

The
Concordia  *Lutheran*

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

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built upon the
foundation of the
apostles and
prophets.”

— Ephesians 2:19-20



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The Concordia Lutheran Editor

The Rev. David T. Mensing
17151 South Central Avenue
Oak Forest, IL 60452-4913

Book and Tract Editor

The Rev. David J. Mensing
22012 Torrence Avenue
Sauk Village, IL 60411

Lay Member:

Mr. Jason A. Mabe
6249 El Morro Lane
Oak Forest, IL 60452

Address subscriptions, renewals, and remittances to: **Scriptural Publications, 17151 S. Central Avenue, Oak Forest, IL 60452-4913.** A special notice of expiration will be inserted in the issue which terminates your subscription.

Officers of the
Concordia Lutheran Conference

PRESIDENT:

The Rev. David T. Mensing
17151 South Central Avenue
Oak Forest, IL 60452-4913

VICE PRESIDENT:

The Rev. Edward J. Worley
9658-54th Avenue South
Seattle, WA 98118

SECRETARY:

The Rev. Paul E. Bloedel
483 Tangent Street
Lebanon, OR 97355

TREASURER:

Mr. Robert G. Bloedel
10017 — 61st Avenue South
Seattle, WA 98178

STATEMENT OF PURPOSE:

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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The Only and All-Sufficient Foundation

Sermon preached by President Edward J. Worley
at the Service of Convocation

Sixty-fourth Annual Convention

June 26, 2015

Text: **Ephesians 2:20**



My dearly beloved, grace, mercy and peace from God our heavenly Father, Jesus Christ our Redeemer and the Holy Ghost our Sanctifier, fellow-redeemed sinners, ransomed from the guilt, punishment and slavery of sin in our dear Savior's holy and precious, innocent blood:

Since man fell into sin, he has had a real problem with being content with what God provides for body and soul. Even the Lord's own apostles demanded more! Remember this famous exchange between Philip and the Lord the night the Savior was betrayed? "*Philip saith unto Him, 'Lord, show us the Father, and it sufficeth us.'* *Jesus saith unto him, 'Have I been so long time with you, and yet hast thou not known Me, Philip? He that hath seen Me hath seen the Father; and how sayest thou then, Show us the Father? Believest thou not that I am in the Father, and the Father in Me? The words that I speak unto you I speak not of Myself; but the Father that dwelleth in Me, He doeth the works'.*" (John 14:8-10). The Lord directs Philip to His Word! But the sinful flesh seeks more! The Apostle Paul spoke to this problem when he said: "*For the Jews require a sign, and the Greeks seek after wisdom; but we preach Christ crucified, unto the Jews a stumblingblock and unto the Greeks foolishness*" (I Corinthians 1:22-23). The attitude of an unbeliever is outright rejection of God's Word: "*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*" (I Corinthians 2:14). But because of their sinful flesh believers are often discontent with what God has provided in His Word and want more: "*Give us more and then we will be satisfied!*" Over against this sinful discontent,

a serious problem ever since Eve fell for what Satan claimed to be *more*, i.e., God's hidden agenda, we have the clear, true doctrine set forth in our text regarding God's Holy Word,

The Only and All-Sufficient Foundation.

Our text suggests three questions for our consideration and answers them according to the following outline:

- I. By whom is the Christian Church built?
 - A. By God alone ...
 - B...yet through means

- II. How does God build the Christian Church?
 - A. Upon the only and all-sufficient foundation...
 - B. His Word, the Apostles and Prophets

- III. What is the chief doctrine by which the Christian Church stands or falls?
 - A. Justification for Jesus Christ's sake...
 - B. who is the One and Only Cornerstone

Let us pray: Dear Lord Jesus, grant us true confidence in Thy Word that we may be and remain true disciples. Instruct us anew regarding the sufficiency of Thy Word, especially in regard to our eternal salvation. In Thy saving Name we pray. Amen.

Here is our text with the context: *“Now therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellowcitizens with the saints and of the household of God, and are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief corner stone, in whom all the building fitly framed together groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord, in whom ye also are builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit”* (vv. 19-22).

Just prior to our text the Holy Ghost proclaims through Paul the marvelous reconciling work of Christ, especially focusing in on what this means for Gentiles: *“Wherefore remember, that ye being in time past Gentiles in the flesh, who are called Uncircumcision by that which is called the Circumcision in the flesh made by hands; 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. But now in Christ Jesus ye who sometimes were far*

off are made nigh by the blood of Christ” (vv. 11-13). We are now united under Christ, both Jew and Gentile: “For He is our peace, who hath made both one and hath broken down the middle wall of partition between us, having abolished in His flesh the enmity, even the law of commandments contained in ordinances for to make in Himself of twain one new man, so making peace; and that He might reconcile both unto God in one body by the cross, having slain the enmity thereby” (vv. 14-16). We were brought to this saving knowledge of Christ by the means God ordained, the preaching of His Word of Peace, the Gospel: “[He] came and preached peace to you which were afar off, and to them that were nigh. For through Him we both have access by one Spirit unto the Father” (vv. 17-18). Then, in our text, the Spirit of God through Paul calls the true believers among the Gentiles the Church of God with such powerful terms as “fellowcitizens with the saints” and “of the household of God!”

It is this Church, the Communion of Saints, all believers and only believers, that is “*built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets*” (v. 20a).

Our first question is simple and already answered by the context: **By whom is the Christian Church built?** Obviously, our gracious God is the builder, as the entire preceding context shows! The text says earlier: “*You hath He quickened, who 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 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. But God, who is rich in mercy, for His great love wherewith He loved us, even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, (by grace ye are saved), and hath raised us up together and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus, that in the ages to come He might show the exceeding riches of His grace in His kindness toward us through Christ Jesus. For by grace are ye saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, not of works, lest any man should boast. For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them*” (vv. 1-10). God does it all — graciously, in Christ and for His sake! Sinners, blind, dead, enemies of God in Satan’s bondage, are *gifted* with salvation by God, for Christ’s sake, through God-wrought faith alone. 100% by grace, 100% as God’s gift!

Did not Christ say: “*I will build My Church?*” Yes, He did (Matthew 16:16)! Does the Scripture emphatically tell us this general principle that God is the only reliable builder? Yes! Yes it does! “*Except the Lord build the house, they labor in vain that build it*” (Psalm 127:1a).

And God also clearly reveals the answer to our second question, **how He builds His Church**, namely, through His Word! Saving faith makes a person a member of His Church, and faith is wrought by God through the Gospel: “*So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God*” (Romans 10:17). “*For this cause also thank we God without ceasing because, when ye received the Word of God which ye heard of us, ye received it not as the word of men but, as it is in truth, the Word of God, which effectually worketh also in you that believe*” (I Thessalonians 2:13).

Our text brings out how God builds by declaring that the Church is built “*upon the foundation of the Apostles and Prophets.*” Scripture declares the Word of God, the Old and New Testament Scriptures, to be the only and the all-sufficient foundation of the Church for doctrine and for practice!

Dr. J. T. Mueller speaks to the point:

The divine perfection, or sufficiency, of Holy Scripture is that property by which it teaches everything that is necessary for salvation. Gerhard defines this property of Scripture as follows (II, 286): “The Scriptures fully and perfectly instruct us concerning all things necessary for salvation.” The Scripture proof for this doctrine is clearly set forth in 2 Tim. 3, 15—17; John 17, 20; 1 John 1, 3.4. Since Holy Scripture is sufficient, or perfect, it requires no supplementation either through traditions (papists) or new revelations (enthusiasts) or doctrinal progress or development (modern rationalistic theologians). The way of salvation taught in the Bible is absolutely complete, Matt. 28, 20; Mark 16, 15. 16. Gerhard, arguing against the Romanists, rightly says: “Laying aside tradition, we adhere to Scripture alone.”

