411 (708) 757-6859

E-mail: revbloedel@gmail.com

TRINITY EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH

300 North Ridgeland Avenue

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

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

Worship Service 10:15 a.m.

The Rev. ROBERT J. LIETZ, Pastor

233 North Cuyler Avenue

Oak Park, IL 60302 (708) 386-4145

E-mail: robertjlietz@yahoo.com

NOTE: For the web site addresses of the individual congregations, please consult the [Directory of Congregations](#) on the web site of the Conference: www.ConcordiaLutheranConf.com



58th Annual Convention
of the
Concordia Lutheran Conference

Friday, Saturday and Sunday
June 26th, 27th and 28th, 2009

at
Trinity Ev. Lutheran Church
Oak Park, Illinois

Motto:

“Redeeming the Time”

Ephesians 5:16

The Essay on the topic
**“Redeeming the Time with Respect to
the Training of Future Pastors”**
will be delivered by
Pastor Edward J. Worley

The Friday sermon will be preached by
President Edward J. Worley

The Sunday sermon on Matthew 9:36-38
will be preached by
Pastor David G. Redlin

The Pastoral Conference on
June 23rd & 24th
Board of Directors meeting on
June 25th