# 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" Ps. 119:105.

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**Train Up A Child In The Way He Should Go: And When He Is Old, He Will Not Depart From It!**

Proverbs 22:6.

**OFFICIAL ORGAN**
**of the**
**Concordia Lutheran Conference**

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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 a false church, 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 acknowledgement 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.

# The President's Column

"Train Up A Child in the Way He Should Go: And When **He Is Old, He Will Not Depart From It."**
Proverbs 22:6

In the excellent essay delivered by Pastor Paul Bloedel on "Our Future Ministry" at our recent convention, the necessity of "nurturing" our children with the Word of God was discussed at length. According to Webster, to nurture means "to raise or promote the development of; to educate, to bring or train up." Brethren, it is the responsibility of every Christian parent to nurture his children with the Word of God, to, as Paul writes by inspiration, **"bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord,"** Eph. 6:4. Such "nurturing" is not easy in a day and age when movies, television and video games consume so much of the time and energy of our children, and yet our obligation to nurture them with the Word of God still remains. Indeed, raising and nurturing our children in God's Word is perhaps more difficult today than in any other generation. Things have changed in the world. To deny that things have changed would be to blind ourselves to the truth. Children today are exposed to things at tender ages with which they are not mentally or emotionally mature enough to handle. Therefore, it becomes even more imperative that we nurture our children with God's Word, that we **"train up a child in the way he should go: and when he is old, he will not depart from it."** Brethren, with this Word of God, we have not only God's command, but a wonderful promise as well.

**"Train up a child in the way he should go."** This is the demand of God for each and every one of us as parents. Indeed, in Deuteronomy 6, the Lord lays out **what** He requires of us as parents in specific terms: **"And thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might. And these words, which I**

**command thee this day, shall be in thine heart: And thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children, and shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up,"** Deut. 6:5-7. So not only does God give us the command to train our children in God's Word, He also gives us the method whereby we are to do that.

And please note well: These words are addressed to parents, not to the pastor, not to the pastor's staff, the Sunday School teachers of a congregation, but to parents. Indeed, Sunday School is a concept barely a hundred years old. It was started here in the United States because parents in sectarian church bodies were not doing the job God required of them. Then, not too long afterwards, some Lutheran church bodies also started adopting Sunday School, and somewhere along the line, parents forgot, or at least turned over, the greater responsibility of training their children to pastors and Sunday Schools. But remember that when Luther wrote the Small Catechism he did so with parents in mind. Listen to the words of Luther as he introduces each major doctrine in the Catechism: "As the head of the family should teach it in a simple way to his household." The responsibility of raising our children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord falls first with you and me as parents. Sunday School and even Confirmation Instruction should supplement what we parents have already done at home.

Look at the command God gives to parents regarding teaching their children. First it says that **"thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children,"** Deut. 6:7a. **THOU** shalt teach them God's Word, and you are to do so **DILIGENTLY.** To be diligent, according to common usage, is to steadily apply the teaching of God's Word, to do so with care and constant effort; carefully, painstakingly, untiringly bringing the Word of God to your children. People, this is something that takes time and takes effort, obviously. It is not something that we as parents can do with a "lick and a promise." When our children bring home memory work, while we want to teach them responsibility and can send them to their rooms to learn the work for which they are responsible, we, as parents, are obligated **by God** to be sure that

they do that work, and do it well, to the glory of God and the benefit of their souls—not to mention our own. The same is true for their Sunday School worksheets. How many of us sit down and talk to our children about the lessons they had in Sunday School, the Bible passages they have to look up, and help them apply those passages, not only to that particular lesson, but to their lives and ours. The Sunday School work is not designed as busy work. It is designed to teach and to nurture, but it depends upon you and I as parents taking the time to help those lessons sink in over the week. If they hear it on Sunday and can't remember the lesson on Monday, then, brethren, we've got a problem—and this is too often the case with too many children today.

As parents we need, as Moses exhorts us, to **"talk of (God's Word) while thou sittest in thine house,"** Deut. 6:7b. If your house is anything like ours, when our children come home from school, they tell us what went on, both the good and the bad. Brethren, this gives us parents an excellent opportunity to **apply** God's Word in every day situations, to show our children that being a Christian is more than attending church services on Sunday morning, but a way of life. When they do well, we can tell them, "Well done," and remind them that the gifts they have are of God. When they need help, when there's a problem, we can use God's Word to help them with that problem. Indeed, God's Word should come into almost every conversation we have in our homes and certainly into our discipline and into the counsel that we give our children. If we don't have time to do that, then, we have to begin to wonder if we really have time for our children.

**"Thou shalt teach them diligently....when thou walkest by the way,"** Deut. 6:7c. Unfortunately, television, video games and the like have become perfect baby-sitting services for us as parents. And too often, when we do go out with our children to do something special, we forget to talk to them about God, about the blessings of being a family, of the glory of the sights we are seeing and who made these things; we forget to remind them that the greatest man-made entertainment is a miracle of God's genius, one which God gave to man. And, we too often do not remind them that man has used these gifts of God and polluted them,

distorting them into something which Christians should avoid, not take pleasure in. When was the last time, dad, you got up out of your chair from in front of the TV and took your children outside to see the glories of the heavens. I don't think anyone can look at the magnificence of the night sky and not be affected, not feel his smallness in this great universe, and yet rejoice that, as small as he is, God loves him so much that He has provided for him eternal life by giving His only begotten Son for him.