When considering the divine sufficiency of Holy Scripture, we must carefully observe the following points: —

a. Holy Scripture does not contain everything which men may know; for with regard to matters of earthly concern it offers very little instruction (the Bible is not a “text-book of science”). Earthly affairs are treated in Scripture only in so far as they pertain to the divine counsel of salvation (the creation of the world, etc.).

b. Holy Scripture does not reveal all divine things which man might desire to know; for also in the spiritual sphere its proper scope is the saving of sinners, 2 Tim. 3, 16—18; 1 Cor. 13, 12; Rom. 11, 33.

c. Nevertheless, Holy Scripture contains all things “necessary to be known for the Christian faith and life and, therefore, for the attainment of eternal salvation” (Quenstedt). All those who deny this truth reject the *Schriftprinzip*, or the basic Christian doctrine that Holy Scripture is the only source and norm of faith. (Mueller, John Theodore, *Christian Dogmatics*, St. Louis: CPH, 1955, p. 137).

When people vainly seek supplements God tells everyone: “*To the law and to the testimony, if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them*” (Isaiah 8:20). The principle is clear: “*If they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded, though one rose from the dead*” (Luke 16:31). The Savior emphatically directs: “*Search the Scriptures, for in them ye think ye have eternal life; and they are they which testify of Me*” (John 5:39).

And this brings us to our final question: **What is the chief doctrine upon which the Christian Church stands or falls** (if that doctrine is rejected or denied!)? Our text declares: “*Jesus Christ Himself being the chief cornerstone.*” The word denotes the most important, the indispensable, the integral and essential stone in a masonry structure. The cornerstone (or *foundation* stone) concept is derived from the first stone set in the construction of a masonry foundation, set on the extreme corner of the foundation, important since all other stones will be set in reference to this stone, thus determining the position of the entire structure. Scripture declares: “*For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ*” (I Corinthians 3:11). Christ, the Son of the Living God, “*the Savior of all men, and specially of those that believe*” (I Timothy 4:10), is the solid rock foundation stone!

The word also denotes the *capstone* or *topmost* stone in a masonry vault and the *keystone* in an arch! Jesus Christ Himself is that indispensable stone, the central cohesive source of support and stability! If the capstone or keystone is removed, there is nothing to prevent the complete collapse of the whole structure. Consider the additional proof passages regarding Christ, in His Person and Work, as the “*chief cornerstone.*” “*Wherefore also it is contained in the Scripture: ‘Behold, I lay in Sion a chief corner stone, elect, precious; and he that believeth on Him shall not be confounded.’ Unto you therefore which believe He is precious; but unto them which be disobedient, the stone which the builders disallowed, the same is made the head of the corner, and a stone of stum-*

bling and a rock of offense even to them which stumble at the Word, being disobedient, whereunto also they were appointed” (I Peter 2:6-8). Everything depends on Christ! In God-wrought faith we shall never be confounded or ashamed, for our salvation is assured! The testimony of “the foundation of the apostles and prophets,” penned word for precious word by inspiration of God, is unshakable. Our precious Savior gave the precious sacrifice: “Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things as silver and gold from your vain conversation received by tradition from your fathers, but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot, who verily was foreordained before the foundation of the world, but was manifest in these last times for you, who by Him do believe in God, that raised Him up from the dead and gave Him glory; that your faith and hope might be in God” (I Peter 1:18-21; Isaiah 28:16). The Apostle Peter quotes the Prophet Isaiah! The prophets and apostles preach Christ: “To Him give all the prophets witness, that through His name whosoever believeth in Him shall receive remission of sins” (Acts 10:43). The Lord said in Matthew 21: “Did ye never read in the Scriptures, ‘The stone which the builders rejected, the same is become the head of the corner. This is the Lord’s doing, and it is marvelous in our eyes’?” (v. 42; Mark 12:10; Luke 20:17; cf. Psalm 118:22-23). We are all familiar with Acts 4:12. Just prior to that verse we read: “Be it known unto you all, and to all the people of Israel, that by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom ye crucified, whom God raised from the dead, even by Him doth this man stand here before you whole. This is the stone which was set at nought of you builders, which is become the head of the corner” (vv. 10-11), and then “Neither is there salvation in any other; for there is none other name under heaven given among men whereby we must be saved” (v. 12). The Apostle tells us the heart of the matter: Salvation alone in Christ! This is why Jesus is the Chief Cornerstone! He is the Savior, the only Savior of all mankind! His person and work brings forgiveness of sins, life and salvation. “For it pleased the Father that in Him should all fulness dwell; and, having made peace through the blood of His cross, by Him to reconcile all things unto Himself; by Him, I say, whether they be things in earth or things in heaven. And you, that were sometime alienated and enemies in your mind by wicked works, yet now hath He reconciled in the body of His flesh through death, to present you holy and unblameable and unreprouceable in His sight, if ye continue in the faith grounded and settled, and be not moved away from the hope of the Gospel, which ye have heard and which was preached to every creature which is under heaven, whereof I, Paul, am made a minister” (Colossians 1:19-23).

The Psalmist declares: *“I will praise Thee, for Thou hast heard me and art become my Salvation. The stone which the builders refused is become the head stone of the corner. This is the Lord’s doing; it is marvelous in our eyes”* (Psalm 118:21-23). The Church is founded on Christ, the one and only Head, the Savior. His person and work are the key subjects of our preaching. The Apostle Paul told the Corinthians: *“And I, brethren, when I came to you, came not with excellency of speech or of wisdom, declaring unto you the testimony of God. For I determined not to know any thing among you save Jesus Christ and Him crucified. And I was with you in weakness, and in fear, and in much trembling. And my speech and my preaching was not with enticing words of man’s wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power; that your faith should not stand in the wisdom of men but in the power of God.”* (I Corinthians 2:1-5).

The doctrine of justification or forgiveness — forgiveness based on Christ’s work alone, a gracious gift from God — is the chief doctrine of the Church. God no longer charges sins to a sinner but, for Christ’s sake alone, declares him righteous. This universal, objective justification is received by the individual through God-wrought faith in the Gospel, another gracious action of God. Upon this vital, saving teaching the Christian Church stands. If this doctrine is denied or somehow falsified in the hearts and minds of men, there is no hope for salvation: *“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). Only this doctrine enables us to recognize Christianity as the only true religion, enables us to distinguish the Christian religion as God’s own, over against all man-made, false religions, the work-righteous fantasies of men and devils (Galatians 5:4-5; Micah 7:18-20). The doctrine of justification by grace alone, for Christ’s sake alone, through faith alone, is the God-given doctrine which gives enduring comfort to penitent sinners (Acts 16:30, 31, 34; Matthew 9:2) and ascribes all glory to God for our redemption, forgiveness and salvation: *“From Jesus Christ, who is the faithful witness, and the first begotten of the dead, and the prince of the kings of the earth. Unto Him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in His own blood, and hath made us kings and priests unto God and His Father, to Him be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen”* (Revelation 1:5-6).

Beloved, Satan, the world and your own sinful flesh want you to reject the very Cornerstone of God’s own choosing, the elect, precious Savior sent from heaven. The “sand-substitutes” so many vainly build upon are evident today, both gross and refined. Men still seek signs. Men

still follow after so-called wisdom. Vain philosophy and so-called science has flooded the outward church like a tsunami, resulting in delusion, uncertainty and unbelief.

By the grace of God, we have, preserved by His faithful promise and providence (Matthew 24:35), all we need in Christ, through *“the Word of His grace”* (Acts 20:32), His precious Gospel, for faith and life. We are exhorted to hold fast to the foundation God has laid: *“Beloved, when I gave all diligence to write unto you of the common salvation, it was needful for me to write unto you and exhort you that ye should earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints”* (Jude 3). The Savior promises: *“If ye continue in My Word, then are ye My disciples indeed; and ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free”* (John 8:31-32). *“The gates of hell shall not prevail against [Christ’s Church]”* (Matthew 16:18)! *“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 8:37-39).

God ever grant us to believe all His good promises unto salvation — not a word of which has failed nor can fail (I Kings 8:56; Joshua 21:45) — in Christ our Cornerstone. Amen.



