

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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“Will ye
also
go away?”

— John 6:67



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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. Robert J. Lietz
233 North Cuyler Avenue
Oak Park, IL 60302

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
5350 South Fountain Street
Seattle, WA 98178

SECRETARY:

The Rev. Paul E. Bloedel
22012 Torrence Avenue
Sauk Village, IL 60411

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 EVIL OF SINFUL SEPARATISM

The Keynote Sermon

delivered at the

59th Annual Convention of the *Concordia Lutheran Conference*

Lebanon, Oregon • June 25, 2010

by President David T. Mensing

I John 2:19

In the Name of Jesus Christ, our precious Redeemer, the Savior and only Head of His Church, dearly beloved brethren and friends, grateful hearers of His Word:

*“Behold, how **good** and how **pleasant** it is for brethren to **dwell together in unity!**”* (Psalm 133:1). That is not just the **private opinion** of the psalmist who penned those exhilarating words, as Bible critics claim; for that holy writer did not put down, black on white, for our learning, admonition, exhortation and comfort, merely his own **personal observation** of “how it is” among those who enjoy genuine God-pleasing fellowship together. On the contrary, that exclamation came *“not by the will of man,”* Peter tells us in his second epistle (1:21); *“but holy men of God [including His psalmist] spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost.”* Yes, beloved brethren, this is **God’s own** perfect, inerrant, infallible, all-wise and all-knowing **evaluation** of the blessedness of true Christian fellowship— regardless of what gainsayers would have us believe who dare to contradict His Word, who complain about what they call the “restrictive environment” of Christian fellowship, and who destroy for themselves the “goodness” and the “pleasantness” that God Himself wants all true believers to have *“in unity”* with their brethren! The “goodness” and the “pleasantness” do not exist, however, simply as the result of being members of an outward **group**, as if mere “membership” in a Christian congregation or in a conference of congregations, like membership in a social club or network, **automatically** carried with it the “perk” of warmness and fuzziness to which everybody “on the list” is entitled. Neither does the “goodness” and “pleasantness” emanate from “good and pleasant” **people**, who imagine that they are *entitled* to “feel good” about themselves and about their relationships with others —and even about their relationship with **God**— because of who **THEY ARE**.

Rather, it is the “**unity**” in which they “ *dwell together* ” — “ *the unity of the Spirit,* ” as St. Paul calls it in his letter to the Ephesians, and the *basis* of that unity, God’s precious Word and doctrine pure, which the Lord Himself graciously blesses with “goodness” and “pleasantness” “ *in the bond of peace* ” (Ephesians 4:3). The Prophet Jeremiah directs us to that blessed **unity** and to its **source** in the sixth chapter of his prophecy, saying to God’s people: “ *Ask for the old paths, where is the good way, and walk therein;* ” and what will be the blessing attached to it? “ *...and ye shall find rest for your souls* ” (v. 16). That same blessed **unity** is described by the Apostle Paul in words which scoffers have characterized as “the pipedream of the Holy Ghost,” —“unattainable in this life,” they say, namely: “ *...that ye all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you, but that ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment* ” (I Corinthians 1:10). To be sure, in such unity is not the result of perfect sanctification on the part of believers (which sanctification will reach perfection only in heaven), but it IS the result of the perfect norm and standard of Christian unity and of the Spirit’s perfect work in our hearts through the perfect means of His grace. Therefore, the Lord Jesus Himself declares: “ *If ye continue in My Word, then are ye My disciples indeed; and ye shall know the truth; and the truth shall make you free* ” (John 8:31-32), free from disunity , free from divisions , free from the spiritual quicksand of rationalism, subjectivism, and emotionalism which many who call themselves “Christians” set up as the judge and arbiter of spiritual “ *truth* ”!

Now one would think that, having been singularly blessed by the Lord of the Church, according to the riches of His grace, with “ *the unity of the Spirit* ” in His precious Word and doctrine pure for now almost sixty years in our beloved Conference, all of our people would not only gratefully **recognize** it, but also **value**, **cherish** and desire to “ *keep [it] in the bond of peace!* ” Sadly, however, “[*our*] *adversary, the devil,* ” taking full advantage of our sinful flesh, “ *in which dwelleth no good thing* ” (Romans 7:18) has devised a vicious pitfall, whereby he seeks unceasingly to undermine and to destroy if possible even **our** precious unity, namely,

The Evil of Sinful Separatism.

On the basis of the text before us, let us explore and learn for our own warning and admonition: **I.** What “separatism” is; **II.** Why it is “sinful;” **III.** How it can be avoided; and **IV.** What benefit God Himself intends for **us** to reap from the “sinful separatism” of former brethren.

I.

It should come as no surprise to us, my dear hearers, that we have been charged —falsely, of course— with “creating” **SINFUL SEPARATISM** as a “*commandment of men*” (Matthew 15:9) intended to control, to coerce, and literally to imprison our people in our churches, making them fearful of leaving them, lest the penalty of “sin” be attached to them, and that therefore we are motivating membership in the Christian congregation by the Law. Nothing could be further from the truth, as we shall presently see.

There is, of course, a **separation** that is MANDATED by **God’s Word**, namely, separation from those who “[*keep on causing*] *divisions and offenses contrary to the doctrine which [we] have learned*” from Holy Scripture (Romans 16:17); the “[*rejection*]” of heretics, that is, of persistent false teachers, “*after the first and second admonition[s]*” fail in efforts to gain them (Titus 3:10); and “[*com[ing] out from among and be [ing] separate*]” from “*unbelievers*” (II Corinthians 6:17), that is, from all those who espouse, preach, practice and tolerate doctrine which is **contrary** to “*the faith which was once delivered unto the saints*” (Jude 3), **contrary** to “*the doctrine which is according to Godliness*” (I Timothy 6:3). “*From such withdraw thyself,*” Paul writes to Timothy (v. 5b).

But there is **NO** command, admonition, exhortation or even suggestion that Christians should avoid, withdraw from, reject, or be separate from those whose profession, preaching, and practice are **in full accord** with Holy Scripture! The word “**SEPARATISM**” (like other words we commonly use which are not themselves found in Scripture but connote a Scriptural truth or position — words like “Sacrament,” “Trinity,” “vicarious,” and “unionism”) —the word “**SEPARATISM**” indicates **leaving** or **standing aside** from those whose position is **orthodox**, truly **Scriptural**, and Biblically **unassailable**, those to whom we should **adhere** in a fellowship of true unity, as we use the doctrine of the church properly (Cat. Q/A. 186B).

This descriptive text is not merely of historical interest, as some claim, as if the apostle is speaking only of the “*antichrists*” (v. 18) of his day and their separatism from him and the early Christians in Asia Minor (as the immediate context might suggest); but he references them for **our** learning and admonition as typical in this regard of **all such** as at any time left the fellowship of the truth **without Scriptural cause**. “*They went out from us,*” he says, just as Demas forsook the Apostle Paul (II Timothy 4:10), and as “*many*” erstwhile disciples forsook the Lord Jesus Himself in John chapter six. And since John includes *himself* in the word “*us,*”

the “*us*” quite obviously means those who, together with him, **held fast** to the truth of God’s Word in doctrine and practice (I John 1:3) — and, by legitimate extension, **all those** who at any time “*continued steadfastly in the apostles’ doctrine and fellowship*” (Acts 2:42) and yet were suddenly, often without warning, **deserted** by those whom they all along had regarded as their faithful and committed brethren and had trusted to stay the course of sound doctrine.

II.

