

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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“A man is
justified by faith
without the deeds
of the Law.”

— Romans 3:28



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STATEMENT OF PURPOSE:

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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HARD WORK — THE CHRISTIAN'S DUTY UNDER GOD

“Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might, for there is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom in the grave, whither thou goest.” — Ecclesiastes 9:10

Since Labor Day shows up on the calendar during the period in which this issue of *The Concordia Lutheran* is normally to be distributed, it is appropriate for us to examine the title of this article, using the totally trustworthy instrument of the Holy Scriptures for our examination.

This 10th verse of Ecclesiastes 9 begins with these words: *“Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might.”* Whatever it might be that our hand finds, discovers, or comes upon to do, to work, to perform, and to execute, **as long as it is not something sinful** (I John 3:4), we are to do it, work at it, perform it, and execute it with vigor, with exertion, and with whatever talent and physical or mental ability our God, in His mercy, has given to us. The work that we do is to be good, not evil (Romans 12:9b); it is to be **God-pleasing work**, as the Holy Spirit emphasizes to us through the Apostle Paul: *“Let him that stole steal no more, but rather let him labor, working with his hands the thing which is good, that he may have to give to him that needeth”* (Ephesians 4:28).

Because of our *“no good”* (Romans 7:18), *“carnal”* (Romans 8:7) flesh, that flesh which looks upon the Word of God and its instruction as *“foolishness”* (I Corinthians 2:14), we need to be repeatedly reminded (II Peter 1:12) of what God’s Word teaches us about work. Such reminders are necessary for all Christians because *“the flesh lusteth against the spirit [the new man], and the spirit against the flesh, and these are contrary the one to the other, so that ye cannot do the things that ye would”* (Galatians 5:17). Our *“corrupt”* flesh (Ephesians 4:22) wants us to be lazy, wants us to come up with excuses for not working, wants us to take the *“exert-as-little-effort-as-possible”* route. God’s remedy for laziness is unmistakably clear in II Thessalonians 3, verse 10: *“If any would not work, neither should he eat.”* If someone keeps on having no desire, no willingness, no intent to work, to labor, to be active, such a lazy person should keep on having nothing to eat and drink, no meals, no food. Those who are lazy often, and not surprisingly, come up with excuses to justify their laziness. One such excuse

is given to us in Proverbs 22, verse 13: *“The slothful [lazy] man saith: ‘There is a lion without. I shall be slain in the streets.’”* What Godly counsel ought to be given to a lazy person? *“Go to the ant, thou slug-gard; consider her ways and be wise”* (Proverbs 6:6).

When it comes to work for those who are physically and mentally able to work, there are many different types and forms of work.

For **children**, the willingness to work as they are able, according to their age, is to be an inseparable part of their function in the family. Whatever their parents ask them to do, they are willingly to do (Ephesians 6:1-2), not only to show their genuine gratitude to their parents for all the hard work that they have done and continue to do for them as their children (Ephesians 5:20), but also to show genuine gratitude to their Savior for all that He accomplished in time and in eternity for their forgiveness and salvation (I Timothy 1:15; Revelation 13:8b; Psalm 118:1). The message of Ecclesiastes 9:10 also applies to children, no matter what the job or work might be which they are asked to do by those whom God has placed over them (making their bed, keeping their room neat, doing their school homework, as well as their Sunday School homework and/or their Confirmation homework, helping Mom and Dad whenever they ask for help, etc.). Oh, how often we as children have failed to follow the instruction of Ecclesiastes 9, verse 10: *“Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might.”* When we see and regret our failings, let us “run” to the refuge and to the comfort of our gracious God’s forgiveness and pardon of our failings on account of the *“finished”* (John 19:30) work of our Savior, Christ Jesus, *“who gave Himself for us, that He might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto Himself a peculiar [special] people, zealous of good works”* (Titus 2:14).

For **parents**, they likewise need to keep before their hearts and minds the message of Ecclesiastes 9, verse 10: *“Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might.”* Parenting is hard work. Whatever the work may be, parents are to do it with vigor, exerting themselves for the glory of God (I Corinthians 10:31; 6:20) and for the temporal (here on earth) and eternal (hereafter) benefit of their children (Psalm 78:5c-7). For mothers, it is hard work during the months of pregnancy and during the actual birth of a child (or children). Bringing a child out of the womb into this world is such hard work that some mothers have actually died (Genesis 35:16-19) and still do die carrying out this work. However, the hard work of childbirth should not discourage or stop

husband and wife from carrying out one of the divine purposes for marriage, that is, to *“be fruitful and multiply and replenish the earth”* (Genesis 1:28a). Faithfully training, teaching, and disciplining of children according to the instruction of God in His Word (Ephesians 6:4; Matthew 28:20a; Deuteronomy 6:6-9; Jeremiah 23:28b; Proverbs 13:24; 19:18) also requires much hard, consistent work. Though this aspect of parenting is hard work, it is most necessary for the proper care, spiritual nourishment, and Godly upbringing of the children. To encourage Christian parents to do this vital work of parenting *“with [their] might [vigor],”* the Savior Himself says to them: *“Lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world”* (Matthew 28:20b). Furthermore, providing for the bodily needs of children is most certainly hard work for the father and the mother. In fact, failing to carry out this parental duty is strongly condemned by God in I Timothy 5, verse 8: *“If any provide not for his own, and specially for those of his own house, he hath denied the faith and is worse than an infidel.”* Oh, how often we parents have failed to carry out in our parental responsibilities the instruction of Ecclesiastes 9, verse 10: *“Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might.”* Our shortcomings are so many! How we need again and again to take to heart and to follow the changeless counsel of our Savior: *“Repent ye, and believe the Gospel”* (Mark 1:15b), that Gospel which assures and reassures us that Christ Jesus *“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). The heavenly Father *“laid on Him [the Messiah, Christ Jesus] the iniquity of us all”* (v. 6c). This load of the world’s sins was so heavy that, in the Garden of Gethsemane, *“there appeared an angel unto Him from heaven, strengthening Him. And being in agony He prayed more earnestly, and His sweat was as it were great drops of blood falling down to the ground”* (Luke 22:43-44). May this willing (Psalm 40:8a), hard work by our Savior *“once for all”* (Hebrews 10:10), *“the Just for the unjust”* (I Peter 3:18), continue to move all parents to show their love for Him who first loved them (I John 4:19) by applying the words of Ecclesiastes 9:10 to their daily life as Christian parents.