Sermon Preached at the Sunday Convention Service

Oak Forest, Illinois June 28, 2015

by Pastor Robert J. Lietz Oak Park, Illinois

Text: **Luke 16:29**

In the name of Jesus Christ, dear friends:



Our sermon text for this Convention Worship Service is Luke 16, verse 29, where it is written that Abraham in heaven was asked by a certain rich man in hell how his five brothers, still living in the world, might escape the torment of eternal damnation. Abraham answered: *“They have Moses and the prophets; let them hear them.”*

This is just one of many very clear verses in the Bible which point us to Holy Scripture as the only source of information about the way to heaven and the only means by which the Holy Spirit works in the sinful hearts of people the second birth (I Peter 1:23), moving them to receive God’s gracious forgiveness (Acts 10:43) and the promise of the *“inheritance”* in *“heaven”* (I Peter 1:4) that Jesus *“bought”* (I Corinthians 6:20a) with His holy *“precious blood”* (I Peter 1:19a). As we continue to study and consider the theme of our convention this year, the words of Abraham in our text direct us to

The Sufficiency of Moses and the Prophets

I. For the saving faith, and

II. For the Christian’s life.

“Moses and the prophets” is another name which the Bible uses for the Scriptures of the Old Testament. Abraham said to the rich man in hell concerning his five brothers: *“They **have** Moses and the prophets [the Old Testament writings]; let them hear them.”* They **had** the Old Testament Scriptures, Abraham said; they were **exposed** to them in an outward way; but they did not *“hear”* them, not with open ears to hear their living, *“powerful”* (Hebrews 4:12a) **words** nor with the *“hearing*

of faith” (Galatians 3:2) created by the Holy Ghost through their general hearing for their “**understanding**” (Psalm 119:104a). In Matthew 13, Jesus clearly described those who are like the rich man in hell, in that “*hearing they hear not, neither do they understand. And in them is fulfilled the prophecy of Esaias [Isaiah], which saith: ‘By hearing ye shall hear and shall not understand, and seeing ye shall see and shall not perceive, for this people’s heart is waxed gross, and their ears are dull of hearing, and their eyes they have closed, lest at any time they should see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and should understand with their heart, and should be converted, and I should heal them’*” (vv. 13-15).

When the rich man wanted some relief from his torments in hell, he cried out: “*Father Abraham, have mercy on me and send Lazarus, that he may dip the tip of his finger in water and cool my tongue, for I am tormented in this flame*” (v. 24). However, the time for “mercy” in the rich man’s life was past. The writer to the Hebrews, in chapter 9, clearly supports that fact with these words of truth: “*It is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment*” (v. 27). Abraham had to say “No” to that proposal by the rich man. Abraham reminded him: “*Son, remember that thou in thy lifetime receivedst thy good things and likewise Lazarus evil things, but now he is comforted and thou art tormented. And beside all this, between us and you there is a great gulf fixed, so that they which would pass from hence [from here, from heaven] to you cannot, neither can they pass to us that would come from thence [from there, from hell where you are]*” (vv. 25-26). Since Lazarus could not come to the rich man in hell and relieve him even in some small way of “*the wages of [his] sin*” (Romans 6:23a), the rich man had another proposal that he set before Abraham, when he said to him: “*I pray thee therefore, Father, that thou wouldest send him [Lazarus] to my father’s house, for I have five brethren, that he may testify unto them, lest they also come into this place of torment*” (vv. 27-28). The rich man thought that by the miraculous appearance of Lazarus raised from the dead his five brothers would escape hell, that “*place of torment.*” But Abraham said to him: “*They have Moses and the prophets; let them hear them.*” Those five unbelieving brothers needed to hear, even just with their ears, the Old Testament *Scriptures*; for those writings of Moses and the prophets alone had the power to convert those five, unbelieving brothers and save them from the everlasting torments of hell. But the unbelieving brother in hell disagreed with Abraham’s pointing him to Moses and the Prophets when he said: “*Nay [No], Father Abraham, but if one*

went unto them from the dead, they will repent” (v. 30). Abraham not only rejected this ungodly and humanly-devised plan of the rich man, but Abraham also set before the rich man **the sufficiency of Scripture** for saving faith when he said to him: “*If they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they [the five brothers] be persuaded though one rose from the dead*” (v. 31). If the rich man’s five brothers will not even open their ears to a superficial hearing of “*Moses and the prophets,*” which were sufficient to “*persuade*” them of their many sins (Psalm 130:3), sufficient to work true contrition or sorrow in their hearts (Psalm 51:17), sufficient to reveal to them the substitutionary suffering and sacrifice of the Messiah for the “*forgiveness*” (Psalm 130:4a) of their “*transgressions*” (Isaiah 53:5a), and sufficient to work in them saving faith in God’s mercy for Christ’s sake, then nothing would persuade them, not even Lazarus coming back “*from the dead*” (Luke 16:31b).

When Jesus spoke these words of our text in Luke 16, the New Testament Scriptures were not yet in existence; the Old Testament Scriptures alone had been written down: “*Moses,*” the instrument of “*the Holy Ghost*” (II Peter 1:21b) in writing down the first five books of the Old Testament, and “*the prophets,*” designated as the Holy Ghost’s instruments in writing down the remaining books of the Old Testament. These Old Testament Scriptures proclaim and set forth, first of all, **the Law of God** which declares: “*Ye shall be holy; for I, the Lord your God, am holy*” (Leviticus 19:2); “*Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself*” (v. 18); “*The poor shall never cease out of the land; therefore I command thee saying, Thou shalt open thine hand wide unto thy brother, to thy poor, and to thy needy in thy land*” (Deuteronomy 15:11); and in Ezekiel 18: “*The soul that sinneth, it shall die*” (v. 20). These verses clearly show us that “*Moses and the prophets*” were sufficient to teach the rich man his duty toward poor Lazarus, sufficient to convict him of his sin in neglecting Lazarus, and sufficient to work in him genuine sorrow for his sins and the dread of damnation. But the rich man did not “*hear Moses and the prophets,*” not even with his ears, and he rejected God’s efforts to prepare his heart for the hearing of the Gospel unto salvation

Secondly, the Old Testament Scriptures proclaim and set forth the very same Gospel as do the New Testament Scriptures, that is, God’s undeserved grace and mercy for the world of sinners, to give blessing to “*all the nations of the earth*” (Genesis 22:18b), on account of the sacrifice and service of the “*Seed*” (Genesis 3:15) of the woman, who was most

certainly “*Christ*” (Galatians 3:16), God’s Messiah. **Moses**, in the second book of the Old Testament, quotes God’s own declaration of His merciful forgiveness, saying: “*The Lord, the Lord God, merciful and gracious, longsuffering and abundant in goodness and truth, keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin*” (Exodus 34:6-7). The **prophet** Isaiah, in chapter 53, declared that “*the Lord hath laid on Him [the Messiah, Christ Jesus] the iniquity of us all*” (v. 6b). “*Moses and the prophets,*” the Old Testament Scriptures, were fully sufficient to **give** the good news of God’s marvelous forgiveness for the sins of all sinners through the perfect obedience and the sinless suffering of the Messiah, Christ Jesus, who “*was wounded for our transgressions; He was bruised for our iniquities; the chastisement of our peace was upon Him, and with His stripes we are healed*” (Isaiah 53:5). And those same Old Testament Scriptures were fully sufficient to **convert** precious souls to the saving faith, that they might receive God’s forgiveness for Jesus’ sake and the gift of everlasting life in heaven. The Apostle Paul wrote to Timothy “*that from a child [he had] known the Holy Scriptures [the Old Testament Scriptures], which [were] able to make [him] wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus*” (II Timothy 3:15). And in Acts 10, the Apostle Peter said to Cornelius, his relatives, and his close friends: “*To Him [that is, to Christ, the Messiah] give **all the prophets** witness, that through His name whosoever **believeth** in Him shall **receive** remission of sins*” (v. 43).

By God’s grace, Lazarus had heard with his ears and believed with his heart what “*Moses and the prophets*” had said; for by means of that “*incorruptible seed*” the poor beggar had been “*born [again]*” (I Peter 1:23) as a child of God and an heir of heaven. And when he died, “*the sufferings of this present time [were] not worthy to be compared with the glory that [was] revealed in him*” (Romans 8:18) when the angels carried his soul into Abraham’s bosom (Luke 16:22). **But** the rich man turned away his ears from the “*hearing*” of God’s Word (Proverbs 28:9), from hearing “*Moses and the prophets,*” and rejected the sincere efforts of the Holy Ghost **by the same Old Testament Scriptures** to work in him true repentance and saving faith in the only Savior for sinners. The tragic result of the rich man’s unbelief, his refusal to hear “*Moses and the Prophets,*” was that he “*died, and was buried; and in hell he lifted up his eyes being in torments*” (Luke 16:22b-23a) in the “*everlasting fire*” (Matthew 25:41b) of hell, the true “*wages of [his] sin*” (Romans 6:23). Because he refused to hear “*Moses and the prophets,*” he died an **unbeliever** (Mark 16:16b).