And why is such “SEPARATISM” **SINFUL**? John says in our text: “*They were not of us.*” They were **not** in “*the unity of the Spirit*” with those whom they had previously recognized and openly confessed as true brethren. Perhaps they had never truly been “*of [them]*,” and their confession (however long it lasted) was a hypocritical **pretense** and a blatant **lie**, OR they suddenly decided, deliberately, to **disavow** the truth of God’s Word, which many of them, like Timothy, had known since childhood (II Timothy 3:15), to **leave** their *orthodox* fellowship, and either to “**go it alone**” OR to join a *heterodox* fellowship in which they would be “free” of the “*sound doctrine*” that they could no longer tolerate (II Timothy 4:3). In either case, whether their separatism resulted from an erring conscience or from a deliberate denial of the **TRUTH** for purely carnal reasons, the **SIN** is evident as **a violation of God’s Word**.

Jesus tells us: “*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), free from soul-destroying error, free from the doubts and misgivings that Satan, the father of lies (John 8:44), cunningly plants in the minds of those who have no spiritual anchor for their souls, free from the lure of “easier religion” elsewhere. It is the “**TRUTH**,” to the knowledge of which it is God’s **primary will** that all men come for eternal salvation (I Timothy 2:4), for the knowledge and conviction of their sins from God’s Law in its fierceness and, from the Gospel, for the good news of their redemption by Christ Jesus and of their reconciliation to God by the perfect vicarious satisfaction of divine justice in Jesus’ active and passive obedience. **Continuance** in Christ’s saving Word of truth is therefore not **an option** for Christians; it is not merely **an ideal** to strive after; and it is not “a pipedream of the Holy Spirit” that “[we] all speak the **same thing**...that there be **no divisions** among [us], but that [we] be **perfectly joined together** in the **same mind** and in the **same judgment**” on the basis of the only source and standard of spiritual truth, the only foundation of faith, and the only legitimate basis of true Christian unity.

Moreover, “SEPARATISM” is **SINFUL** because it militates against a whole host of still other passages of Holy Writ. Jesus said: “*He that is **not with Me is against Me; and he that gathereth not with Me scattereth***” (Luke 11:23). We are to “***hold fast the profession of our faith without wavering***” (Hebrews 10:23), “***not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together as the manner of some is***” (v. 25). Indeed, Scripture likens “SEPARATISM” to spiritual **adultery**—those purporting to be Christ’s bride “sleeping with the enemy”—or to spiritual **malicious desertion**, in which one who pledged fidelity to the other “*even unto death*” simply **walks out** of the relationship for no Godly cause, intending not to come back. Such separatists **walk out** on the heavenly Bridegroom and “*the household of faith*” and “*go a whoring after **other gods***” (Judges 2:17)—the gods of indifferentism, accommodationism, ecumenism, and materialism—committing **idolatry** for the sake of temporal peace, tranquility and unity in the **family**, among worldly **friends**, among those who are “*not of us.*” Unity in the “**family**” trumps all of those, say the separatists, since “everybody knows” that “blood is thicker than water;” and the “separatist” values unity between spouses, parents and children MORE than unity with Christ, with His Word, and with **His** “family,” that is, His **true disciples** (Matthew 12:49-50). —And “separatists” also **walk out on** and **keep themselves and their children from** the ministration of the true *Means of Grace*, whereby the Holy Spirit not only creates faith in the unconverted but strengthens and preserves faith in those who are already God’s children by faith in Jesus (Galatians 3:26; I Peter 1:5; Romans 1:16). How self-destructive is **that**?

And, make no mistake about it, my dear hearers, for those who “*willfully*” commit this sin **contrary to better knowledge**, “*after that [they] have received the knowledge of the truth,*” after having not only **learned** the truth of God’s Word but having been **convinced of it** and having **embraced it** in their hearts, “*there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins, but a certain fearful looking for of judgment and of fiery indignation which shall devour the adversaries!*” (Hebrews 10:26-27). They place their souls in imminent danger not only of **error** and of being **led away** from the **saving truth**, but in jeopardy of **damnation** because they trod underfoot their own Savior and despised His precious blood which had paid for all their sins (Hebrews 10:29)!

III.

Just how can **SINFUL SEPARATISM** be **avoided**? We read in our text about the separatists who **deserted** the fellowship of the truth in **John’s** day: “*If they had been of us, they would **no doubt** have **continued with***

us.” Why would the apostle have expected that outcome? Why indeed did the Holy Ghost inspire **those very words** for our learning and admonition? Simply because, as Jesus Himself points out in John chapter ten, His **true sheep** *hear His voice* and *follow Him* (v. 27). They “*continue in [His] Word*” (John 8:31) as their only source and standard of spiritual truth. And in Matthew 7:24, Jesus says: “*Whosoever heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them, I will liken him unto a wise man, which built his house upon a rock.*” Our **confidence** in God’s good and gracious will for us and in His inerrant revelation of that will to us and to all mankind is **never misplaced** when we are “*built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets*” —the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments— “*Jesus Christ Himself being the Chief Cornerstone*” (Ephesians 2:20). It is **rock solid** and defies erosion Matthew 7:25)!

And since “*it is God which worketh in [us] both to will and to do of His good pleasure*” (Philippians 2:13) in and through the means of **His Word**, we can be **assured** of being and remaining members of His Church by faith in Jesus as our Savior when we **continue in** His Word; and being **motivated** and **constrained** by *His love* (II Corinthians 5:14) — the love according to which He took our place under the Law, earned righteousness to cover our unrighteousness, and suffered and died to pay the penalty of our guilt — we will cheerfully and diligently **adhere** (that is, **stick to**) to an **orthodox** local church and fellowship which has, teaches, professes, and practices His Word in its truth and purity and administers His holy sacraments according to His divine institution. If we are truly “*of them,*” we will “*no doubt continue with*” those who, by God’s grace and with His help, “*continue steadfastly in the apostles’ doctrine and fellowship,*” as did the early Christians in Jerusalem (Acts 2:42). And when Satan tempts **us**, as he has tempted and continues to tempt so many **others**, to **SINFUL SEPARATISM** — to leaving our orthodox churches and fellowship contrary to God’s Word — and when our precious Savior asks **us**, as He asked His **true disciples** in John chapter six, “*Will ye also go away??*” (v. 67), we shall boldly declare, as it is written of **them**: “*‘Lord, to whom shall we go?? Thou hast the words of eternal life’*” (v. 68). Indeed, ‘we have no intention of yielding aught of the eternal, immutable truth of God for the sake of temporal peace, tranquility or unity!’ (Formula of Concord, Thorough Declaration XI, 95, *Triglotta*, p. 1095). So help us God!”

IV.

And yet, when, in our various congregations, we even casually examine the church record books to see why, after almost sixty years, some of our

flocks are in their net size —according to raw numbers— not much larger **now** than they were **then**, and may be even smaller than when they were founded, the devastating results of Satan’s vicious ploy are shocking! The **evil** of SINFUL SEPARATISM indeed **took its toll**; and we find, much to our dismay and discouragement, that “[*many*] *went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would no doubt have continued with us.*” But “*the Lord knoweth them that are His*” (II Timothy 2:19), the Scripture assures us; and our precious Savior exhorts us: “*Fear not, little flock, for it is your Father’s good pleasure to give you the kingdom*” (Luke 12:32). **For what benefit** then does God **permit us** to **suffer these reverses** as the result of SINFUL SEPARATISM? John addresses that question yet in our text, saying: “*They went out, that they might be made manifest that they were not all of us.*” We have the comfort of knowing **who they are**, so that we are now no longer plagued by their infidelity, by their cavil and partisan complaining, by their gain-saying contrary to God’s Word, by their divisiveness in the congregation, and by their efforts to “deceive **us** and seduce **us** into misbelief, despair, and other great shame and vice!” (Luther, *Sixth Petition*). Thus the Lord graciously turns even this seeming misfortune among us, this grievous sin of former and unfaithful brethren, **into good** for **us** according to His promise in Romans 8 verse 28!