**"Thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children... when thou liest down, and when thou risest up,"** Deut. 6:7d. People, I know how busy your schedules are. Nevertheless, the Lord commands us to find time for Him, to begin our day as a family with Him, and to end our day as a family with Him. How long does it take to say Luther's morning prayer or Luther's evening prayer together or to say the Lord's Prayer? How long does it take to have family devotions to either begin or end the day? It's amazing that we can find or make time for other things, but there doesn't seem to be enough time to begin and end the day with God.

And parents, we need to set an example for our children. Don't just **send** your children to Sunday School, bring them-and participate in Bible Class. What message are you sending to your children when you tell them it's important they be in Sunday School, but you've outgrown the need to learn? You think it's hard for you to sit for a couple of hours—ask a seven or eight year old how hard it is to sit for that long. And, dear fellow Christian, if you think you are to the point where you don't need what is being taught in Bible Class on any given Sunday, you better take a very hard look at what the B'ble says to you about the Word of God, about your need for it, about the reason God has placed a pastor in your midst—and remember the admonishment of the writer to the Hebrews: **"For when for the time ye ought to be teachers, ye have need that one teach you again which be the first principles of the oracles of God; and are become such as have need of milk, and not of strong meat. For every one that useth milk is unskillful in the Word of Righteousness: for he is a babe. But strong meat belongeth to them that are of full age, even those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and**

**evil. Therefore leaving the principles of the doctrine of Christ, let us go on unto perfection (or completeness); not laying again the foundation of repentance from dead works, and of faith toward God, of the doctrine of baptisms, and of laying on of hands, and of resurrection of the dead, and of eternal judgment. And this will we do, if God permit."** Heb. 5:12-6:3. Well, brethren, God does permit. He has provided the place for the study of His Word, He has provided each of our congregations with a pastor. He has provided you with a country in which you can do so freely, and He has given you the time. So, what do you do now?

Parents, we cannot shirk these responsibilities. They are given to us by God Himself. We can give reason after reason, excuse after excuse, but God's Word is clear on this. We can't get around the clear words of God to us in Scripture. Paul admonishes us in his letter to the Ephesians, **"Bring them up (that is, your children) in the nurture and admonition of the Lord,"** Eph. 6:4b. Parents, if we need to make a change, let us make that change today. Resolve today to do what we should be doing, that is, nurturing our children with God's Word, **"teaching (the saving words of Scripture) diligently unto (our) children, and...talk of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up."** For not only is this our responsibility as Christian parents, but with this responsibility God also gives us a most gracious promise, namely, that **"when he is old, he will not depart from it."**

We worry about our children. While we would be far better committing them to God and not worrying about them, worry about our children is a part of our flesh that is not easily mastered. We worry about their safety, we worry about their grades, we worry about whether or not they are growing into responsible young people, we worry about their boyfriends and girlfriends, we worry about their future, we worry about this and that and just about everything. I wonder, however, how much worrying we do about our children's spiritual welfare in comparison to these other things. It is something to think about very seriously. As we said, this world is becoming more and more evil day by day. The mainline church bodies are becoming more and more cor-

rupted by the world, indeed, teaching for doctrines the works of Satan himself. Note the acceptance and approval by the majority of mainline church bodies of homosexuality, sexual promiscuity, the denial of clear doctrines of Scripture, not just any doctrines, but doctrines which are necessary to salvation; there are women in the pulpits, and we could go on and on. Where will our children be in ten years? What will be most important to them? making a living, or making their salvation sure by remaining faithful to what they have been taught by you in God's Word? will they be more concerned about success or about nurturing their children with the Word of God? Remember the words of St. Paul: **"For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears; and they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables,"** II Tim. 4:3,4. That time is here now. What will it be in ten years? If there is anything for us to worry about, to focus our concern on, let it be our children's spiritual welfare.

For that reason, we must do what God exhorts us, yea, commands us to do, and train our children in the way they should go, bringing them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord. And when we do this, we have a glorious promise, that our children will, by God's grace, remember what they have been taught. Oh, it may happen that they even may fall away for a time and search out something new to tickle their ears. But if we have done our job faithfully and properly, then God promises that that knowledge will stay with them, that the Holy Ghost will bring it to their remembrance, and if nothing else, their conscience will be pricked. And since this knowledge is life and salvation itself, that Jesus has saved all of us, indeed, all mankind from sin, death and the devil by His substitutionary life and death and has thereby given unto us everlasting life, this, above all other things in this life, is what we should endeavor, with all our might, to give unto our children.