It is most certainly true that “*Moses and the prophets*,” the Old Testament Scriptures, are sufficient, by themselves, to bring lost and condemned sinners to genuine contrition and to saving faith in God’s finished, perfect gift in the Messiah, in Christ, the gift of free forgiveness and completely flawless righteousness for the Messiah’s sake, for Christ’s sake. In one of our seminary classes, *Introduction to the Old Testament*, the students had the assignment to read the entire Old Testament and keep a record of all direct and indirect references to God’s grace and mercy in the Messiah toward all sinners. This assignment brought both the professor and the students to see ever more clearly the magnitude of the revelation of the Gospel of God’s grace and mercy in the Messiah as revealed in the Old Testament Scriptures.

Abraham also points **us** to “*Moses and the prophets*,” which are sufficient to keep and preserve **us** in the saving faith in Christ Jesus, our Savior. As St. Paul wrote to Timothy, “*From a child [most of **us too have**] known the Holy Scriptures [the Old Testament Scriptures], which are able to make [us] wise unto salvation through faith which in Christ Jesus*” (II Timothy 3:15). We too, **have** the Word of God in its truth and purity. Let **us** not only continue to “*hear*” these Scriptures **with our ears** in our public worship services, in our Sunday School and Bible classes, in our adult instruction classes, in our confirmation classes, and in our home devotions; but let **us**, who enjoy “*the hearing of faith*” (Galatians 3:2) worked in us by the Holy Spirit, continue to hear these Scriptures **with our hearts**, by faith hearing with grateful hearts **God’s holy Law**, which shows us **our** sins (Romans 3:20b), **our** imperfections (Matthew 5:48), and **our** failures to be as “*holy*” as God Himself is holy (Leviticus 19:2), so that with broken and contrite hearts we continue to despair of our own merit and worthiness. Let **us** also continue to hear **with our hearts**, in the Scriptures of both the Old and New Testaments, the good, wonderful, and marvelous news of **the Gospel**, that Gospel which announces to **us** that “*God was in Christ reconciling the world unto Himself, not imputing [not charging] their trespasses unto them, and hath committed unto **us** the Word of Reconciliation*” (II Corinthians 5:19) to comfort **our** broken and contrite hearts with the assurance of forgiveness, life, and salvation. Oh, my dear brethren, let **us** remember the priceless words of our Savior in John 8: “*If ye **continue** in My Word, then are ye My disciples indeed, and ye shall know the truth and the truth shall make you free*” (vv. 31-32), free from the “*curse of the Law*” (Galatians 3:13a) because Christ Jesus was “*made a curse for us*” (v. 13b), free from the “*torments*” of hell (Luke 16:23), as Lazarus and Abraham were free from those torments because Christ

Jesus suffered those torments for them, for us, and for “*all*” (II Corinthians 5:15a). There is **no other source** of God’s peace, comfort, hope, and salvation in Christ Jesus than what “*Moses and the prophets*” reveal to us in the Old Testament and, for us today, what also the apostles and evangelists reveal to us in the New Testament, that we “*might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing [we] might have life through His name*” (John 20:31).

II.

However, the Word of God is not only profitable and sufficient for daily convicting us of our sins through His holy Law and daily preserving of our faith in His undeserved grace through “*the Gospel of Christ, ...the power of God unto salvation to everyone that believeth*” (Romans 1:16). For, as now we preach, in the second place, that “*Moses and the prophets*” are also profitable and sufficient as the Holy Spirit’s means by which He produces in the believing Christian a life of “*good works*” (Matthew 5:16), a life of “*much fruit*” (John 15:5), a life of gratitude, as we live unto Him who lived, “*died*” and “*rose again*” (II Corinthians 5:15b) for us.

The Apostle Paul reminded Timothy that “*Moses and the prophets,*” the Old Testament Scriptures, were “*given by inspiration of God, and [are] profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for **instruction in righteousness**, that the man of God may be perfect [complete], thoroughly furnished well fitted out, well-equipped] **unto all good works**” (II Timothy 3:16-17). The Lord Jesus said that “*every branch in Me that beareth not fruit [the heavenly Husbandman] taketh away*” (John 15:2); and James, in his epistle, wrote that “*faith without works is dead*” (2:20b). We can therefore rightly assume that poor Lazarus, as a believing Christian who was taken to heaven upon his death, had lived a Godly life here in this world, not to gain entrance into heaven (Ephesians 2:9; etc.) but as the fruit and evidence of his faith in his Savior, who had gained that entrance **for him** (II Corinthians 5:15). As a “*beggar*” (Luke 16:20a) “*destitute of daily food*” (James 2:15), and having a body “*full of sores*” (v. 20b of our text) much like Job in the Old Testament, we can rightly assume that Lazarus, according to his New Man, suffered “*patiently*” (I Peter 2:20) without grumbling or complaining or blaming God for his trying circumstances but glorified “*God*” (Romans 15:6) in the day of tribulation. We have absolutely nothing in our text that even suggests otherwise. Where did Lazarus receive “*instruction in righteousness*” for his sanctified life? Where but “*Moses and the prophets,*” specifically in the Proverbs, where Solomon instructed him: “*My son, despise not the chastening of the**

Lord, neither be weary of His correction; for whom the Lord loveth He correcteth, even as a father the son in whom he delighteth” (Proverbs 3:11-12; see also Hebrews 12:6ff.). How could Lazarus, as a believing child of God, grumble and complain when he had a heavenly Father who loved him so much that He forgave him all of his sins and gave him the inheritance-gift of heaven solely and only because of what Christ, the Messiah, did and suffered as the ransom-price for his redemption? (Cf. Titus 2:11-14). How could he? —a completely appropriate question for the child of God to ask himself in his daily battle with the Old Adam of sin, which tempts him to the grievous sin of murmuring against God (I Corinthians 10:10). How could Lazarus grumble and complain when he had a God who loved Him **that much** and showed it by chastening him? How could he? How could **we**, why would we, when “*the love of Christ constraineth us*” (II Corinthians 5:14a) to do the very opposite, when “*they that are Christ’s have crucified the flesh [and continue to crucify it] with the affections and lusts*” (Galatians 5:24) motivated and enabled by the Gospel? (Compare Joseph’s question in Genesis 39:9.) Lazarus had learned from “*Moses and the prophets*,” from Genesis 50:20 for example, and had patiently trusted what you and I know and by God’s grace believe from the instruction of the Apostle Paul, “*that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to His purpose*” (Romans 8:28). Abraham said of Lazarus. “*Now he is comforted*” (v. 25b). In heaven, Lazarus was now delivered from the “*evil things*” (v. 25b) which he had suffered on earth. The Apostle Paul, in Romans 8, wrote that “*the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us*” (v. 18).

The works of the rich man in hell (and presumably of his five brothers still on earth) were the **rotten**, stinking works produced by persistent impenitence, sinful pride, and arrogant unbelief! Though they **had** “*Moses and the prophets*” which were “*able to make [them] wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus*,” they turned their ears away from them, they rejected the message of God’s Law, they refused to confess their sins, they turned their hearts away from the substitutionary, perfect work of the Messiah, and they despised the mercy and grace of God in the Messiah, wanting nothing to do with His righteousness and spurning His forgiveness. They therefore brought upon themselves the “*swift destruction*” (II Peter 2:1b) of God’s “*wrath*” (John 3:36b). The rich man, before he ended up in hell, showed his unbelief, his disregard and rejection of God’s instruction through Moses in Deuteronomy 15, where the Lord God Himself said: “*If there be among you a poor man of one of thy brethren within any of thy gates in thy land*

which the Lord thy God giveth thee, thou shalt not harden thy heart, nor shut thy hand from the poor brother, but thou shalt open thy hand wide unto him, and shalt surely lend him sufficient for his need, in that which he wanteth" (vv. 7-8). The selfish, self-centered life of the rich man while he was on earth was proof that he was an unbeliever, a child of the devil, and an heir of "everlasting punishment" (Matthew 25:46a).