For **employees**, the words of truth in Ecclesiastes 9:10 are also for them; they are not exempt from this divine counsel: *“Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might.”* It is not easy, but hard because of the *“no good”* flesh (Romans 7:18), to obey, submit to, and follow the directions of our employers, those whom God has allowed to be over us in our job and vocation. What does God’s Word say to em-

ployees, to workers? *“Servants, be obedient to them that are your masters according to the flesh, with fear and trembling, in singleness of your heart, as unto Christ; not with eyeservice, as menpleasers, but as the servants of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart, with good will doing service as to the Lord and not to men, knowing that whatsoever good thing any man doeth, the same shall he receive of the Lord, whether he be bond or free”* (Ephesians 6:5-8). *“Servants, be subject to your masters with all fear, not only to the good and gentle, but also to the froward. For this is thankworthy, if a man for conscience toward God endure grief, suffering wrongfully. For what glory is it, if, when ye be buffeted for your faults, ye shall take it patiently? But, if, when ye do well and suffer for it, ye take it patiently, this is acceptable with God. For even hereunto were ye called, because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow His steps; who did no sin, neither was guile found in His mouth; who, when He was reviled, reviled not again; when He suffered, He threatened not, but committed Himself to Him that judgeth righteously; who His own self bare our sins in His own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness; by whose stripes we were healed”* (I Peter 2:18-24). There is only one exception to being an obedient and submissive employee: When the employer or those who are over us require us to do what God in His Word forbids, or when they forbid us to do what God in His Word demands, then the Christian employee must say: *“We ought to obey God rather than men”* (Acts 5:29). Oh, according to this Scriptural instruction, how often we, as employees, have failed in our work! How often we have, in our employment, *“come short”* (Romans 3:23) of being what our God wants us to be as employees! Let us *“confess our faults”* (James 5:16a), remembering that our dear heavenly Father, for the sake of Jesus, *“is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness”* (I John 1:9). Then, having *“the forgiveness of sins according to the riches of His grace”* (Ephesians 1:7b), let us, as employees, work with renewed vigor, exerting ourselves with the talent and physical and/or mental ability which our God in *“His merciful kindness”* (Psalm 117:2) has given to us.

The words of Ecclesiastes 9:10 also apply to the unmarried, to the widow, to the widower, to citizens, to the unemployed, to those looking for a job, to employers, etc.

The time will come when we will no longer be able to work. When we die, that will be the end of our working days here in this world. The

Lord God said to Adam: *“In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread till thou return unto the ground, for out of it wast thou taken; for dust thou art and unto dust shalt thou return”* (Genesis 3:19). Only our God knows the time of our death. The psalmist confesses that so clearly in Psalm 31: *“My times are in Thy hand”* (v. 15a). When we die, that will be the end of our labor; that will be the end of all planning in regard to our work; that will be the end of all study, all reading, all growth in knowledge; that will be the end of all efforts to increase in wisdom. Solomon writes in Ecclesiastes 9, verse 10: *“There is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom in the grave, whither thou goest.”* As children of God, we ought to look at death and the grave without fear or dread; for the Apostle Paul writes in I Corinthians 15: *“O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory? The sting of death is sin, and the strength of sin is the Law, but **thanks be to God which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.** Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye steadfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labor is not in vain in the Lord”* (vv. 55-58). Only in and through our dear Savior, Christ Jesus, *“the Lord our Righteousness”* (Jeremiah 23:6b), are we given, by faith in Him, victory over the fear of death and the grave and the sure and certain anticipation of everlasting life in heaven. This is why the message of Revelation 14:13 is so sweet: *“Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth; yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labors, and their works do follow them.”* When the child of God is received into the everlasting rest of heaven, the works which he did as the fruit and evidence of his abiding faith in His Savior will stand as a fitting memorial to the grace of God and an example for other believers to emulate as they *“walk in the spirit”* (Galatians 5:25), waiting for the redemption of *their* body (Romans 8:23).

Having such an *“inheritance, incorruptible and undefiled, reserved in heaven for [us], who are kept by the power of God [His precious Gospel] through faith unto salvation”* (I Peter 1:4-5), let us, during whatever time we have left in this world, take to heart and follow, by God’s *“grace”* (I Corinthians 15:10) alone, the light and lamp (Psalm 119:105) of Ecclesiastes 9, verse 10: *“Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might,”* living not unto ourselves but unto Him who died for us and rose again (II Corinthians 5:15).

— R. J. L.



Was the Reformation Just a Big “Misunderstanding”??

It seems that everywhere we look these days people are desperately trying to establish “concord” or agreement between Christ and Belial. It should come as no surprise that there is no “concord” to be found, especially in light of such passages as II Corinthians 6:14-15. Yet the quest continues in opposition to Holy Writ, the desperation grows and grows when the sought-after result does not come to pass, and the arguments and reasoning become less and less coherent when the foundation of faith is forsaken in favor of sinful human rationalism.

It has been suggested by a number of published church historians that the Reformation was really just a “misunderstanding” between Luther and his followers on one side, and the Catholic Church on the other, and that, because of this mere misunderstanding, nothing should hinder the two sides from being reconciled for the greater good of the propagation of outward Christendom.

The Reformation was not just an emotionally heated singular event during which people’s judgment became clouded with emotion leading to hasty and ignorant decisions and conclusions. Instead, the Reformation was a series of events, involving many learned and prestigious people, established institutions, and secular governments, spanning many years, during which each side carefully and clearly defined its terms, established and defended its own position according to its principles, and attacked the position of the other side.

The Reformation officially began on October 31, 1517 with Martin Luther posting his 95 Theses. These theses were posted in order to facilitate a public discussion and debate, particularly among the clergy and professors of theology, concerning the practice of selling indulgences from sin, guilt, and pain in purgatory in order to raise funds to build St. Peter’s Basilica in Rome. Luther implored the Pope to clarify the church’s teachings on the subject, to the end that gainsaying against the church might be stopped (Theses 81 to 91).

However, instead of engaging in the discussion and setting the record straight as it were, the Catholic Church responded by excommunicating Luther. In so doing, the Catholic Church declared him to be a heretic, a teacher of false doctrine. Surely such actions and pronouncements of “the Church,” the entire

body of outward Christianity, the head of which was the Pope, being “lower than God but higher than men...[who] judges all and is judged by no one” (Innocent III), are not taken and proclaimed without due attention and consideration. Even the Catholic Church’s initial responses to Luther showed that there was no “misunderstanding” at all. If that is all it had been, then the Church and its head would have grievously sinned by identifying and charging “sin” where there might not have been any sin at all (Cf. I John 3:4; Romans 4:15b).