My dearly-beloved brethren, knowing as we do from the Scriptures that it is our adversary, the devil, the liar and the father of lies, who is the author of all disunity, “*let us hold fast the profession of our faith without wavering, for He is faithful that promised*” (Hebrews 10:23) that the very gates of hell shall not prevail against His Church (Matthew 16:18). Let us resist Satan steadfast in the faith (I Peter 5:9), that he may flee from us (James 4:7) whose faith rests solidly upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets! Let us cling in childlike confidence to the merits of our precious Redeemer, for whose sake our sins have been forgiven from the foundation of the world and in whom we have been begotten unto a living hope or expectation of life everlasting in heaven as the gift of His free grace (I Peter 1:3-4)! And may He, through His powerful, efficacious and never-failing Word strengthen and preserve us steadfast in His Word and faith unto our end. For this is His gracious and good will! Amen.

Soli Deo gloria!

When do we use the doctrine of the Church properly?

We use the doctrine of the Church properly

...when we take heed to be and remain members of the Invisible Church by sincere faith in the Redeemer;

Examine yourselves whether ye be in the faith; prove your own selves.

II Corinthians 13:5

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

...when we adhere to the visible church which teaches and practices the Word of God in all its purity;

They continued steadfastly in the Apostles' doctrine. Acts 2:42

...when we do all in our power to maintain, promote, and extend this visible church by prayer, personal service, and financial support;

They that were scattered abroad went everywhere, preaching the Word.

Acts 8:4

Go ye, therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost. Matthew 28:19

So hath the Lord ordained that they which preach the Gospel should live of the Gospel. I Corinthians 9:14

...when we avoid in spiritual matters all false churches and all heterodox organizations and individuals as dangers to our souls.

Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep's clothing; but inwardly they are ravening wolves. Matthew 7:15

Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God; because many false prophets are gone out into the world. I John 4:1

Now, I beseech you, brethren, mark them which cause divisions and offenses contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned; and avoid them. Romans 16:17

Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers. For what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? And what communion hath light with darkness? And what concord hath Christ with Belial? Or what part hath he that believeth with an infidel? And what agreement hath the temple of God with idols? For ye are the temple of the living God, as God hath said, I will dwell in them and walk in them; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people. Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you and will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be My sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty. II Corinthians 6:14-18

Can two walk together, except they be agreed? Amos 3:3

(Adapted from *Exposition of Luther's Small Catechism*, St. Louis, CPH, 1943.)

2010 Convention Digest



The 59th Annual Convention, held at St. John's Lutheran Church, Lebanon, Oregon, officially began at 9:30 a.m. with a Divine Worship Service of Convocation in which the local Pastor, the Rev. M. L. Natterer, served as the liturgist, and the Conference President, the Rev. David T. Mensing, delivered the

keynote sermon. He chose as his text **I John 2:19**, taking as his theme the motto of our convention, *The Evil of Sinful Separatism*, and dividing it into four parts, namely, **I.** What "separatism" is, **II.** Why it is "sinful," **III.** How it can be avoided, and **IV.** What benefit God Himself intends for us to reap from the "sinful separatism" of former brethren.

Following the service, the opening session of the convention was called to order by the President, who first appointed the standard convention committees. He then delivered his annual report in which he referred to on-going "ambitious projects" such as the printing of full-length books by *Scriptural Publications*, the subsidy of the Ekaterinburg congregation in Russia, and assistance to the brethren in Nigeria. Additionally, the Conference had begun the "challenging initiative" to offer full support for two new full-time seminary students. It was mentioned that four of the Conference congregations exceeded their pledged amounts to the Student Aid Fund. President Mensing then summarized some of the work that was accomplished over the past year—stressing particularly the work of the Committee on Missions, our Seminary, and *Scriptural Publications*.



After the noon meal, sessions were opened with a devotion conducted by Pastor Paul E. Bloedel. The Chairman, Pastor Mensing, then presented three specific **recommendations from the Board of Directors:** **1)** To ratify Board actions between conventions in authorizing the Treasurer to issue emergency relief funds to needy brethren: To Pastor Nimi

Fyneface in Nigeria (\$4,300.00 in August and \$2,500.00 in February) and to St. Mark's Ev. Lutheran Church (\$5,000.00 in February). **2)** To send an official letter from the President of the Conference to Professor John F. Brug and the chairman of Northwestern Publishing House calling their attention to libelous statements against our Conference in Brug's book, *WELS and Other Lutherans* (second edition), demanding that these statements be disavowed and corrected; and to have the seminary students, together with their professors, write a detailed refutation of Brug's claims that can be published on the Conference web site. **3)** To have the Conference President direct an official letter on behalf of the Board to *Western Union* at its corporate headquarters (copied to its Compliance Department in Englewood, Colorado), asking them to explain and correct the current blockage of our Treasurer from using its services to send money not only to Russia and Nigeria on behalf of our Conference but even money transfers of a personal nature by the Treasurer, as this curtails our humanitarian work at home and abroad. The ratification was approved, but drafts of the two recommended letters would be submitted later in the convention for specific approval.

In the initial report of the *Finance Committee*, Mr. Robert G. Bloedel, the Conference Treasurer, presented the *Financial Report* for fiscal year 2009–2010. The report showed a beginning cash balance of \$49,230.04 in the *General Fund* plus total receipts of \$43,406.15, yielding total cash available of \$92,636.19. Expenditures totaled \$50,483.47, leaving an ending cash balance as of May 31, 2010 of \$42,152.72. The report also showed an increase in the *Student Aid Fund* from \$56,437.98 at the beginning of the fiscal year to an ending balance of \$70,555.69 on its closing date, May 31, 2010. Total cash in all funds as of May 31, 2010: \$112,708.41. The Treasurer then distributed the Finance Committee's *Budget Worksheet* for the new fiscal year, June 1, 2010 through May 31, 2011. It showed a beginning cash balance of \$42,152.72 and anticipated receipts (including the pledges of our congregations) of \$27,258.75, for an expected total cash available of \$69,411.47 in the *General Fund*. Projected budgetary expenditures totaled \$60,300.00 divided among the following items, some of which anticipated the favorable action of the delegates on specific recommendations of committees: *Scriptural Publications*—\$3,500.00; Ekaterinburg Subsidy—\$9,600.00; Ekaterinburg Facilities Rental Subsidy—\$2,400.00; Nigerian Aid—\$8,000.00; St. Mark's Subsidy—\$13,200.00; Archival Subsidy—\$500.00; Telephone Expense—\$100.00; Convention Expense—\$1,000.00; General Travel Expense—\$10,500.00; Seminary Instructors' Salaries—\$9,000.00; Miscellaneous Expenses—\$2,500.00. In the Stu-

dent Aid Fund, the estimated pledged income for the new year is \$18,720.00, with the student support expenses totaling \$22,800.00. [NOTE that the *final* General Fund budget adopted by the convention was *lower* than that originally proposed.]

Pastor Robert J. Lietz, the chairman of the *Committee on Missions*, divided his report into three main sections: **1)** concerning our brethren in Russia, **2)** concerning our brethren in Nigeria, and **3)** concerning our brethren in Sauk Village, Illinois. The chairman read a letter from Pastor Schurganoff in which he mentioned **a)** the serious bout with the flu for which he had been hospitalized and which resulted in serious organ complications, and **b)** the mechanical failure of his computer which resulted in his sporadic contact this year. Pastor Lietz stated the committee's desire for Pastor Schurganoff to attend the Fall Pastoral Conference in Lebanon, Oregon, this year, and for Mr. Alex Popoff (a layman of St. John's congregation who is fluent in Russian) to work as translator for this meeting. Chairman Lietz then read from the "Profile of a Subsidized Congregation" that Pastor Schurganoff completed and returned to the committee on June 18, 2010. The chairman also mentioned the work that Mr. Popoff has done (and intends to continue) in translating some instructional materials into the Russian language for the benefit of Pastor Schurganoff and his congregation. Regarding Russia, the committee's **first recommendation** requiring convention approval was that the Conference bring Pastor Schurganoff to the United States for the 2010 Fall Pastoral Conference. (The estimated cost for this trip is approximately \$2,000.00.) The **second recommendation** was to send Pastor Schurganoff \$500.00 to purchase a new computer. And the **third recommendation** was that the Conference maintain its current level of subsidy for the congregation in Ekaterinburg (both for pastoral support and facility rental).