If the rich man's five brothers would "*hear Moses and the prophets*" speak to them the demanding message of **God's Law**, this is the only means by which the Holy Spirit produces "*a broken and a contrite heart*" (Psalm 51:17b; cf. Jeremiah 23:29). If the rich man's five brothers would "*hear Moses and the prophets*" in the wonderful message of **the Gospel**, this is the only means by which the Holy Spirit brings to "*broken and...contrite heart[s]*" the marvelous news of sin "*forgiven*" and "*covered*" (Psalm 32:1) by God on account of the finished work of the "*Redeemer*" (Job 19:25) for "*all the nations of the earth*" (Genesis 22:18a), that work which satisfied God's justice and God's holiness. This wonderful message of the Gospel is the only means by which the Holy Ghost works in penitent hearts the faith to take the comfort of this Gospel of Christ in "*Moses and the prophets*," the comfort that God has removed their sins from them "*as far as the east is from the west*" (Psalm 103:12). And it is this comfort of God's forgiveness for Jesus' sake, received by faith, which will move the heart to continue to "*hear Moses and the prophets*" and to bring "*forth much fruit; for without [Christ you] can do nothing*" (John 15:5b); for "*without faith [in Christ] it is impossible to please [God]*" (Hebrews 11:6a).

Let **us**, dear brethren, by God's rich grace, always be "*swift to hear*" (James 1:19a) the precious Word of our merciful God, in both the Old and New Testaments of His unchanging revelation of Himself to us poor sinners, eager to hear with our ears **and** with our hearts the words "*which are able to make [and keep us] wise unto salvation by faith which is in Christ Jesus*" and to train us in holiness of living to the praise of the glory of His grace! For it is the good and gracious will of our God that, through His powerful, all-sufficient Word and His Sacraments, we are kept through faith unto salvation (I Peter 1:5), ready to receive at the end of our lives in this world the everlasting "*comfort*" and joy of heaven with Lazarus, Abraham, and all true believers in Christ Jesus, our dear and only Savior, "*who gave Himself for us, that He might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto Himself a peculiar [a special] people, zealous of good works*" (Titus 2:14) for His sake. Amen.

*O Holy Spirit, grant us grace
that we our Lord and Savior
in faith and fervent love embrace
and truly serve Him ever,
so that, when death is drawing nigh,
we to His open wounds may fly
and find in them salvation.*

*Help us that we Thy saving Word
in faithful hearts may treasure.
Let e'er that Bread of Life afford
new grace in richest measure.
Yea, let us die to every sin,
for heaven create us new within
that fruits of faith may flourish.*

*And when our earthly race is won,
death's bitter hour impending,
then may Thy work in us begun
continue til life's ending,
until we gladly may commend
our souls into our Savior's hand
to rest in peace eternal.*

— TCH 293

Convention Digest



The 64th Annual Convention, held at Peace Ev. Lutheran Church, Oak Forest, Illinois, officially began at 9:30 a.m. on Friday, June 26th, with a Divine Worship Service of Convocation in which the local pastor, the Rev. David T. Mensing, served as the liturgist and the Rev. Edward J. Worley, Conference President, delivered the keynote sermon based on Ephesians 2:20. His theme was: ***The Only and All-Sufficient Foundation***, which he divided into the following three questions as his parts: **I.** By whom is the Christian Church built?; **II.** How does God build the Christian Church?; and **III.** What is the chief doctrine of the Christian Church?

Following the service, the first session of the convention was called to order by the President, who first appointed the standard convention committees. In his report, President Worley focused upon the sufficiency of Scripture in accord with the theme for this year's Convention. Because this attribute of Holy Scripture can only benefit us if we are rightly using the Word, the President mentioned that he considers members who are inconsistent in their Bible Class attendance to be "high-risk." The President encouraged everyone to be present for and listen attentively to the Convention essay and mentioned that they should also prepare themselves to contribute to the discussion.

After the noon meal, sessions were opened with a devotion conducted by Pastor Lietz. The chairman of the *Committee on Missions*, Pastor Robert J. Lietz, began his report by citing passages of Scripture that exhort us to love one another in response to God's great love for us—loving our neighbor not only in word but in deed. He then gave an update on St. Mark's in Sauk Village, Illinois, a congregation currently receiving financial assistance from the Conference (\$800.00 a month). This subsidy is being used to help them fully support their pastor according to God's ordinance. For the next fiscal year, St. Mark's has requested from the Conference a slightly reduced subsidy of \$750.00 a month. With regard to Good Shepherd in Tucson, Arizona, which is also being subsidized for the same purpose, the chairman mentioned that the congregation is requesting a reduction in the subsidy received from the Conference from \$1,000 a month to \$900 a month for the next fiscal year. Concerning Pastor Schurganoff and his congregation in Ekaterinburg, Russia, the Committee Chairman reported that there has been a slight increase in attendance at their worship services. Earlier in the month, Pastor Schurganoff informed the Chairman that the time for re-registration of their congregation is coming up, and that there is the possibility that they will be denied church registration by the Russian government—being considered a church of Western influence—and thus also be prohibited from renting a place to worship. In the mean time, the congregation is requesting that the monthly assistance from the Conference remain the same for this next fiscal year, namely, \$1,200.00 a month (including both salary for the pastor and rent of the worship facilities). About our Nigerian brethren, Pastor Lietz reported that there are currently eleven seminary students being trained by the *Fellowship of Lutheran Congregations in Nigeria* (F.L.C.N.); but their instruction is taking much longer than had been planned. Updates were given from seven Nigerian congregations (including one that was just newly formed). Pastor Fyneface explained that his goiter has been causing him more problems with both swallowing and breathing. He is currently taking some medication to help him. Though he hopes that his goiter can be shrunk without surgery, Pastor Fyneface and his congregation are considering various options that are available. If it is decided to have the surgery performed, Pastor Fyneface would prefer not to have it done in Nigeria because of careless medical practices in that country. What our Conference and its constituent congregations can do to help the Nigerian brethren in defraying the cost of necessary surgery and care will be the subject of on-going discussions this year.

In the initial report of the *Finance Committee*, Mr. Robert G. Bloedel, the Conference Treasurer, presented the *Financial Report* for fiscal year 2014–2015. The report showed a beginning cash balance of \$10,696.35 in the General Fund plus total receipts of \$40,540.50, yielding total cash available of \$51,236.85. Expenditures totaled \$38,903.22, leaving an ending cash balance as of May 31, 2015 of \$12,333.63. The report also showed a modest increase in the Student Aid Fund from \$33,239.47 at the beginning of the fiscal year to an ending balance of \$34,251.68 on its closing date, May 31, 2015. Total cash in all funds as of May 31, 2015 stands at \$46,585.31. It was moved and seconded to receive, subject to audit, the *Financial Report* of the Treasurer concerning the past fiscal year. This motion was carried. The Treasurer then distributed the Finance Committee's *Budget Worksheet* for the new fiscal year, June 1, 2015 through May 31, 2016. It showed a beginning cash balance of \$12,333.63 and anticipated receipts (including the pledges of our congregations) of \$31,893.00, for an expected total cash available of \$44,226.63 in the **General Fund**. Projected budgetary expenditures totaled \$39,600.00 divided among the following items: *Scriptural Publications* – \$1,000.00; Ekaterinburg Subsidy – \$12,000.00; Ekaterinburg Facilities Rental Subsidy – \$2,400.00; St. Mark's Subsidy – \$9,000.00; Good Shepherd Subsidy – \$10,800.00; General Travel Expense – \$2,400.00; Convention Expense – \$1,000.00; Miscellaneous Expenses – \$1,000.00. In the **Student Aid Fund**, the estimated income for the new year is \$2,400.00. The Treasurer drew attention to the fact that under the Lord's blessing, the Conference is doing much better financially at the present time than at the start of the previous fiscal year. As a side note, the Treasurer requested that the brethren send him hard copies of actual receipts or bills when they are seeking reimbursement, not merely an e-mail asking for an undocumented amount of money.