After the Papal bull of excommunication failed to achieve its desired result, namely the silencing and marginalizing of the “heretic” Luther, the Church took more drastic and decisive action at the Diet of Worms in 1521. Luther refused to disavow and take back all that he had written, despite his works being deemed “in error” by the Catholic Church, recognizing that by God’s grace his writings and teachings were Scriptural and doctrinally sound. Because of his refusal to recant and his defiance of the Catholic Church in accord with Acts 5:29, Luther was banned by the Holy Roman Empire, and a bounty was placed on his head. The Pope had effectively cut Luther down with both of his “swords” – the sword with which he claims to control the church, and the sword with which he claims to control all the civil governments of the world (Pope Boniface VIII, *Unam Sanctum*, 1302). One would think, from a purely temporal standpoint at least, that the Pope would not have acted so irresponsibly in a matter of such great stakes as to neglect to understand Luther’s position.

In the years that followed, it became clear that Luther’s early efforts to combat the sale of indulgences and the subsequent punitive actions taken against him and his followers as the result of their efforts identified and addressed *symptoms* of the disease which had infected the Roman Catholic Church for centuries already. The disease was clearly greater than the mere sale of indulgences! The real substance of the Reformation is set forth in two principles, often called the “pillars” of the Reformation, the first of which is the Formal Principle of “*Sola Scriptura*” (*Scripture Alone*). The second, the Material Principle of “*Sola Gratia, Sola Fidei*” (justification by *grace alone through faith alone*) was articulated in the *Augsburg Confession* (Cf. A.C. Art. IV). It is in its confutation of all of these doctrines, both immediately after their presentation and for the forty years subsequent thereto (Council of Trent, 1545-1560) that the Catholic Church showed not only that it clearly understood the position of the Reformers, but that it condemned those teachings and their adherents to hell.

The first of these pillars, the *Formal Principle* (II Timothy 1:13), is “*Sola Scriptura*” or *Scripture alone* as the only source and standard of Christian doctrine and practice. This principle is based on such clear passages of God’s Word as Matthew 28:20, Ephesians 2:20, and I Peter 1:10-12. In addition, John 8:31-32 declares that the divine truth and the freedom that it imparts is known if we continue in Jesus’ Word. These passages very clearly establish that there is one standard of Christian doctrine by which all human teaching and opinion is to be regulated in order to be assured of God’s truth, which He

has graciously preserved to us (II Timothy 3:15-16). In fact, Scripture never provides any *other* standard by which we are to judge truth and error, and any departure from this principle of *Scripture Alone* forfeits the surety of knowing *any* of the truth (John 17:17; I Timothy 6:3-4a).

Luther himself, early on, identified this *Formal* Principle as essential to his theology, when, for example, he stated at the Diet of Worms regarding his writings: “Unless I am convicted [convinced] of error by the testimony of Scripture or (since I put no trust in the unsupported authority of Pope or councils, since it is plain that they have often erred and often contradicted themselves) by manifest reasoning, I stand convicted [convinced] by the Scriptures to which I have appealed, and my conscience is taken captive by God’s Word, I cannot and will not recant anything, for to act against our conscience is neither safe for us, nor open to us.”

The *Formula of Concord* (1580) expressed this teaching very clearly when it stated, “*as the oracles of God*” (I Peter 4:11): “We believe, teach, and confess that the sole rule and standard according to which all dogmas and all teachers should be estimated and judged are the prophetic and apostolic Scriptures of the Old and New Testament alone” (*F.C., Epitome, Triglot*, p. 777). The Reformers did not stop, however, at rightly identifying and defining the *principium cognoscendi*, or beginning of understanding. As if to avoid any misunderstanding from the outset, they stated that “other writings, however, of ancient or modern teachers must not be regarded as equal to the Holy Scriptures, but all of them together be subjected to them and should not be received otherwise or further than as witnesses [to show] in what manner after the time of the apostles...the pure doctrine of the prophets and apostles was preserved” (*Ibid*).

In response to this clearly Scriptural and intelligently expressed principle, the Roman Church, in the Council of Trent (1545-1560), had already expressed a very contrary view. In its fourth session regarding the Scriptures, the Council stated that the Holy Scriptures, in addition to the traditions pertaining to faith and morals which have been preserved in the Catholic Church, are to be considered as having equal authority. The Council then went on to list all of the Scriptures and traditions that are to be held to. In order to be clear and preemptively to squelch any further challenge to the contrary, the Council stated, “If any one receive not, as sacred and canonical, the said books entire with all their parts, as they have been used to be read in the Catholic Church, and as they are contained in the old Latin *Vulgate* edition; and knowingly and deliberately contemn the traditions aforesaid; let him be anathema.” The Council of Trent, after having examined to their satisfaction the writings of the *Augsburg Confession* and the subsequent confessional writings of the reformers, pronounced God’s curse on any who hold such Scriptural doctrines.

The second pillar, the *Material* Principle, is “*Sola Gratia, Sola Fidei*” or justification by *grace alone* through *faith alone*. This principle is based on such

clear passages of God's Word as Ephesians 2:8-9 and Romans 3:24 and 28. It is by God's grace, free grace alone, that sinful mankind is saved, unassisted by any works of merit on their part. The Holy Ghost also makes unacceptable any *mixture* of the two concepts, grace and works, in Romans 11:6 where He states through the Apostle Paul, "*If by grace, then is it no more of works; otherwise grace is no more grace. But if it be of works, then is it no more grace; otherwise work is no more work.*" Romans 4:3-5 and John 3:16 clearly establish that *faith alone* is the receiving means of God's grace, namely, confidence of the heart whereby we appropriate or lay hold on the forgiveness of sins and our inheritance in heaven. This material principle — *sola gratia, sola fidei* — is assuredly the most comforting message that a poor sinner could ever hope to hear!

As noted above, the reformers in the *Augsburg Confession* cleanly and clearly expressed the material principle, "*as the oracles of God*" (I Peter 4:11) in Article IV, saying "Also they [the Lutherans] teach that men cannot be justified before God by their own strength, merits, or works, but are freely justified for Christ's sake through faith, when they believe that they are received into favor and that their sins are forgiven for Christ's sake, who by His death has made satisfaction for our sins. This faith God imputes for righteousness in His sight."