Concerning the congregations in Nigeria, Chairman Lietz reported that emergency aid was sent from the Conference to Nigeria in August 2009 and February 2010. Pastor Fyनेface's eldest son, Elishama, died on June 16, 2010 as a result of liver and kidney problems and was received into the mansions of heaven by God's grace in Christ. Pastor Lietz also noted that *Scriptural Publications* recently completed a prototype edition of the New Testament in Kalabari—the native language of our Nigerian brethren—for their examination and eventual use. The chairman then read the most recent correspondence from Pastor Fyनेface summarizing the current situation in the various Nigerian congregations and among their pastors. A great number of laymen in the congrega-

tions are unemployed now; and, consequently, a financial debt has risen among the seven pastors of the nine congregations. The Committee on Missions recommended that the Conference send \$8,000.00 to Nigeria in order to clear this debt.

Concerning the financial struggles of St. Mark's congregation in Sauk Village, Illinois, Pastor Lietz summarized what had happened earlier this year and the \$5,000.00 grant of emergency aid that was approved by the Board of Directors in February. For this new fiscal year, St. Mark's requested a financial subsidy of \$1,100.00 per month; and the Committee on Missions recommended to the convention that the Conference grant this monthly subsidy for the fiscal year 2010–2011. This request, together with all the other recommendations of the Committee on Missions, were adopted by the delegates in convention assembled.

Pastor Mensing, chairman of the *Editorial Committee* and editor of the *Concordia Lutheran*, presented his report in which he highlighted the committee's work over the past year. The primary work of this committee is the editing of the "official organ" of our Conference, the *Concordia Lutheran*, and of editing prior to publications any books and tracts to be printed by *Scriptural Publications*. Editor Mensing expressed his gratitude for the contributions of the pastors in writing timely and edifying articles and for the help provided by the other committee members, Pastor Lietz, the Book and Tract Editor, and Seminararian Jason Mabe, the committee's lay member, in reviewing and editing the articles submitted. He also conveyed his appreciation for the work of the Print Shop Manager of *Scriptural Publications*, Mr. Phillip Martin, in the layout and printing of the *Concordia Lutheran*.

Pastor Lietz, the chairman of the *Publishing House Board of Control*, summarized the work of *Scriptural Publications* in the production of the Kalabari version of the New Testament, the bi-monthly production of the *Concordia Lutheran*, the printing and distribution of the 2009 Convention *Proceedings*, and the transfer of the Conference website maintenance from Mr. Lee Roller in Seattle to Mr. Martin Trusty in Chicago, who will be hosting the site without charge to the Conference. For this new year, *Scriptural Publications* plans on printing more copies of the *Constitution and Bylaws* of the Concordia Lutheran Conference, reprinting the *Advanced Bible History*, and improving and updating the Conference website.

Mr. David J. Mensing, 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 \$1,443.45; total receipts of \$6,123.75; total expenditures of \$4,774.25; and an ending balance of \$2,792.95.

The next morning, sessions began with a devotion led by Pastor David G. Redlin. Pastor Robert J. Lietz then began his essay entitled: “*Sinful Separatism: Satan’s Vicious Device to Destroy the Unity of the Spirit among True Brethren.*” In his brief introduction, the essayist referred to the way that Jesus countered and overcame the temptations of the devil in the wilderness with the Sword of the Spirit, responding with “*It is written*” (Matthew 4). Holding fast to “*sound doctrine*” (I Timothy 1:10; II Timothy 4:3; Titus 1:9) is crucial for pastors and laymen alike in order to repel the attacks of Satan. It was stressed that “*sound practice*” must accompany “*sound doctrine*” if we are to be “*doers of the Word and not hearers only*” (James 1:22). In comments from the floor, it was mentioned that we need to be careful that we do not take for granted any of the passages of Holy Scripture—even those precious passages that we have heard so often. Continuing with his essay, Pastor Lietz stressed the point of Scripture that it is the Gospel of God’s grace in Christ Jesus that moves and impels us to hold fast to His pure Word and to be diligent in the consistent application of His Word in our lives. In the discussion that followed, the terms “*doctrine*” and “*practice*” were defined and elaborated upon as these are used in the context of the congregation and the family. The essayist pointed out certain fruits of true zeal for sound doctrine and practice—concluding the first part of his essay with an outline of what would follow in the next four parts.

At the beginning of Part II, Pastor Lietz defined heresies as “*man-produced nonsense which fights against the God-inspired teachings of the Holy Scriptures*” and defined heretics as “*false prophets*” (Matthew 7:15; 24:11a) who, with their heresies, their lies, “*deceive many*” (24:11b). The Scriptures instruct us to “*mark*” and to “*avoid*” (Romans 16:17) those who adhere to and promote false teachings, withdrawing ourselves from them (I Timothy 6:3–5). God wants His people to be completely united on the foundation of His Word in all its truth and purity, “*endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace*” (Ephesians 4:3). This concluded Part II of the essay. Parts III–V were deferred to the afternoon session of the following day.

Following the noon meal, the afternoon session began with a devotion conducted by Pastor Robert J. Lietz. The Vice President and Chairman

of the *Committee on Lutheran Union*, Pastor Edward J. Worley, presented the committee's report, in which he set forth the constitutionally defined purpose of the Committee on Lutheran Union. There were no official discussions with any church bodies over the past year. And while there was a brief exchange of e-mails between the chairman and a Rev. William Mack, the latter objected to our condemnation of the selective fellowship in which he desires to engage.

The chairman of the *Committee on Theological Education*, Pastor Worley, summarized the work of the seminary students over the past year and their successful completion of their respective interim colloquies before the Pastoral Conference just prior to the convention. He also outlined the courses to be studied over the next year by the three students, as well as the plan to join all three students together in full time study beginning in the 2011–2012 academic year. It was noted that a layman from St. Mark's had been attending the first-year seminary classes as an auditor, and had completed all of the course work and written exams, but without credit. Also, as a non-matriculated student, he had not submitted himself to the required colloquy of the pastors over the coursework he had taken.

Next came the interest reports of the two *Seminary Instructors* and of the three *Seminarians*. In his report, Professor Lietz exhorted us to give thanks to the Lord for our three seminary students and for our seminary professors. He then described the work that he and Seminarian Jason Mabe accomplished during this past academic year in Dogmatics II (which focused on Christology) and Old Testament Isagogics (which focused on the Messianic prophecies and Gospel references in the Old Testament together with the fulfillments and parallels in the New Testament). Professor Mensing then detailed the courses that he taught primarily to the first-year students, David and Daniel Mensing, as well as to the auditing student, Jim Bielefeldt: New Testament Greek, Dogmatics I, Hermeneutics, Exegesis, Introduction to the Scriptures, New Testament Isagogics, and Ecclesiastical Latin (which course was also taken by the second-year student, Jason Mabe). There was also Practicum work in the local congregation that was assigned to the first-year seminarians. He expressed gratitude in the Lord for the sacrifices of the Conference brethren which funded financial support for the first-year students and thus allowed them to study full time without the distraction of secular work.