Pastor David T. Mensing, Chairman of the *Editorial Committee* and Editor of the *C. L.*, presented his report in which he emphasized how our official organ (the *CONCORDIA LUTHERAN*) and also our official website (www.ConcordiaLutheranConf.com) both give consistent testimony to the true doctrine and practice according to the clear words of Holy Scripture with which the Lord has so graciously blessed us in our Conference. The Editor mentioned that on a number of occasions assigned articles did not come in on time, causing the Editor himself to write additional articles; and he apologized for not always being able to get the issues out on schedule. The Editor expressed his thanks to the other members of his committee – Pastor David J. Mensing and Mr.

Jason A. Mabe – as well as Pastor Lietz who provided additional help in editing *C. L.* articles. The Print Shop Manager of *Scriptural Publications*, Mr. Phillip Martin, was especially thanked for his work in the layout and printing of the *C. L.s*. In the discussion following the report, it was mentioned that the most recent issues, as well as many older issues of the *C. L.* are available on the Conference website. While it was acknowledged that publishing the *C. L.* on-line (as opposed to printing hard copies) would save money, there are those who definitely prefer having the hard copies.

Pastor Robert J. Lietz, the chairman of the *Publishing House Board of Control*, referred to the work of the Publishing House (*Scriptural Publications*) in printing the *C. L.s* six times a year. He also reported that there are other projects in various stages of completion. A great deal of work has been put into the reprinting of the *Advanced Bible History*. The goal is to be able to republish this book within the next 12 months. Mr. Phillip Martin (Print Shop Manager) and Mr. Martin Trusty (Business Manager) have been working together on updating the Conference website with new content. Thanks was expressed to Peace Congregation for housing the printing equipment and covering the cost of utilities connected with the use of that equipment. Following the report, it was mentioned that audio and video content can be published very easily on the web (also on such sites as *Youtube*), and that it might be nice to publish audio readings of *C. L.* articles or other devotional material on our Conference site, as well as on other sites, especially for those who are sight challenged.

Mr. Martin Trusty, the Business Manager of *Scriptural Publications*, presented his report, which consisted in his detailed balance sheet summarizing the finances of our Publishing House. The report showed a beginning cash balance of \$2,600.57; total receipts of \$1,703.24; total expenditures of \$1,793.55; and an ending balance of \$2,510.26.

The next morning, sessions began with a devotion led by Pastor Bloedel. Pastor David T. Mensing then began his essay entitled: “**Holy Scripture—The Only Source and Norm of Christian Faith and Life,**” **Part I: Holy Scripture as the only Source and Norm of Christian Faith.** In his introduction, the essayist focused upon a quotation from the *Formula of Concord* (Thorough Declaration, Part XI) in which we state, together with the confessors of old, our heartfelt intention, with the help and by the grace of God, to hold fast to every teaching of Scripture, not yielding in the least bit for the sake of earthly peace, tran-

quility or unity. We hold firmly and without compromise to the doctrines of God's Word, because it alone sets forth in the Gospel of Jesus Christ the perfect and only way to eternal salvation. Furthermore, as the very Word of God, the Scriptures present absolute truth and perfection in all of its words and parts, containing all that we need to know for our Christian faith and life. While the Bible does not answer all of the curious questions that humans may ask (in both spiritual and earthly matters), yet with the teachings of Holy Scripture (including both the Old and New Testaments) we are not at all lacking anything that is necessary for us to know, as the Lord God Himself has chosen to reveal that which is necessary. Not only are extra-Biblical sources unnecessary for providing supplemental spiritual information, but any and every source of religious knowledge that goes beyond or conflicts with the teachings of Scripture would only draw us away from and undermine the fully-sufficient, divinely-inspired source and norm that is Holy Writ. Discussion centered upon the prevailing tendency in society for individuals to have the "freedom" to determine what is right and wrong for themselves—arguing against the Bible as being objective truth and rejecting the application of God's Word to them. The false sources of doctrine that are honored and followed by the Romanists (tradition) and Reformed (rationalism) were contrasted with our *quia* subscription to the Lutheran Confessions in the *Book of Concord* as a secondary norm or standard that is and must always be normed by the Scriptures themselves. The essayist then focused upon three examples: The doctrines of God, Creation, and Redemption to show how the pure teachings of the Christian religion can only have Holy Scripture (not natural knowledge, human reason, or tradition) as their source and norm. Even a single passage of the Bible is fully sufficient to source a doctrine and to provide the perfect norm for correcting false beliefs. Even though a non-biblical source may happen to state a truth about God and the true religion (Acts 17:28), the truth of the point can only be established for us Christians by Holy Writ itself.

It was decided to pause the presentation of the essay to allow the other business set on the agenda for the Saturday morning session to be completed. The Vice President and Chairman of the *Committee on Lutheran Union*, Pastor David T. Mensing, then presented the committee's report, in which he first stated the purpose of the committee, namely, to handle matters of potential fellowship with interested church bodies. Earlier in the month, the chairman received an inquiry about our Conference from an independent Lutheran congregation in Columbus, Ohio, "seeking a pastoral candidate to replace its retiring pastor." The

chairman then read excerpts from the letter he received from that congregation as well as the response that he sent to it. Sadly, no reply has been received up to this time. Some information about our Conference was also sent to four pastors affiliated with the United Lutheran Mission Association (a group that has marked and avoided the LCMS as a heterodox fellowship); but, again, no reply has been received. The Committee's report was received into record.

In response to a request from the Conference President, an update on Pastor Emeritus David G. Redlin was given by Pastor Daniel Mensing; and Pastor Paul Bloedel gave an update on Pastor Emeritus M. L. Natterer. By the grace of God, both of these retired pastors are doing well physically, mentally, and spiritually; and they are staying active in their respective congregations.

Following the noon meal, the afternoon session began with a devotion conducted by Rev. David J. Mensing. The essay then resumed with a focus upon the fact that the primary fundamental doctrine of Redemption can only be known from the Scriptures and could never have been devised by the mind of man. The essayist quoted the well-known explanation of the Second Article as found in Luther's *Small Catechism*, together with some of the many Bible passages upon which that explanation is built and firmly rests. Various ways this blessed doctrine is contradicted by extra-biblical sources were summarized. It was mutually agreed that the remainder of Part I of the essay be heard and considered in the afternoon session on Sunday.

The chairman of the *Committee on Theological Education*, Pastor Worley, then gave his report in which he mentioned that, because there are currently no theological students, the Committee's main focus was centered upon collecting from the former professors the teaching materials that they had generated over the years. The chairman then led the brethren in a prayer beseeching the Lord to grant us men who are willing and eager to pursue the office of the ministry and to enroll in our seminary. During the discussion following the report, it was mentioned that not only should we encourage men to study in our seminary with our words, but also by showing our love and appreciation for the pastoral office by way of our example.

The convention then took up the *Election of Officers and Standing Committees*, Pastor David T. Mensing was elected **President**; Pastor Edward J. Worley was elected **Vice President**; Pastor Paul E. Bloedel

was elected *Secretary*; Mr. Robert G. Bloedel was elected *Treasurer*; Mr. William Bergstrom was elected *Board Member at Large* from the “Far West”; and Mr. Erik Roe was elected as *Board Member at Large* from the “Middle West.” The results of the elections of the “standing committees” are as follows: *Editorial Committee* — Pastor David T. Mensing, Chairman and Editor of the *CONCORDIA LUTHERAN*; Pastor David J. Mensing, Book and Tract Editor; Mr. Jason A. Mabe, Lay Member. *Committee on Theological Education* — Pastor Edward J. Worley, Chairman; Pastor Paul E. Bloedel, Mr. Daniel M. Bloedel, and Mr. Mark J. Mensing. *Committee on Missions* — Pastor David T. Mensing, Chairman; Pastor Robert J. Lietz, Mr. Dale Peterson, Mr. Tom Fedor, and Mr. David Jue. *Committee on Lutheran Union* — Pastor Edward J. Worley (Vice President), Chairman; Pastor Paul E. Bloedel (Secretary); Pastor David T. Mensing (Theological Professor); and Mr. Phillip R. Martin, Lay Member. *Finance Committee* — Mr. Robert G. Bloedel (Treasurer), Chairman; Mr. Paul Natterer, Mr. Phillip R. Martin, and Mr. Jerry Sidwell. *Publishing House [Scriptural Publications] Board of Control* — Pastor Robert J. Lietz, Chairman; Mr. Martin L. Trusty, Business Manager; Mr. Phillip R. Martin, Print Shop Manager.