Contrary to this Scriptural doctrine, the Council of Trent, in its sixth session, declares that all who hold to such views be *anathematized*, or *cursed* by God. The language of their canons leaves no doubt as to the Romanists' position or as to their understanding of the Reformers' position. Of particular importance are Canons 9, 11, 12, 14, and 30, which read as follows:

CANON IX – If any one saith, that by faith alone the impious [that is, the ungodly] is justified; in such wise as to mean, that nothing else is required to co-operate in order to the obtaining the grace of Justification, and that it is not in any way necessary, that he be prepared and disposed by the movement of his own will; let him be anathema.

CANON XI – If any one saith, that men are justified, either by the sole imputation of the justice of Christ, or by the sole remission of sins, to the exclusion of the grace and the charity which is poured forth in their hearts by the Holy Ghost, and is inherent in them; or even that the grace, whereby we are justified, is only the favor of God; let him be anathema.

CANON XII – If anyone saith that justifying faith is nothing else than confidence in the divine mercy which remits sins for Christ's sake, or that this confidence alone is that whereby we are justified; let him be anathema.

CANON XIV – If any one saith, that man is truly absolved from his sins and justified, because that he assuredly believed

himself absolved and justified; or, that no one is truly justified but he who believes himself justified; and that, by this faith alone, absolution and justification are effected; let him be anathema.

CANON XXX – If any one saith, that, after the grace of Justification has been received, to every penitent sinner the guilt is remitted, and the debt of eternal punishment is blotted out in such wise, that there remains not any debt of temporal punishment to be discharged either in this world, or in the next in Purgatory, before the entrance to the kingdom of heaven can be opened (to him); let him be anathema.

These differences are in no wise “misunderstandings,” but are diametrically opposed to one another. By God’s grace alone, the Reformers set forth a thoroughly Scriptural doctrinal thesis to the whole world, boldly declaring the truth of God’s Word, particularly with regard to how a poor sinner gets to heaven. In contrast to this, the Roman Church set forth its anti-scriptural thesis to the whole world, which robs poor sinners of any surety of salvation, and tricks them into trusting in themselves instead of in God’s grace for Christ’s sake.

In contrast to the anathema pronounced on all true believers by the Romanists, God himself curses all those who teach contrary to His Word, Galatians 1:8. Let us all be on our guard, as the Holy Ghost through Peter exhorts all of us in 1 Peter 5:8, to beware of the devil and his temptations in all of their forms, including the deceptive “*cunning craftiness*” (Ephesians 4:14) of religious ecumenism, lest we, by toleration of vicious false doctrines or by willingness to characterize them as “mere misunderstandings,” become partakers of other men’s sins (I Timothy 5:22). On the contrary, being constrained by the love of Christ (II Corinthians 5:14), let us take every opportunity to proclaim to others the reason of the hope that is in us with meekness and fear (I Peter 3:15), holding fast the profession of our faith without wavering (Hebrews 10:23) and standing fast on the foundation of the apostles and prophets (Ephesians 2:20), until by grace, for Christ’s sake, through faith we inherit the kingdom prepared for us from the foundation of the world (Matthew 25:34).

— **David J. Mensing, Seminarian**
(Submitted through his Pastor)





Especially for our Youth...

Dangers in Dating For a Consistent Christian

“And whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by Him” (Colossians 3:17).

Dating: A Modern Practice

Although opinions vary greatly among social historians, most would agree that “dating” as we find it today is a relatively new social practice. In Holy Scripture we read that the custom of *arranged* marriages was the norm. The father, as head of the household, made the choice; and even today this custom prevails in many cultures. Nevertheless, the modern custom of “dating” seems to have begun after the so-called Victorian Era (1837-1901), during which couples rarely saw each other without a chaperone, and marriage proposals were often made in written form.

It appears that *modern* dating practices arose afterward, so that around 1920 informal dating became more commonplace. Thus began a series of un-chaperoned male and female interactions ranging from the utterly frivolous to the marriage-serious. There were no real rules; and, as today in 2010, what was considered “acceptable” behavior was largely determined by the individual’s own values —or lack thereof! In the 1960s the so-called “sexual revolution” resulted in a record number of unwed mothers, sexually transmitted diseases and temporary “living in sin” arrangements; and dating was often viewed as an opportunity to indulge in sexual experimentation. To this very day, some see a date as a prelude to a sexual encounter without any commitment beyond the “one night stand.” The fear of AIDS and virulent STDs has acted as a curb to some of this behavior but only to a certain extent.

Dating Defined

Because dating is largely a social custom without sharply defined rules and often determined by the influence of popular culture and peers, a precise definition of dating is unattainable. The world “out there” is an

inconsistent place, and social customs are in flux and often quite chaotic. Generally speaking, “dating” today means “going out” or “spending time together.” It may be as non-committal as casually eating together, sitting together, and sharing “small talk.” On the other hand, a date may be a long evening spent talking on the most personal level in an attempt to get to know one another and to learn more about the other person’s deeply held values and judgments; and such knowledge might eventually help a person to make the choice of an individual with whom one would want to enter into the holy estate of marriage with a lifetime commitment. Usually, dating progresses from the “fun” level to the “serious” level over time; but some relationships move very quickly as if driven by forces beyond one’s control. Yikes! But more on *that* later.

Dating and the Christian

Scripture enjoins: *“I beseech you, therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service. And be not conformed to this world; but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God”* (Romans 12:1-2). How does this apply to our subject at hand? Obviously, a true Christian, according to the New Man, does not conform to the attributes, desires, motivations and behavior of those of the world, whom Scripture accurately describes as being *“without Christ... having no hope, and without God in the world”* (Ephesians 2:12), those who *“...walk in the vanity of their mind, having the understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God through the ignorance that is in them because of the blindness of their heart, who being past feeling have given themselves over unto lasciviousness, to work all uncleanness with greediness”* (Ephesians 4:17-19). They, in their entire behavior, have a manner of living that is entirely governed by the *“old man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts”* (Ephesians 4:22), who do not even know *“what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect will of God”* (Romans 12:2) but *oppose* all spiritual things of God and *cannot* do *otherwise* in their carnal mind: *“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), *“because the carnal mind is enmity against God; for it is not subject to the Law of God, neither indeed can be. So then they that are in the flesh cannot please God”* (Romans 8:7-8). The Holy Ghost also speaks to this marked contrast between believ-

ers and those of the world in these telling words from St. Peter's first epistle: "*Forasmuch then as Christ hath suffered for us in the flesh, arm yourselves likewise with the same mind; for he that hath suffered in the flesh hath ceased from sin, that he no longer should live the rest of his time in the flesh to the lusts of men but to the will of God. For the time past of our life may suffice us to have wrought the will of the Gentiles, when we walked in lasciviousness, lusts, excess of wine, revellings, banquetings, and abominable idolatries; wherein they think it strange that ye run not with them to the same excess of riot, speaking evil of you, who shall give account to Him that is ready to judge the quick and the dead*" (I Peter 4:1-5).