In his interest report, Mr. Daniel P. Mensing, one of the first-year stu-

dents, described some of his experiences during the past academic year. He expressed gratitude to the Lord for blessing him in his studies. Dan also spoke of some of the Practicum work that he was assigned to do, which included the teaching of Sunday School. He is looking forward to beginning his second year studies this fall. Mr. David J. Mensing, the other first-year student, then gave his report. He mentioned that his favorite courses were Dogmatics, New Testament Greek, and Exegesis. Dave recalled the blessing that God bestowed upon his family in the middle of the first semester—the birth of his third daughter, Zoe. He also noted the special work that he and his fellow seminarians performed — right at final exam time at the end of the first semester — in reproving, rebuking, and exhorting those who were sinfully separating themselves from the orthodox congregation in their midst. Dave thanked the Conference for the generous financial support that was provided to him and his family over the past year—allowing him to study full-time without needing to divide his attention between seminary and secular work. Mr. Jason Mabe, the second-year student, followed with his interest report. After briefly mentioning the sad defections from Peace congregation halfway through the academic year, he summarized the content of his studies in Dogmatics II, Old Testament Isagogics, and Ecclesiastical Latin. He expressed his gratitude for the two full-time students, and is looking forward to continuing his studies together with them. He also thanked many of the brethren for assisting him over the past year.

The convention then took up the *Election of Officers and Standing Committees*. **Officers:** Pastor David T. Mensing was re-elected **President**; Pastor Edward J. Worley was re-elected **Vice President**; Pastor Paul E. Bloedel was re-elected **Secretary**; and Mr. Robert G. Bloedel was re-elected **Treasurer**. The **Board Members-at-Large** were also re-elected: Mr. Raymond S. Kusumi from the “far west” and Mr. Erik R. Roe from the “middle west.” The **Standing Committees** elected were as follows: **Editorial Committee:** The Rev. David T. Mensing, Chairman (Editor, *The Concordia Lutheran*); The Rev. Robert J. Lietz (Book and Tract Editor); Mr. Jason A. Mabe, Lay Member. **Committee on Lutheran Union:** The Rev. Edward J. Worley, Chairman; The Rev. Paul E. Bloedel; The Rev. Robert J. Lietz; Mr. Daniel Bloedel. **Committee on Theological Education:** The Rev. Edward J. Worley, Chairman; The Rev. Paul E. Bloedel; Mr. John F. Swanson; Mr. Mark J. Mensing. **Committee on Missions:** The Rev. Robert J. Lietz, Chairman; The Rev. David G. Redlin; Mr. Alex Popoff; Mr. Dale Ellis; Mr. Michael J. Danyluk. **Finance Committee:** Mr. Robert G. Bloedel,

Chairman; Mr. Paul Natterer; Mr. Phillip R. Martin; Mr. Erik R. Roe. ***Publishing House Board of Control:*** The Rev. Robert J. Lietz, Chairman; Mr. David J. Mensing, Business Manager; Mr. Phillip R. Martin, Print Shop Manager.

On Sunday morning, the local pastor, the Rev. M. L. Natterer, served as liturgist for the Sunday worship service, while Pastor Edward J. Worley of Seattle, Washington, preached the sermon based on **John 6:60–69**. His theme was: “***Will You Also Go Away?***” divided into four parts: **I.** The sinful flesh caused many disciples of Christ to take offense at what the Savior was teaching them; **II.** To be and remain a true disciple of Christ is entirely the result of God’s gracious work through His Word; **III.** When many disciples defected and sinfully separated themselves from Christ and His Word, Christ asked, “Will You Also Go Away?”; and **IV.** By God’s grace alone may you respond to the Savior’s probing question as Peter did.

Following the noon meal, the afternoon session began with a devotion conducted by Pastor M. L. Natterer. The convention then heard the remainder of the essay: “*Sinful Separatism: Satan’s Vicious Device to Destroy the Unity of the Spirit among True Brethren*” by Pastor Robert J. Lietz, continuing with Parts III–V. The title of Part III was: “What sinful separatism is, and why it is so vital to warn against and reject it, especially in these latter days!” In this section, the essayist stressed that those who sinfully separate themselves from an orthodox congregation despise both the Law and the Gospel of the Lord. The point was also made that sinful separatism manifests lovelessness toward those who adhere to the pure Word of God in doctrine and practice. Sinful separatists are guilty of idolatry when they allow any earthly consideration to pull their hearts away from following the Lord and His Word in a true-teaching church. Because of the continuous attacks of the devil, the world, and the sinful flesh within, we must not neglect to warn against the sin of separatism. In Part IV, “The disastrous consequences of sinful separatism for the separatists themselves, for their brethren left behind, and for the church-at-large,” the essayist emphasized the point of Scripture that willful sin removes a person from the saving grace of God. Sadly, separatists often remove their children as well from an orthodox congregation and from the unleavened Word of the Lord, through which the Holy Ghost works to create, strengthen, and preserve saving faith. Realizing the grave spiritual danger in which they have placed themselves, those who have sinfully separated from us should be remembered in our prayers, that God would bring them to true repen-

tance. Separatists also present a danger to those whom they formerly acknowledged as brethren, since they may encourage others to follow their wicked example. In the concluding section, Part V, “For the days ahead, words of comfort, encouragement, strength, and help against the devilish, fleshly, and worldly allurements of sinful separatism,” the essayist quoted many comforting passages of Holy Scripture, which he called “mighty spiritual weapons,” through which the Holy Ghost grants spiritual strengthening and a greater confidence in the Lord’s promises of protection and aid even while we endure the afflictions brought upon us by those who set themselves against us, against the Lord our God, and against His precious Word. The essay was adopted with thanks; and, after final editing and review, it will appear in its entirety in the official *Proceedings* of the convention.

Mr. Raymond S. Kusumi, the *Conference Statistician*, delivered the statistical report for fiscal year 2009–2010. (The specifics of this report can be found in the official *Proceedings*.) Without objection, Mr. Kusumi was also re-appointed as Statistician for the coming year.

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 Lietz 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 Mensing and Worley for their sermons; **4)** Thanks to the Pastors who led devotions opening the various sessions of the Convention; **5)** Thanks to Mr. Stephen Bloedel and the combined choir of St. John’s and St. Luke’s for the beautiful organ and choir music that enhanced the worship services; **6)** Thanks to St. John’s Lutheran Church and its pastor for hosting the convention and for their loving and generous hospitality; and thanks to the Lord for preserving to the congregations of our Conference the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace through His Word.

Peace Ev. Lutheran Church of Oak Forest, Illinois, extended to the Conference its invitation to host the *Sixtieth Annual Convention*, and this kind offer was unanimously accepted. 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, 2011). The Conference President then concluded the 59th Annual Convention of the Concordia Lutheran Conference with a devotion that included the singing of Hymn 292, a prayer, the Lord’s Prayer,

the customary concluding formulas, and the Apostolic Benediction.

—Rev. Paul E. Bloedel, Secretary

What Does the Bible Teach about Angels?

A 1992 Gallup youth poll reported that belief in angels among American teenagers had risen from 64% in 1978 to 76%. Popular culture seems fascinated by the topic. New Age religion followers show interest in the subject. Angels are being portrayed in the print media (newspapers, magazines, books), at computer websites, and on video (television, movies). The topic is discussed over the radio not only on religious stations but on secular ones as well. An interest in angels is even growing in the artistic venue. The vast majority of information about angels is not reliable because it is not taken from the only reliable source, the Holy Bible. For the Holy Scriptures are the only source and norm of Christian faith and practice and the clear and infallible guide to angels. Any question that is not answered by God's inerrant Word is unanswerable in this life; for, if God wanted us to know the answer, He would have revealed it to us in His Word (II Timothy 3:15-17; Deuteronomy 29:29). This article will give only straight Biblical answers to the questions posed since these answers come from the only one who knows, the Creator of the angels Himself, as He reveals them in His Holy Word.

Where do angels come from?