On Sunday morning, the local pastor, the Rev. David T. Mensing, again served as liturgist, and the Rev. Robert J. Lietz preached the sermon based on Luke 16:29. His theme was: *The Sufficiency of Moses and the Prophets*, divided into two parts: **I.** Sufficient for our faith, and **II.** Sufficient for our life. Holy Communion was celebrated for the strengthening of our faith and in testimony of our God-wrought unity.

Following the noon meal, the afternoon session began with a devotion conducted by Pastor Daniel P. Mensing. The convention then heard the continuation of *Part I* of the doctrinal essay: “*Holy Scripture—The Only Source and Norm of Christian Faith and Life*,” by Pastor David T. Mensing. The focus of the remainder of Part I (Holy Scripture as the only Source and Norm of Christian *Faith*) centered upon the requirement of an orthodox fellowship to have orthodox practice—consistently putting their correct teachings into practice. Orthodox “practice,” as the term is used in this context, does not refer to perfection in sanctification (as if it were possible for a person to live in perfect conformity to the Law of God), but rather refers to Christians *consistently applying* the doctrines of Scripture among themselves—holding each other to the standard of God’s Word and not allowing sin and error to go unchallenged or without rebuke. The Scriptures are fully sufficient to be the standard that is used for correcting error and guiding us in the way that

the Lord would have us to go. For a congregation or church body to have purity of doctrine while not insisting upon orthodoxy in practice is to foster hypocrisy. Various examples were given to show the importance of having orthodox practice that consistently follows the clear teachings of Holy Writ. The essayist gave many more examples of how God wants our practice to be conformed to the perfect, all-sufficient norm of Holy Scripture. It was mentioned that sometimes people are tempted not to apply the principles of Scripture when a particular activity is not specifically mentioned by name in the Bible. After citing various ways that God's Commandments are violated by inconsistent practice, the essayist focused, by way of example, upon the importance of putting the Doctrine of Fellowship into practice in different social situations that may come up in the life of a Christian.

In its Final Report, the *Resolutions Committee* submitted drafts of six resolutions to the Convention for its consideration and moved their adoption. In short, the following resolutions were presented and unanimously adopted: **1)** Thanks to Pastor David T. Mensing for his edifying essay; **2)** Thanks to last year's officers for their service, and an exhortation to pray for the newly elected officers; **3)** Thanks to Pastors Edward J. Worley and Robert J. Lietz for their sermons; **4)** Thanks to Pastors Worley, Lietz, Bloedel, D. J. Mensing, and D. P. Mensing, who provided devotions opening the various sessions of the Convention; **5)** Thanks to Mr. Mark J. Mensing, Mr. John P. Mensing, and all those who contributed to the organ, brass and choral music that was greatly enjoyed by the brethren during the convention [A special *personal* word of thanks was also expressed from the floor by Mr. John P. Mensing, Peace's choir director, for the dedication and energy put into the worship music by all who participated in the choir and in the brass ensemble.]; **6)** Thanks to Peace Ev. Lutheran Church—to Pastor and Mrs. David T. Mensing and to the other members of the congregation—for hosting the convention and for their loving and generous hospitality; and thanks to the Lord for preserving among us "*the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace*" through His Word. The motions to adopt these resolutions were all seconded and were carried unanimously.

Mr. Raymond S. Kusumi, the *Conference Statistician*, delivered the statistical report for fiscal year 2014–2015. (The specifics of this report can be found in the official Proceedings.)

St. Luke's Lutheran Church of Seattle, Washington, extended to the Conference its invitation to host the **65th Annual Convention**. (Dates

— Pastoral Conference: Tuesday and Wednesday, June 21 and 22; Board of Directors Meeting: Thursday, June 23; The Convention: Friday, Saturday, and Sunday, June 24, 25, and 26, 2016). This invitation was unanimously accepted.

The new Conference President concluded the 64th Annual Convention of the *Concordia Lutheran Conference* with a devotion that included the singing of Hymn 53, a prayer, the Lord's Prayer, an exhortation, and the Apostolic Benediction.

—P. E. B.



INTRODUCING THE PASTORS OF THE F. L. C. N.

Our official relationship as a Conference with the *Fellowship of Lutheran Congregations – Nigeria* goes back to June, 2004, when the Fellowship of Lutheran Congregations (U. S. A.) ceased to exist as a legal entity and joined the Concordia Lutheran Conference by amalgamation or merger into one corporate body. At that time, the *Fellowship of Lutheran Congregations – Nigeria*, an independent church body in Nigeria, joined the F. L. C. in recognizing *fellowship* with the Concordia Lutheran Conference, even though its pastors and congregations themselves did not *join* the Conference as members, neither did their church body forsake its national identity in amalgamation with our Conference.

The F. L. C. had in fact established a foreign missions relationship with brethren in Nigeria back in 1979, when, in fellowship with the late Pastor D. Tobin Briggs of Port Harcourt, it began to assist the Nigerian brethren both monetarily and spiritually in the establishment of local congregations and in the training of pastors. **Nimi Benson Fyeface** at that time was a layman in Pastor Briggs' congregation, assisted him in secretarial and other matters, and was recommended by Pastor Briggs to the F. L. C. for theological training. Fyeface was sent to the United



States in 1982, supported by the congregations of the F. L. C., to study full-time under Pastor Robert Lietz in Oak Park, Illinois. He also took several summer courses under Pastor Ralph Boyer in Minnesota. After completing his studies in 1984, he was called by St. Paul's Nyemoni Lutheran Church (Cathedral) in Abonnema, Rivers State, Nigeria, to be its pastor. Since that time, Pastor Fyeface has trained pastors for the F. L. C. N. and has been instrumental in founding several of the seven

other congregations now comprising the *Fellowship of Lutheran Congregations – Nigeria*. Therefore we shall begin with his biography, and then present the other pastors in alphabetical order. The biographical information was supplied by Pastor Fyeface.

Pastor Nimi Benson John Fyeface was born in Abonnema, Rivers State, Nigeria on April 23, 1957. He received his early education in Abonnema and Port Harcourt and also pursued higher education at the British Careers Training

College, Jersey, Britain. As noted above, Pastor Fyनेface was trained by the F. L. C. here in the States primarily under Pastor Lietz from 1982-1984 and was ordained and installed at *St. Paul's Nyemoni Lutheran Cathedral* in September 1984. He and his wife, Ibiere, have nine children. His eldest son, Elishamma, is by God's grace in heaven. In his spare time (which is rare), Pastor Fyनेface enjoys reading writing, and singing.



Pastor Elison Bibi Agborubere was born in Abalama in Rivers State on July 27, 1950 and received his education in Buguma and in Lagos. He studied under Pastor Fyनेface in the F. L. C. N. seminary from 1995 to 2003. On December 27, 2003 he was ordained and installed as Pastor of *Salem Lutheran Church* in Abalama-Asalga. He is married to his wife, Ayafe, and has six grown children. His recreational activities include reading and listening to music.



Pastor Timothy Biobele Aaron, the son of Chief Matthew Aaron and his wife, Ere, was born on May 6, 1974, in Elem Sangama-Akulga. His early education was at the State School there, and his secondary schooling was at the Nyemoni Grammar School in Abonnema. He studied at the F. L. C. N. seminary from 2009 to 2014, when he was ordained and installed on August 30 of that year as Pastor of *St. Clement's Lutheran Church* in Elem Sangama. He and his wife, Esther, presently have no children. He enjoys reading and fishing.



Pastor Allenson Karibi Asawo was born in Abalama-Asalga on March 15, 1949, the son of Allen and Waite Asawo. His early primary and secondary education were received in Ndele and Port Harcourt. He then studied at the University of Science and Technology, also in Port Harcourt. He attended the F. L. C. N. seminary from 1995 to 2003 and in December of that year was ordained and installed as Pastor of *St. Matthew's Lutheran Church*, Port Harcourt. He and his wife, Lolo, have six children. His recreational interests include reading and listening to music.