Any Christian man or woman who thinks that a worldly person is not "as bad" as Scripture itself depicts him is not only fooling himself or herself, but is calling God a liar and rejecting God's Word! Sad to say, such a compromising attitude about worldly people is usually the result of already having given in to their influence and having allowed the sinful flesh to conform the naive person to their deceit. The common argument, "But he (or she) is not like *that!*" is completely erroneous and flies directly in the face of clear passages of Holy Writ, the *only* source and norm for Christian faith and practice! Don't deceive yourself! And don't be deceived by the world!

Dating and the Sixth Commandment

Dating, as a Christian should understand it, must be according to the Biblical norm, namely in accordance with "*that good, and acceptable and perfect will of God*" (Romans 12:2). As our title-text clearly enjoins, "*...whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by Him*" (Colossians 3:17).

What do we learn from the Bible about God's will in male–female relationships? Consider the commandment that focuses on these relationships: "*Thou shalt not commit adultery.*" With Luther we ask, "What does this mean?" and reply on the basis of Scripture: "We should fear and love God that we may lead a chaste and decent life in word and deed, and each love and honor his spouse" (*Small Catechism*, Sixth Commandment). God Himself instituted holy matrimony in the Garden of Eden (Genesis 2:18-24) as a lifelong union (I Corinthians 7:39) of one man and one woman (I Corinthians 7:2). The chief purpose of marriage is companionship as God's own solution to loneliness (Genesis 2:18, 21-24); and His blessing upon marriage is the gift of children

(Genesis 1:28; Psalm 127:3). Since the Fall, marriage is also a deterrent to fornication (I Corinthians 7:2-5) as God protects marriage with the Sixth Commandment and instructs us regarding His will for the life-long intimate relationship that He ordained as legitimate between a man and a woman: Marriage.

But the Sixth Commandment also governs the relationship between those of the opposite sex who are NOT married to one another. How so? The application of the commandment teaches them to lead a chaste and decent life in thoughts, desires, words and deeds, and to avoid all unchastity (I Peter 2:11; Philippians 4:8; Ephesians 5:3-4, 12; 4:29; Matthew 5:28; 15:19). Obviously, this Scriptural application also expresses God's will regarding the conduct of those who are on a "date."

The Purpose of Dating as a Christian Should Understand It

The world has a variety of reasons for dating that go beyond an effort to find a spouse. Some date for the sake of harmless diversion and fun among friends, while others admittedly seek carnal seduction and fornication which they refer to as "getting lucky" or "scoring." A *Christian*, however, dare not determine *his* purposes according to a *fleshly* agenda (Ephesians 5:3-4). As with everything else that a Christian does here in this world, he should regard dating and its interpersonal relationships as opportunities for chaste behavior to the glory of God (I Corinthians 10:31-32) and should recognize that dating, as a means to an end, might well serve the salutary purpose of finding a Godly spouse with whom to share his life in the divinely-instituted estate of marriage which is honorable in all (Hebrews 13:4).

Whom Should a Christian Date?

According to Holy Writ there are only two "kinds" of people in the world: Godly and ungodly. Regarding a Godly woman, Scripture speaks of her rarity: "*Who can find a virtuous woman? For her price is far above rubies*" (Proverbs 31:10), and it speaks of the blessing that the Lord bestows upon a truly Godly marriage: "*Whoso findeth a [Godly] wife findeth a good thing and obtaineth favor of the Lord*" (Proverbs 18:22). Scripture also contrasts a Godly woman with an ungodly woman in very sobering words and warns a man to use God's wisdom, the wisdom of His Word, to avoid falling prey to the ungodly:

“When wisdom entereth into thine heart and knowledge is pleasant unto thy soul, discretion shall preserve thee; understanding shall keep thee” (Proverbs 2:10-11).

“...to deliver thee from the strange woman, even from the stranger which flattereth with her words, which forsaketh the guide of her youth and forgetteth the covenant of her God. For her house inclineth unto death, and her paths unto the dead” (Proverbs 2:16-18).

“For the lips of a strange woman drop as an honeycomb, and her mouth is smoother than oil; but her end is bitter as wormwood, sharp as a two-edged sword. Her feet go down to death; her steps take hold on hell. Lest thou shouldst ponder the path of life, her ways are moveable that thou canst not know them” (Proverbs 5:3-6).

To enter into a romantic relationship with such an ungodly, unstable, unbelieving woman is dangerous and foolish. To marry such a woman brings constant misery: *“It is better to dwell in a corner of the housetop, than with a brawling woman in a wide house... It is better to dwell in the wilderness, than with a contentious and an angry woman” (Proverbs 21:9, 19; cf. Proverbs 19:13b; 25:24; 27:15).*

Regarding a Godly man, Scripture promises: *“A faithful man shall abound with blessings...” (Proverbs 28:20a)* and warns against any relationship with the ungodly which allows them influence over us: *“Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful. But his delight is in the Law of the Lord; and in His Law doth he meditate day and night” (Psalms 1:1-2).* The Apostle Paul warns us: *“Be not deceived: Evil communications [Greek: companionships, associations] corrupt good manners [Greek: morals]” (I Corinthians 15:33).* Moreover, we have this clear prohibition: *“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?” (II Corinthians 6:14-15).* How can a Christian read such clear passages of Scripture and deliberately enter with an ungodly person into a relationship that, according to the world’s standards, is expected to become progressively more intimate with time and may eventually lead to the life-long commitment of marriage with an

unbeliever? That is not the “free choice” that the world sees it to be! A Christian is free to marry whom he or she chooses, Scripture tells us, but “*only in the Lord,*” that is, only to a fellow-believer (I Corinthians 7:39). The Bible exhorts us: “*Trust in the Lord with all thine heart, and lean not unto thine own understanding. In all thy ways acknowledge Him, and He shall direct thy paths*” (Proverbs 3:5-6); and that exhortation certainly applies to making choices with life-long temporal and even spiritual implications.