The angels were created by God, the Holy Trinity; they owe their existence entirely to Him who made all things. Scripture tells us that all created things were created by God in six 24-hour days. Only God is eternal (Genesis 1:1ff.; John 1:1-3; Genesis 2:2-3; cf. also Psalm 90:2; Isaiah 48:13). The Bible expressly states that angels are creatures — created by God (Psalm 104:4; Colossians 1:16). Since only God existed prior to the six days of creation, and God did not create anything after that period, the angels must have been created during the original six days. Scripture does not tell us, however, on which day. Those who deny the existence of angels, both ancient skeptics (cf. Acts 23:8) and “modernists” today, do so in direct contradiction of the revelation of Holy Scripture.

What does the word “angel” mean?

Taken from the Greek [pronounced AHNG • gell • loss], it is actually an

official title meaning “messenger” (cf. Matthew 1:20; 4:11; *et al.*) and designates their holy office as heavenly spiritual ambassadors. In the Old Testament, the Hebrew word [pronounced mah • LACH] also means “messenger” (cf. Psalm 91:11; 103:20; 148:2). Angels are sometimes called “*sons of God*” (Job 1:6; 2:1; 38:7). [Note: In Genesis 6:2, however, the reference is not to angels but to men (specifically believers); cf. also Genesis 5:22; 6:4.]

What are angels?

Their nature is described by Holy Writ as “*spirit*” — a “spirit” being a finite creature, but a personal being that is non-corporeal, that is, without a material body (Psalm 104:4; Hebrews 1:14; Luke 24:39; Ephesians 6:12). They are God’s foremost invisible creatures. He did not create them from His own essence, nor did He create them from the original crude and chaotic mass of matter. He created them out of nothing by sheer omnipotence. As non-material beings they possess special attributes that no corporeal creature has. The fact that angels are individual and personal is proven from their personal names (Luke 1:9) and titles (Genesis 3:24; Isaiah 6:2), personal actions and emotions (Matthew 28:2; Luke 15:10), moral character (Matthew 25:31) and various other attributes (Judges 13:6, Matthew 28:3; Daniel 4:13; Colossians 1:16).

The sudden appearance of angels shows that as spirits they are invisible but may appear in visible forms as God so wills (cf. for example: Luke 1:11; 2:13, *et al.*, also Genesis 18:2; 19:1; Acts 1:10). In each case these forms were as young men, never females or babies (cf. Mark 16:5; Luke 24:4; cf. John 20:12). At certain times the Bible describes their faces and garments in glorious terms (Matthew 28:3, Luke 24:4).

Historical Note: Prior to the middle of the fourth century, angels were depicted in church art and architecture in simple robes (without wings) as young men. Angels of the Eastern Church were depicted as dignified protectors, but never as females or children. A distinction between seraphim (as having six wings), cherubim (having four wings) and ordinary angels (with two wings) was also observed in Eastern Church depictions. It was during the Renaissance (especially during the so-called “High Renaissance,” circa 1500-1550) that female angels and little angels with children’s heads and wings were introduced, as well as other artistic embellishments such as long trains of garlands, scroll-work, etc.). As a result of this, nearly all modern forms follow these innovations of the Renaissance artists and not the Biblical descriptions of young men in white robes.

What was the original state of all the angels when God created them?

All the angels were created good (Genesis 1:31 – “*very good*”). They were endowed with concreated perfection; they were holy, righteous and just. They were also given a completely free will which some of the angels abused and sinned against God (II Peter 2:4).

Why are there now TWO kinds of angels?

The good and holy angels are those that retained their original character; and the evil angels or demons [led by *Satan* (“enemy”), the *devil* (“liar”)] are those who chose to sin against God and fell away from Him, losing their concreated goodness (John 8:44; II Peter 2:4; Matthew 8:29; Jude 6; Matthew 25:41).

The Bible does not reveal the exact nature, nor the exact time, of Satan’s sin; but we do know that both his fall and that of the evil angels (demons) was entirely his and their own fault; for they were not morally defective at creation, nor did God cause their fall in any way (Jude 6; James 1:13).

What are the attributes and abilities of the angels?

Since only God is infinite in His essence and ability, the angels as creatures of God are finite and limited. They possess intellect and will [they know things (Ephesians 3:10); and they gladly minister (Psalm 103:21)] and have power to react to material things (cf. Genesis 19:16; Matthew 4:5). Their moral perfection is transcendent, so that as holy beings (Matthew 25:31), they always serve God in complete devotion (Psalm 103:20-21). Their knowledge is great but finite (Matthew 24:36; Mark 13:32); for they learn from the Gospel revelation (Ephesians 3:10; I Peter 1:12). They cannot know what God has not given them to know (Matthew 24:36). Only God has foreknowledge and omniscience (I Kings 8:39; John 2:25; John 21:17; Acts 1:24; cf. Job 26:6; 31:4; 34:21; Psalm 147:5; I John 3:20). Angels are very powerful yet not all-powerful (Psalm 103:20; II Thessalonians 1:7; Matthew 12:29); their power far transcends human strength (II Kings 19:35; Psalm 91:11-13; cf. Ephesians 6:10-17). Only God is almighty, omnipotent (Job 42:2; Psalm 115:3; 135:6; Isaiah 43:13; Matthew 19:26; Luke 1:37; Revelation 19:6). Only God can do miracles in and of Himself (Psalm 72:18; contrast the miracles claimed by the Roman Antichrist in II Thessalonians 2:9, “*lying wonders*”). Angels possess limited immutability (stability) since they do not propagate their kind

(Matthew 22:30; Luke 20:35-36), neither do they die (Luke 20:36), and therefore do not increase or decrease in number. Angels are invisible as spirits (Hebrews 1:7; 14; Colossians 1:16). Angels are illocal – *in* a place without *occupying* the place, for spirits are independent of spatial dimension, uncircumscribed by space (Matthew 24:31; Psalm 104:4; Daniel 9:21; Luke 2:13ff). Moreover, their nature as spirits makes them extremely agile, able to transverse space quickly, not being bound by gravity, friction and all the forces impeding material bodies (cf. Psalm 91:11-12). When we view the powers and abilities of the good angels, we see how God has equipped them to perform their duties flawlessly and for our benefit (cf. Hebrews 1:14; Psalm 91:11-12; *et al.*).

What are the duties of the good angels?

The good angels praise God (Isaiah 6:3; Luke 2:13), carry out His commands (Psalm 103:20-21), and serve as God’s ministers in the world and the church (Psalm 104:4, Hebrews 1:14). God sends angels to serve His believing “*little ones*” (Matthew 18:6, 10), the believers in their work and calling (Psalm 91:11-12), and the dying (Luke 16:22). The good angels are interested in all that occurs in the church. Not only do they admire and praise the mystery of the redemption of mankind by Christ (Luke 2:13-14; I Peter 1:12; Ephesians 3:10), but they rejoice over every convert: “*There is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner that repenteth*” (Luke 15:10). Scripture notes the presence and ministrations of the angels at all chief historical events in the church such as the giving of the Decalog (Galatians 3:19), and the conception (Luke 1:26ff.), the birth (Luke 2:9ff.), the resurrection (Matthew 28:2ff.; Mark 16:5ff.; Luke 24:4ff.; John 20:12ff.), the ascension (Acts 1:10ff.), and the return of Christ for judgment (Matthew 13:41ff.; 24:31; 25:31; etc.). In short, the good angels are sent by God to serve His elect, His true believers in Christ. This is stated in Hebrews 1:14, “*Are they not all ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation?*” The Bible does not teach that each believer has one specific angel assigned as his or her “guardian angel” (as the Romanists claim); but it does teach that, at God’s command, the angels guard and protect His believers (Psalm 91:11-12) and especially the little ones among them (Matthew 18:10). The good angels are our heavenly brothers in God’s spiritual family (Revelation 19:10). Among their other specified duties, the good angels will on Judgment Day gather the elect for heaven and the unbelievers for hell (Matthew 13:40-42, 49-50; Matthew 25:31; I Thessalonians 4:16; Matthew 24:31).