Pastor Bateinm Anthony Bestman, the son of Anthony and Barisoma Bestman, was born in Abalama on September 27, 1974. He attended ele-



mentary school in Abalama and secondary school in Ahoada. After high school he studied at the Rivers State University of Science and Technology in Port Harcourt. From 2009 to 2014 he was trained at the F. L. C. N. seminary by Pastor Fyneface, and on August 30th of that year was ordained and installed as Pastor of ***Salem Lutheran Church*** in Abalama. He and his wife of one year, Dawariku, have one child, Excel. Pastor Bestman enjoys reading and writing in his leisure time.



Pastor God'stime Eberechi Douglas was born in Abonnema on November 20, 1956. His parents are both deceased. His elementary and secondary education were received in Abonnema, and he studied then at the British Careers Training College and Transworld Tutorial, Jersey, Britain. At the F. L. C. N. seminary he pursued his theological studies from 1995 to 2003. On December 27, 2003, he was ordained and installed as Co-Pastor (with Pastor Fyneface) of ***St. Paul's Nyemoni Lutheran Cathedral*** in Abonnema. He and his wife, Inoma, have seven children. Recreationally he enjoys reading and music.



Pastor Onesimus Ojodale Ekele was born in Ogador Eteh-Kogi on May 25, 1980. He attended a community primary school and government secondary school. His initial theological training was received at the All Saints Theological Seminary (Anglican) in Lagos, but he was carefully colloquized before being admitted into the F. L. C. N. On December 1, 2007, he was installed as Pastor of the F. L. C. N.'s newest congregation, ***Christ Lutheran Church*** in Abule-Egba-Lagos. He and his wife, Deborah, are the parents of three children. He enjoys reading and football (soccer) in his spare time.



Pastor Innocent Quezi Karibo, the youngest of the pastors, was born on September 19, 1981, to Quezi and Emmanba Karibo in the Idama Community, Akulga. His early education was received at the state elementary school and the government secondary school in Idama. He then attended the Rivers State University of Science and Technology in Port Harcourt. After studying under Pastor Fyneface from 2009 to 2014, he was ordained and installed as Pastor of ***Holy Trinity Lutheran Church*** in Idama on Au-

gust 30, 2014. He and his wife, Owanate, are the parents of two children. Pastor Karibo enjoys reading and sports.



Pastor Balaiyi Christopher Thompson, born on July 4, 1968, to Christopher and Lily Thompson of Abalama, received his early education at the State School in Abalama and went to high school at the Comprehensive Secondary School there. He studied at the F. L. C. N. seminary from 2009 to 2014 and was ordained and installed as Co-Pastor of **Salem Lutheran Church** in Abalama on August 30, 2014.

He and his wife, Iyallba, are the parents of six children.

The addresses of the pastors are found on the second to the last page of our **CONCORDIA LUTHERAN**. Our readers are encouraged to write occasionally to these dear brethren with a word of love and encouragement. They and their people live under the most trying circumstances imaginable, in great poverty and in jeopardy of their safety. Their standard of living is extremely low, and lawless gangs of thugs threaten them on a regular basis. Sadly, the pastors for the most part do not have computers; and Internet service is both expensive and also unreliable; the same for personal telephone service — things which we here take for granted every day. May the Lord of the Church keep them all under His gracious protection (Psalm 91:11-12), bear them up as on wings of eagles (Isaiah 40:31), sustain them in body and soul (Psalm 55:22), and preserve them steadfast in His Word and faith unto their end (I Peter 1:3-9)!

—**Pastor David T. Mensing**
Chairman, Committee on Missions



Dearest heavenly Father, for Jesus' sake we commit to Thy special care our dear brethren in far-off lands, who are suffering great tribulation for the sake of the Gospel. Keep them under the protection of Thy wings, avert whatever might prove hurtful to them in body or soul, and grant them courage to bear their burdens patiently and cheerfully, knowing and trusting Thy promise to work all things to their good and blessing. To Thy gracious fatherly keeping and loving protection we commend our precious brethren in the faith, the dear sheep and lambs of Thy flocks in Nigeria and Russia, together with their faithful pastors whom Thou hast placed over them. Gird them with Thy might and strengthen them to stand fast against the wiles of the devil, the world, and their sinful flesh, as well as the fearsome onslaughts of lawless militants and anarchists who threaten their lives and safety every day, as well as the discrimination of Godless governments which seek to restrain and hinder the free course of Thy Gospel in their midst. Grant that, nurtured and preserved in the one true and saving faith by the effectual working of Thy Spirit through Thy Gospel proclaimed in its purity and the Sacraments rightly administered among them, they may earnestly contend for the faith, place their confidence alone in Thee, and remain steadfast and unmoveable even unto the end. May it please Thee to bless, cherish, and preserve the Vine which Thine own right hand hath planted, that Thy name may continue to be glorified by the production of abundant fruit upon its branches to the praise of Thy grace. In Jesus' Name we ask it. Amen.

Churches in Fellowship

ORTHODOX LUTHERAN CHURCH OF EKATERINBURG

Ekaterinburg, Russia

The Rev. Roman G. Schurganoff, Pastor

P. O. Box 27

620039 Ekaterinburg, RUSSIA

E-mail: 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

The Rev. Innocent Karibo, Pastor

Holy Trinity Lutheran Church

Idama, Rivers State, NIGERIA

SALEM LUTHERAN CHURCH

Abalama, Nigeria

The Rev. Elison B. Agborubere, Balaiyi Thompson and Bateinm Bestman, Pastors

Thompson Compound Abalama

Abalama, Rivers State, NIGERIA

ST. CLEMENT'S LUTHERAN CHURCH

Elem-Sangama, Nigeria

The Rev. Timothy Biobebe Aaron, 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 LUTHERAN CHURCH

Kula, Nigeria

Pastoral Vacancy at present

St. Paul's Lutheran Church

Kula, Rivers State, NIGERIA

ST. PAUL'S NYEMONI LUTHERAN CATHEDRAL

Abonnema, Nigeria

The Rev. Nimi B. Fyeface and

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

P. O. Box 123

Abonnema, Akulga, Rivers State, NIGERIA

E-Mail: njohnfyeface@yahoo.co.uk



Directory of Member Congregations

www.concordialutheranconf.com

GOOD SHEPHERD EV. LUTHERAN CHURCH On the Web at:
4090 S. Melpomene Way, Tucson, AZ 85730 GoodShepherdLutheranChurchTucson.com

Worship Service 9:30 a.m.
Sunday School & Bible Class 10:45 a.m. Telephone (520) 721-7618

The Rev. DANIEL P. MENSING, Pastor
550 North Harrison Road, Apt. 11107, Tucson, AZ 85748 Pastor: (520) 448-8694

E-mail: goodshepherdlutherantucson@gmail.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.
Worship Service 10:00 a.m. Telephone: (708) 532-4288

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 Telephone: (541) 258-2941
Sixth and Tangent Streets, Lebanon, OR 97355

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.
Worship Service 10:30 a.m. Telephone: (206) 723-1078

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.
Worship Service 4:00 p.m. Telephone: (708) 757-6859

The Rev. DAVID J. MENSING, Pastor
22012 Torrence Avenue, Sauk Village, IL 60411 Pastor: (708) 655-7549

E-mail: d_mensing@hotmail.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.
Worship Service 10:15 a.m. Telephone: (708) 386-6773

The Rev. ROBERT J. LIETZ, Pastor
233 North Cuyler Avenue, Oak Park, IL 60302 Pastor: (708) 386-4145

E-mail: robertjlietz@gmail.com

*Oh, keep us in Thy Word, we pray;
the guile and rage of Satan stay.
Oh, may Thy mercy never cease;
give concord, patience, courage, peace.*

*A trusty weapon is Thy Word,
Thy Church's buckler, shield and sword.
Oh, let us in its power confide
that we may seek no other guide.*

*Oh, grant that in Thy holy Word
we here may live and die, dear Lord;
and when our journey endeth here
receiue us into glory there.*

— TLH 292, 4, 8, 9