We are to be responsible at all times to God and to be morally self-aware: “*Keep thy heart with all diligence, for out of it are the issues of life. Put away from thee a froward mouth, and perverse lips put far from thee. Let thine eyes look right on, and let thine eyelids look straight before thee. Ponder the path of thy feet, and let all thy ways be established. Turn not to the right hand nor to the left; remove thy foot from evil*” (Proverbs 4:23-27). God holds us responsible for our decisions.

When He clearly warns us not to entangle ourselves with the ungodly and we ignore these warnings to our own spiritual peril, we should not be surprised when the misery God foretells comes upon us! All too often we act not upon the basis of better knowledge but impulsively and foolishly. Like Peter, we frequently consider those warnings as meant for everyone else, but not for ourselves (Matthew 26:33). What?! That is sheer arrogance and conceit! God promises great blessings to those who seek and find a *Godly* spouse, but do we trust His promises? God warns us of great miseries in ungodly relationships, but we often pursue and cultivate such relationships as if He had said nothing. Do we know better than God? Evidently we often *think* we do — just as Peter did. And Peter fell! Scripture warns us: “*Wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall*” (I Corinthians 10:12).

The Sad Scenario Repeated So Often

How often inconsistent Christians invest in bad relationships, hoping that a rare exception will occur and everything will, miraculously, work out in the end! They give their time, attention and effort to a person who cannot reciprocate in kind because he is not a believer, does not have a “*new man*” of faith which after God’s image “*is created in righteousness and true holiness*” (Ephesians 4:24), does not know the true teachings and the power of God’s Word, and in his carnal mind, which is “*enmity against God,*” has no desire to be subject to God’s Law, “*neither indeed can be*” (Romans 8:7). Over time the inconsis-

tent Christian gives also his or her heart and mind to the other ...still hoping that “love will conquer all,” when the other person cannot love in true unselfish charity because he or she has no living faith. Nevertheless the inconsistent Christian refuses to recognize the one-sided relationship. Is it because so much has been “invested” that to give up would constitute great emotional loss? Has the inconsistent Christian become so desperate for *any* relationship that he or she will *settle* for one that is not God-pleasing, for one devoid of Christian fellowship, for one in which Christ is not the center, Savior, and Head, for a relationship without God’s blessing and therefore destined for unhappiness, misery and failure? How can a person continue to do the *same* thing in relationship after relationship and expect *different* results? Yet, inconsistent Christians often cultivate and seek to maintain a relationship with an ungodly person for the paltry return of “feeling” loved, needed, and of course sexually satisfied — as long as it lasts! Is that all there is?? It makes no sense. It is not reasonable. It is sad. It is pitiful. And it is spiritually destructive! Even when others point out the obvious and warn against the disaster that awaits those who walk not after the spirit but after the flesh (cf. Romans 8:1 and 4), the warning is rejected in blind stubbornness. Somehow the inconsistent Christian thinks, “I will show everybody that he is wrong. I will have what I need ...someday.” Such “belief” is not only *without* any basis in God’s promises in the Bible but is actually *contrary* to God’s express warnings! It is not only a form of “enthusiasm” (expecting miracles apart from God’s means) but “rebellion” (fighting against God)! How can people think that they are doing what God wants and claim His blessing upon their lives when they deliberately walk contrary to His Word and will? They are only deceiving themselves!

Dating “Evangelism”

A Christian should not begin a dating relationship with someone on false pretenses. Even when two people are mere acquaintances and visit with one another only socially or casually, it should be a consistent Christian’s priority (assuming concern for the welfare of his friend’s immortal soul) to inquire about his religious background and beliefs. While to most people here in this world the subject of religion is NOT among the first things to be discussed, our friends should know up front that God and our faith in Him constitute the most important part of our life, that His Word is the one thing truly needful (Luke 10:41-42), and that seeking His kingdom and His righteousness is our prime consideration and top priority (Matthew 6:33). In con-

fessing this faith from the very outset, both in word and in deed (James 1:22, 26), a consistent Christian will be on record as to what his friends should expect from him in the way of values, attitudes, opinions and judgments, as well as in overt conduct; and this agenda may well determine the eventual extent of the relationship. We cannot expect the unregenerate to be “open” to the instruction of God’s Word or to be willing to place himself under the spiritual care of a faithful, orthodox Christian pastor (whose faithfulness and orthodoxy he is in no position to evaluate); but we can rightly expect him — if he is at all interested in an on-going relationship with us — to be curious about what makes us “tick” spiritually, to be inquisitive about what we believe and why, to be interested in seeing for himself our church and in attending one of its services or Bible classes. If such minimal interest is not evident, the relationship should be kept strictly social and not permitted to become at all “serious.” Why? Simply because anyone who is unwilling even to “explore” our faith and confession — the most important thing in our life — its basis and its substance is not a candidate for a close friendship and for a relationship that is intended, eventually at least, to lead to marriage. It is that simple; it is that clear!

But some may reply “No, it’s not that simple! What if the person promises that he (or she) will *eventually* come to church? Don’t I have to be patient! What if I think my private efforts to convert him are making progress? Do I force the ‘church attendance’ issue on him?” Our reply? “Listen to yourself. What is his ‘promise’ *worth*? Why do you ‘think’ that your efforts are making ‘*progress*’? What *evidence* is there of any progress whatsoever? Since when is church attendance —even out of curiosity— ‘*an issue*’ with him?” Do not even begin an ongoing “dating relationship” with someone whom you do not know! Do not make an “emotional commitment” to a person whose integrity is uncertain! Do not become “*unequally yoked together*” with an unbeliever, with a worldling, with a “*carnally minded*” person, with an enemy of your Savior’s cross, with a heterodox Christian, with one who is not your “brother” (or “sister”) in the faith! Remember that the “*unequal yoke*” endangers YOU — otherwise God’s own warning through the Apostle Paul in II Corinthians 6:14ff. is an empty one. The “*unequal yoke*” puts YOU at the disadvantage of being led astray by the dominant “ox”; that’s why it’s a danger! The “*unequal yoke*” is not an opportunity for mission-work! Do the mission-work BEFORE being “*yoked together*” with anyone! Why would you risk getting emotionally involved with a person who

is not *currently* under the influence of God's Word? Without God's Spirit working in the heart through His Word (Philippians 2:13), there is no expectation that a person will do anything but act according to his deceitful lusts (Ephesians 4:22; Romans 8:5a, 7)!