Are we allowed to adore, worship or pray to angels?

No, we are to worship God alone (Matthew 4:10; Revelation 19:10; 22:8-9; Colossians 2:18). We should rejoice and take comfort in their service on our behalf. We should pray to God for His promised protection which He accords us not only directly (Psalm 34:7; 91:10) but also by way of His angels (11-12). But we should never pray to angels, for prayer is an act of worship due to God alone (Matthew 4:10).

Must we not fear that some of the good angels will sin and fall away to follow Satan while they are supposed to be guarding us?

No. Since the rebellion of Satan and his evil legions, God assures us through His psalmist that “*His angels...do His commandments, hearkening unto the voice of His Word.*” They are “*ministers [i.e. servants] of His, that do His pleasure*” (Psalm 103:20-21). Those are the angels that He charges with our keeping and protection (Psalm 91:11), and who, He promises, will fulfill their mission (v. 12). They are **His** “*ministering spirits, sent forth [by Him] to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation*” (Hebrews 1:14), for the believers who are joint-heirs with Christ (Romans 8:17) of the inheritance of heaven (I Peter 1:4). If even “*an angel from heaven*” were to preach to us a false Gospel (Galatians 1:8-9), he would be *cursed* by God and, as an evil plague, would not be permitted to “*come nigh [our] dwelling*” (Psalm 91:10). “*Therefore will not we fear*” (Psalm 46:2), for “*the gates of hell shall not prevail against [His Church]*” (Matthew 16:18).

The *evil* angels (demons) led by the devil (Satan, Beelzebub) have no hope of redemption and will spend eternity in the place prepared for them (Hebrews 2:16; Matthew 8:29; 25:41; II Peter 2:4). We do not pray for them, for they have no hope at all of escaping their just eternal punishment (Jude 6).

What are the works and desires of Satan and his demons?

In the Old Testament, the prince of the evil angels is called **Satan**, which is Hebrew for “adversary” or “enemy.” He first appeared in the Garden of Eden when, by using the serpent as his cunning tool, he tempted Eve to disobey God’s simple prohibition (Genesis 3). But he is mentioned throughout the Old Testament (I Chronicles 21:1; Job 1:6-12; 2:1-7; Psalm 109:6; Zechariah 3:1-2). In the New Testament, he is also called **Satan** (Matthew 4:10; 12:26; Mark 1:13; 3:23; 4:15; Luke

10:18; 22:3, 31; Acts 5:3, *et al.*), as well as *the Devil*, “false accuser,” “liar” in Greek (cf. Matthew 4:1; 13:39; 25:41; Luke 8:12; John 8:44, *et al.*). Another New Testament name for Satan is “*Beelzebub*” (“lord of dung,” also “lord of flies” ...which feed on dung), *the prince of devils*” (Matthew 12:24, 27; 9:34; 10:25). In addition he is called “*the god of this world*” (II Corinthians 4:4); “*the prince of the power of the air*” (Ephesians 2:2); “*the adversary*” (I Peter 5:8); “*that wicked one*” (I John 5:18); “*the prince of this world*” (John 14:30); “*the tempter*” (Matthew 4:3); “*the accuser*” (Revelation 12:10); “*the angel of the bottomless pit*” (Revelation 9:11); “*Abaddon*” (in Hebrew) and “*Apollyon*” (in Greek), i.e., “*Destroyer*” (Revelation 9:11); “*Belial*” (in Hebrew), i.e., “*the wicked one*” (II Corinthians 6:15); “*the dragon, that old serpent*” (Revelation 20:2); to name just a few!

Now the evil angels, led by Satan, constantly work against God and all true believers. All endeavors of the wicked angels are aimed at harming man in his body (Job 2:4, 5, 7ff.; Mark 5:5), in his temporal possessions (Job 1:11ff.), and particularly in his soul (I Peter 5:8; Acts 5:3-5). The entire state of unbelief, among heathen nations as well as in external Christendom, is a work of the devil (Ephesians 2:1-3; John 8:44). All who do not believe the Gospel are thinking and doing what the devil wills; they are completely in his power (Acts 26:18; Colossians 1:13; Ephesians 2:2). This spiritual possession by the devil does not relieve man of personal responsibility (John 8:44-45), nor does it destroy man’s perverse will according to the flesh, since the unbeliever of his own will rejects the Gospel and gladly does what is evil (Hosea 13:9; cf. Matthew 22:1-10; Luke 14:16-24).

God also suffers (allows) the devil or his demons to take possession of a man by personally dwelling in his body. If this be the case with an unbeliever, it should not surprise us because the entire person, body and soul, is the devil’s own (John 8:44; Ephesians 2:2-3). When, however, a believer’s body is temporarily inhabited by Satan, the person is rendered helpless to exercise his God-enlightened reason and will and becomes for a time the involuntary instrument of Satan, even uttering blasphemies and behaving himself in a thoroughly ungodly manner. The Christian should be reminded, both before and after the fact, that the devil had no real power over his soul and that he was in no jeopardy of damnation, neither is he responsible for his behavior while possessed. Passages of comfort to such a person include John 14:27; Matthew 16:18b; Matthew 11:28-29; Galatians 3:26; Isaiah 43:1-3a; Psalm 91:10.

Jesus Christ, God's Son manifest in the flesh (Colossians 2:9; I Timothy 3:16), defeated the devil in life (Matthew 4:11; Luke 4:13) and in death (Hebrews 2:14; I John 3:8), and will cast him into "everlasting fire" on the Last Day (Matthew 25:41b; Revelation 20:10). As Christians we must "resist the devil" (James 4:7) "steadfast in the faith" (I Peter 5:9) which is founded on God's Word (Ephesians 2:20; 6:11 ff.) and we exercise in fervent prayer (Matthew 26:41), confident that he can no longer successfully accuse us (Romans 8:1, 31-32, 37) and that, by faith in Christ, we can now overcome his temptations (Romans 8:35; 16:20; Revelation 12:10-11).

Are there different ranks and/or orders of angels?

There are orders, classes and/or ranks among both the good and the evil angels. Although Scripture does not give us the precise order or number of such ranks, nor the exact differences between them, we do read concerning the good angels of "Cherubim" (Genesis 3:24, Psalm 80:1), "Seraphim" (Isaiah 6:2), "thrones, dominions, principalities, powers" (Colossians 1:16) and "Michael, the archangel" (Jude 9; Daniel 10:13, 21; 12:1; Revelation 12:7). Among the evil angels we read of "the devil and his angels" (Matthew 25:41), "Beelzebub, the chief of the devils" (Luke 11:15); "Satan...[and] his kingdom" (Luke 11:18); and of "principalities, powers, ... rulers of the darkness of this world" (Ephesians 6:12), "the god of this world" (II Corinthians 4:4); and "the prince of the power of the air" (Ephesians 2:2, cf. John 12:31; 14:30).

In studying angels we must beware of going beyond what the Bible expressly says (Jeremiah 23:28; John 8:31-32; I Peter 4:11; *et al.*). Some who go beyond and contrary to Scripture in regard to angels claim, for example, that angels are spirits of departed men (Churches of the New Jerusalem, Spiritists), that good angels are more perfectly developed men (Mormons), or that they have gender and therefore interact with one another sexually (Mormons, Shakers). Others teach, contrary to Scripture, that angels are the thoughts of God communicated to man (Christian Science). Still others deny altogether the existence of angels and of a personal devil (Unitarians and "modernists" in both Protestant and Catholic churches). On the other hand, we assert what Scripture says and only what Scripture says (II Corinthians 13:8; I Peter 4:11; II Timothy 3:16).

How many angels are there?