Charity: The Bond of Perfectness

Scripture enjoins: "*Put on, therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, longsuffering, forbearing one another and forgiving one another if any man have a quarrel against any. Even as Christ forgave you, so also do ye. And above all these things put on charity, which is the bond of perfectness. And let the peace of God rule in your hearts, to the which also ye are called in one body; and be ye thankful. Let the Word of Christ dwell in you richly, in all wisdom teaching and admonishing one another; in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord. And whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by Him*" (Colossians 3:12-17). The character and actions of a consistent Christian are described here. If he is looking for a spouse, a consistent Christian should desire a true "soul-mate," a person who shares such God-wrought, God-pleasing character, virtues and actions. Mark well the emphasis on "*charity*." Charity is that unselfish, self-giving, undeserved love that only true believers know and have. Why? Because it is one-of-a-kind love, a gift of God's grace in Christ Jesus wrought in us by God's Spirit through the Gospel. It is what forms a *perfect bond*. How so? As a Gospel-generated gift from God, it manifests itself in sacrificial service to others even when they deserve nothing! Unlike forms of human love which are self-motivated or stimulated by the "likeable" or "desirable" qualities and actions of other *people*, charity is generated in us by *God*, who loved (and loves) us perfectly and completely in His Son (I John 4:9; 3:16). Charity forgives and forgets sin for Christ's sake. Charity is the fruit of genuine Christian faith (I John 3:14; Ephesians 4:32). This charity is a "*bond*" that joins Christians together out of gratitude for God's forgiveness and enables a Christian couple to love one another, even when one or the other is not so "lovable"! A consistent Christian should want such charity to be the foundation of his or her marriage and, therefore, to seek only a truly Godly spouse; and the understanding of this priority should govern a Christian even in the choice of the person he or she dates!

The Prayer of Faith

Christians cherish this marvelous promise of God from Romans 8: “*He that spared not His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him also freely give us all things?*” (v. 32). Out of sheer grace, purchased by Christ by His holy life and by His innocent suffering and death, God gifts us with the forgiveness of sins, life and salvation; and alone through faith in the Gospel we lay hold on it and make it our own. For the sake of our Savior, Jesus Christ, God the Father shall also “*freely give us all things!*” Does that promise include also a spouse, a life-long companion? If we desire to have one — yes! In the Fourth Petition of the Lord’s Prayer we pray for “*our daily bread,*” which, as Luther properly explains, includes “everything that belongs to the support and wants of the body, such as...a pious spouse.” God answers every proper prayer in His own time and in His own manner, very often through *means*. He wants us to work for our daily bread (I Thessalonians 4:11; II Thessalonians 3:12); and we should seek a “pious spouse” where he or she may be found, the most obvious place being within the congregations of our Christian fellowship! To pray for a pious or Godly spouse and then to go contrary to God’s Word in seeking someone who is otherwise, is not acting in good faith toward God! God’s Word also tells us, “*Delight thyself also in the Lord; and He shall give thee the desires of thine heart. Commit thy way unto the Lord; trust also in Him; and He shall bring it to pass*” (Psalms 37:4-5). Consistent Christians should understand that God will bless their actions when they conform to what His Word enjoins, and that includes truly God-pleasing decisions and actions in dating. “*And whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by Him*” (Colossians 3:17). May God work within us, by His Gospel, “*both to will and to do of His good pleasure*” (Philippians 2:13) to our own great blessing and to His glory, for Jesus’ sake.

Lord, keep me watchful then and humble,
And suffer me no more to stray.
Uphold me when my feet would stumble,
Nor let me loiter by the way.
Fill all my nature with Thy light,
O Radiance, strong and bright!

(TLH 399, 4)

— E. J. W.



A Look Ahead on the New Seminary Year

“And the things that thou hast heard of me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also.” — II Timothy 2:2

In this directive to Timothy, the Apostle Paul, on behalf of the Holy Ghost (I Corinthians 2:13), sets forth a *special mission* to those who have already studied for the work of the Holy Ministry and have shown themselves approved unto God as workmen that need not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the Word of Truth (II Timothy 2:15). It is their solemn duty *to pass along to others* what they themselves “*have heard,*” “correctly understood and sincerely embraced” (from the wording of the Seminary Diploma) in the course of their own studies, namely, the pure teachings of Holy Scripture as these have been established and confirmed by the *sedes doctrinae* or “prooftexts” of the Bible. It is therefore both our duty and our privilege, motivated and enabled by the Gospel (Romans 1:16; II Corinthians 5:14; I John 4:19; II Corinthians 3:6), not to shun to declare unto our students “*all the counsel of God,*” as St. Paul himself exemplified this solemn charge in his own preparation of the pastors in Ephesus (Acts 20:27). Thorough theological training is therefore the fifth object of our Concordia Lutheran Conference (*CONSTITUTION*, Article III), since God’s Word, and not merely church tradition, makes this a priority matter among us.

Moreover, we are charged to commit to our students not the “creative” theology of rationalists and modernists, who make up what they teach as they go along, not on the basis of Scripture but on the basis of their own sin-blinded reason, nor what might be called the “revisionist–” or “revisitation–” theology of those who despise the authority and clarity of the *sedes doctrinae* and insist on subjecting those “clear and certain” texts, which neither need nor permit of interpretation, to the repeated and periodic scrutiny of *exegesis* on the basis of the latest *hermeneutics* to see whether they are *still* as clear as they once *were*. If we followed *their method*, we would never be **SURE** of anything; and “*the apostles and prophets*” would no longer be our “*foundation*” (Ephesians 2:20) but only a perpetual petri dish in a theological laboratory that “bears

watching” as Christian doctrine “evolves.” Indeed, Paul’s exhortations to Timothy and to Titus regarding *sound doctrine* (I Timothy 1:3, 11; 4:7, 13, 16; 5:17; 6:1, 3; II Timothy 3:10, 16; 4:2-3; Titus 1:9; 2:1, 7, 10) would be completely meaningless because its “soundness” would be the shifting sand of uncertainty. It is not the Word of God that is to be *tried* or tested, but those who teach and preach — as to whether they are teaching and preaching according to *it* (I John 4:1; cf. Romans 16:17-18; I Timothy 6:3-5).

By the grace of God, we embarked upon the second year of full-time teaching and learning in our beloved seminary on September 7th. Again joining Jason A. Mabe, who has been studying on a part-time basis since September 2006, were David J. Mensing and Daniel P. Mensing as full-time students, together with James E. Bielefeldt, who at present is auditing courses pending his official matriculation into the program. Dave, Dan and Jim are pursuing second-year studies — catching up with Jason; and *all four* will, God-willing, be on the same full-time track in September of 2011 in the third year of our theological curriculum. Somewhere along the line, Jim will close the gap with the others after completing the equivalent of three semesters of German, two semesters of Ecclesiastical Latin, and four semesters of his *practicum*, courses which he elected to skip while studying part-time.

This year, the course load is “light” by one class since Dave and Dan, having entered the seminary with credits in German, took Latin (normally a second-year course) as first-year students along with Jason last year already. That leaves six second-year courses to complete this year: *Dogmatics II* (Anthropology through Christology) and *Old Testament Isagogics* (the study of the content of the Old Testament books) — both of which are being taught by Professor Lietz — and the third semester of *New Testament Greek* and *Exegesis (Interpretation) of Romans*, which are taught sequentially, as well as *Church History I* and the *Principles of Teaching* (including the psychology of learning, teaching methodology and *Catechetics*) — all of which are being taught by Professor Mensing. The seventh “course” (2 credit hours per semester) is the *Practicum* or internship, which includes keeping a log of personal daily devotions, sketches of the local pastor’s preached sermons, summaries of meetings attended and Bible Classes taught, and participation in the liturgy of worship services, as well as a sampling-load of such routine tasks as bulletin production, servicing the chancel for services, duplication of Sunday School and Bible Class materials, and the publishing of an unofficial summary of each voters’ meeting for distri-

bution to the families. This year again, the *Practicum* is supervised by Professor Mensing, the local pastor where the students are in residence.

Professor Lietz's classes meet on Tuesdays and Thursdays from ten o'clock in the morning until two o'clock in the afternoon. Professor Mensing's classes meet on Wednesdays from one until two o'clock in the afternoon and on Sunday and Thursday evenings from seven until ten o'clock. There is also a *Practicum* Consult on Saturday morning from ten until about eleven o'clock. All the classes meet at Peace in Oak Forest, since that is the residence of the matriculated students; and Professor Lietz has graciously elected to drive from Oak Park twice a week to teach his courses — for which the students are very grateful. Jim Bielefeldt also travels —from Sauk Village, about half an hour to the south and east. Jason Mabe is still working full-time to support his family, which means that his classes are necessarily restricted to evening sessions; but, by God's grace, he and his family now live in Oak Forest, saving him a lot of travel time. God-willing all of our students will be studying on a full-time basis beginning next September, and the matter of scheduling should be much easier to accomplish.

We professors humbly thank God for the “*faithful men*” He has given us as students in our seminary and for the opportunity we have to “*commit to [them]*” what we ourselves, by His grace, once “*heard,*” apprehended, and sincerely believed during and since our theological training; and we eagerly look forward, each and every day, to both the challenges and joys of teaching these young brethren. As they “*study to show [themselves] approved unto God,*” let us keep them in our daily prayers regarding their health, well-being, and stamina, that they may pursue their studies with unflagging zeal and diligent labor for the Lord's sake and for ours, as “[*workmen*] that [*need*] not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the Word of Truth” (II Timothy 2:15) and “*who shall be able to teach others also.*” May He also grant that, by our example of love for His Word and of high esteem for the incumbents of the Holy Ministry in our midst, our students may be encouraged even now to anticipate one day having, at the call of the Holy Ghost, a flock of like-minded sheep and lambs to feed, tend and oversee for the Lord's sake, that we may never lack a faithful shepherd's leading. God grant it for Jesus' sake!

— **Professor David T. Mensing**

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Elem-Sangama Arch-Deaconry
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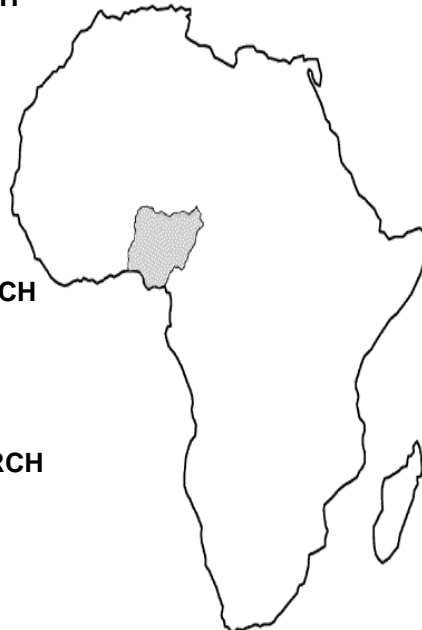
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Sunday School & Bible Class 10:45 a.m.

The Rev. DAVID G. REDLIN, Pastor

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

E-mail: david.redlin@q.com

PEACE EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH

Central Avenue at 171st Place, Oak Forest, IL 60452-4913 Telephone: (708) 532-4288

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

Worship Service 10:00 a.m.

The Rev. DAVID T. MENSING, Pastor

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

E-mail: pastormensing@yahoo.com

ST. JOHN'S LUTHERAN CHURCH

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

Sunday School & Bible Class 10:00 a.m.

Worship Service 11:00 a.m.

The Rev. M. L. NATTERER, Pastor

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

E-mail: m.l.natterer@comcast.net

ST. LUKE'S LUTHERAN CHURCH

5350 South Fountain Street, Seattle, WA 98178 Telephone: (206) 723-1078

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

Worship Service 10:30 a.m.

The Rev. EDWARD J. WORLEY, Pastor

9658 – 54th Avenue South, Seattle, WA 98118 (206) 723-7418

E-mail: revworley@comcast.net

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

Worship Service 7:00 p.m.

Adult Bible Class 4:30 p.m.

Adult Catechism Class 8:30 p.m.

ST. MARK'S EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH

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 Pillars of the Reformation



Scripture alone is the only source of divine truth, the only norm of Christian doctrine and practice, and the only standard against which errorists are to be judged.

Grace alone merited by Christ in His vicarious satisfaction of divine justice is the cause of man's full and free justification by God totally apart from the works of the Law.

Faith alone — confidence of the heart in the mercy of God which remits sins for Christ's sake — is the only means of personally appropriating the gift of justification.