How many angels are there? At times, accommodating Himself to our

limited capacity to understand all mysteries, the Lord speaks in terms of *concrete numbers* when referring to His heavenly hosts. For example, in Daniel's prophecy we read: "*Thousand thousands ministered unto Him, and ten thousand times ten thousand stood before Him*" (Daniel 7:10). Sometimes the Lord refers simply to "*multitudes*" of angels (Luke 2:13) and in Hebrews 12:22 to "*an innumerable company of angels.*"

How do angels differ from human beings?

Angels are *sexless*, neither male nor female, as mentioned earlier. The Lord Jesus says, "*They neither marry nor are given in marriage*" (Matthew 22:30). Angels do not propagate, nor can they. They are of a fixed number. They neither increase in number, nor do they decrease because they are immortal and cannot die. Thus the risen and glorified believers are described in this manner: "*Neither can they die any more, for they are equal with the angels*" (Luke 20:36).

Note well in the previous passage that "*equal with*" does not mean "*the same as*" in essence, but that the glorified saints are *immortal*. Humans do not become angels when they die, as some suggest. Angels are a different creative order of life entirely. Sentiment notwithstanding, Christians should not succumb to such myths. For example, the angel pins worn by grieving relatives and others in behalf of murder victims are misleading. Humans do not "get their wings," as it were, when they die, as in the classic movie, "*It's a Wonderful Life.*" Speaking of wings, we do not know if all angels are to be regarded as having wings, for the references to winged angels are limited and are very specific: The angelic attendants in Isaiah's vision (6:2) are *seraphim* with six wings each, and the other references to winged angels speak of *cherubim* (Exodus 25:20; 37:9; Ezekiel 10:5ff.; *et al.*), which are special orders among the angels. [Note: The suffix "*-im*" designates the plural number in Hebrew and should not be supplemented with an "s" in English: seraph — *seraphim*; cherub — *cherubim*.]

How do angels differ from God?

God is unlimited, infinite, eternal, self-existent, the Creator, while angels are limited, finite, immortal creatures who are dependent upon Him.

What is an "angelophany"?

This term refers to a *visible manifestation* or appearance of an angel.

Many are recorded in Holy Writ (Genesis 32:1; Matthew 28:2; Luke 1:11; Acts 12:7; *et al.*). However, the Bible never promises that the presence of God's angels among men will be discernable as visible manifestations; and yet, it also reveals that, although angels have at times appeared in human form, some men have failed to identify them as such (Hebrews 13:2).

Do angels have names?

Only two angels are named in Holy Writ (besides "Satan"): "*Michael, the archangel*" (Jude 9; Daniel 10:13, 21; Daniel 12:1; Revelation 12:7) and "*Gabriel*" (Daniel 8:16; 9:21; Luke 1:19, 26).

What does the Bible teach us about Satan's method of operation?

We are not to be ignorant of Satan's devices (II Corinthians 2:11) as he uses false teaching and other temptations to seduce us away from Christ and His Word (II Corinthians 11:3; Matthew 13:19; Revelation 12:9; Matthew 4:3). Specifically, Satan, as he did in the Garden of Eden (Genesis 3:1-5), entices men to question God's Word (v. 1), directly opposes and contradicts God's Word (v. 4), and attributes to God an evil and selfish motive in expressing prohibitions and making requirements; he makes sin appear pleasurable and hides from men the consequences of sin (v. 5). In all of these tactics, the devil exposes himself as the liar he is (John 8:44), not interested in the truth or in man's salvation, but in his ultimate destruction (I Peter 5:8).

Though devils all the world should fill, all eager to devour us,
we tremble not; we fear no ill; they shall not overpower us!
This world's prince may still scowl fierce as he will.
He can harm us none! He's judged; the deed is done!
One little Word can fell him!

(Luther: *A Mighty Fortress Is Our God*, v. 3)

"Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, He also Himself likewise took part of the same, that through death, He might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil, and deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage." — Hebrews 2:14-15

"For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that He might destroy the works of the devil." — I John 3:8

— **E. J. W.**

Churches in Fellowship

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



CHRIST LUTHERAN CHURCH

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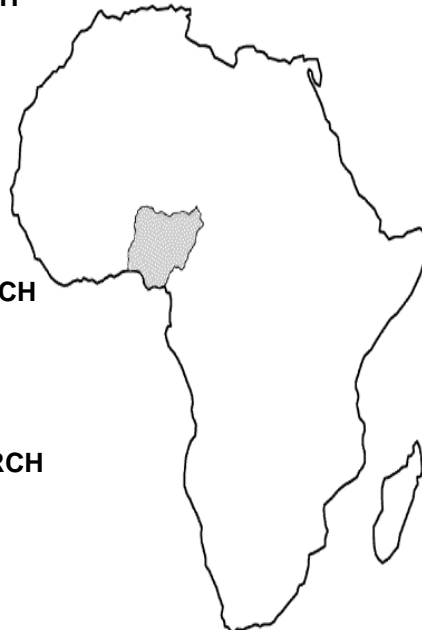
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76 Abba Street, Mile 1 Diobu
Port Harcourt, Rivers State, NIGERIA

ST. PAUL'S LUTHERAN CHURCH

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The Rev. Onengiye C. Wariboko, Pastor
St. Paul's Lutheran Church
Kula, Rivers State, NIGERIA

ST. PAUL'S NYEMONI LUTHERAN CATHEDRAL

Abonnema, Nigeria
The Rev. Nimi B. Fyneface 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





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

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4050 South Melpomene Way, Tucson, AZ 85730 (520) 721-7618

E-mail: david.redlin@q.com

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The Rev. DAVID T. MENSING, Pastor

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

E-mail: pastormensing@yahoo.com

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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

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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.

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

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

Worship Service 10:00 a.m.

The Rev. PAUL E. BLOEDEL, Pastor

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

E-mail: revbloedel@gmail.com

TRINITY EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH

300 North Ridgeland Avenue, Oak Park, IL 60302 Telephone: (708) 386-6773

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

Worship Service 10:15 a.m.

The Rev. ROBERT J. LIETZ, Pastor

233 North Cuyler Avenue, Oak Park, IL 60302 (708) 386-4145

E-mail: robertjlietz@yahoo.com

The Separatist

Scripture likens “SEPARATISM” to spiritual **adultery** —those purporting to be Christ’s bride “sleeping with the enemy”— or to spiritual **malicious desertion**, in which one who pledged fidelity to the other “*even unto death*” simply **walks out** of the relationship for no Godly cause, intending not to come back. Such separatists **walk out** on the heavenly Bridegroom and “*the household of faith*” and “*go a whoring after other gods*” (Judges 2:17) —the gods of indifferentism, accommodationism, ecumenism, and materialism —committing **idolatry** for the sake of temporal peace, tranquility and unity in the **family**, among worldly **friends**, among those who are “*not of us.*” Unity in the “**family**” trumps all of those, say the separatists, since “everybody knows” that “blood is thicker than water;” and the “separatist” values unity between spouses, parents and children MORE than unity with Christ, with His Word, and with His “family,” that is, His **true disciples** (Matthew 12:49-50).

The Disciple of Jesus

Continuance in Christ’s saving Word of truth is therefore not **an option** for Christians; it is not merely **an ideal** to strive after; ... he will cheerfully and diligently **adhere** (that is, **stick to**) to an **orthodox** local church and fellowship which has, teaches, professes, and practices His Word in its truth and purity and administers His holy sacraments according to His divine institution... Our precious Savior asks **us**, as He asked His **true disciples** in John chapter six, “*Will ye also go away??*” (v. 67), we shall boldly declare, as it is written of **them**: “*‘Lord, to whom shall we go?? Thou hast the words of eternal life’* (v. 68). Indeed, ‘we have no intention of yielding aught of the eternal, immutable truth of God for the sake of temporal peace, tranquility or unity!’” (Formula of Concord, Thorough Declaration XI, 95, *Triglotta*, p. 1095).

Excerpts from the Convention Keynote Sermon, p.67ff.