Brethren, let us do so. May God give you and me the strength and the will to do for our children what He would have us do as His representatives to them on earth, remembering that their souls were so precious to Him, as are ours,

that He gave His very life that they and we might live forever. For the sake of Him who says to us: **"Suffer the little children to come unto Me, and forbid them not: for of such is the kingdom of God."** Amen.

Your servant in Christ,
Pastor Mark W. Dierking, President

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How shall the young secure their hearts
And guard their lives from sin?
Thy Word the choicest rules imparts
To keep the conscience clean.

'Tis like the sun, a heav'nly light
That guides us all the day,
And thro' the dangers of the night
A lamp to lead our way.

The starry heav'ns Thy rule obey,
The earth maintains her place;
And these Thy servants, night and day,
Thy skill and pow'r express.

But still Thy Law and Gospel, Lord,
Have lessons more divine;
Not earth stands firmer than The Word,
Nor stars so nobly shine.

Thy Word is everlasting Truth;
How pure is every page.
That holy Book shall guide our youth
And well support our age.

**(The Lutheran Hymnal, #286)**

# CONVENTION DIGEST

The "heart of the Whetstone Valley" in northeastern South Dakota was the site of the **40th Annual Convention** of our **CONCORDIA LUTHERAN CONFERENCE,** hosted this year by St. Stephen's Ev. Lutheran Church, the Rev. Mark W. Dierking, Pastor. According to usual custom, the convention was preceded by a two-day **Pastoral Conference** (June 18th and 19th) and a meeting of the **Board of Directors** (June 20th). The Pastor and several families of the host congregation provided hospitality for delegates and guests in their homes, while others stayed in alternative facilities arranged by the congregation or, at their option, took care of their own lodging. Delicious meals were served by the ladies of St. Stephen's, and supervised play and recreational activities were provided for the children and young people.

The Convention itself opened on Friday, June 21st, with a service of convocation. Pastor Dierking, the Conference President as well as host pastor, both preached the keynote sermon and conducted the liturgy. His text was the **Convention Motto,** Psalm 43:3, **"O Send Out Thy Light And Thy Truth,"** and under the theme, "How God Answers Our Prayer Through The Work of Our Conference," he treated the text according to three of the most important objectives of our Conference: I. The joint extension of the Kingdom of God through cooperative mission work; II. The publication and distribution of orthodox religious materials; and III. The adequate training of pastors for the future ministry in our midst.

Following the service, sessions began with a brief opening devotion conducted by the President. Ad hoc convention committees were appointed according to the Prospectus, and the Committee on Registration and Excuses reported that five member-congregations were represented by five pastoral delegates, nine lay delegates, and five alternates, for a total initial delegate vote of fifteen. In his **Annual Report** the President offered praise to the Lord for the period of peace He has graciously permitted to reign among us and, instead of providing a resume of the past fiscal year, he spent the bulk of his report on forward-looking matters, including progress in the preparation of

instructors for our seminary program, the printing of the **C.L.**, Sunday School materials, and special target projects (like the "Sketch" of our doctrinal position, now available through our publishing house, and an updated edition of our Constitution), and potential progress in Lutheran union—all of which would be reported on in greater detail by chairmen of the standing committees. The report was accepted pending review by a committee appointed by the Vice President.

After adoption of the agenda, a report was heard from the Colloquy Committee regarding the successful colloquy of Pastor David G. Redlin of Tucson, Arizona, and immediately thereafter a report from the Membership Committee, which had studied the constitution of his congregation and its application for membership. The committee's recommendation to receive Good Shepherd Ev. Lutheran Church of Tucson and her pastor into the membership of our Conference was unanimously adopted, and the number of represented congregations changed to **six** with **seventeen delegate votes.**

The Friday afternoon session opened with a devotion led by Pastor David T. Mensing of Oak Forest, Illinois. Then followed the presentation by Pastor Paul R. Bloedel of Seattle, Washington, of the first part of his essay, **"Our Future Ministry."** After a brief introduction concerning the importance of providing a well-trained future ministry, Pastor Bloedel proceeded to Part I centering upon "**the men** whom we need for our future ministry" and their qualifications. He first dealt with **natural** qualifications, some of which are required by Scripture, others of which are only desireable as advantageous in the work of the ministry. Chief, however, are the **spiritual** qualifications that a student must have even to prepare for the Office of the Ministry: The God-given desire for the office, produced by the Gospel; personal faith in Christ, his Savior; deep love for God's Word and the desire to confine himself to its rule in all his endeavors; loving concern for the Savior's sheep and lambs; and finally, the willingness to suffer for the Lord and for the truth of His Word. Interspersed was lively discussion from the floor.

Three **recommendations** of the **Board of Directors** were adopted by the Convention: 1) That, in order to give him more time for his local congregational work, Pastor Bloedel be relieved of the printing of the Sunday School materials, and that he provide "repro proofs" of the material for local duplication by individual pastors; 2) That a committee be authorized to study alternatives in the publication of the CONCORDIA LUTHERAN, their findings to be reported to the editor for his evaluation and possible implementation; And 3) that our laymen be encouraged to assume a more active role in the Conference, particularly through their membership on the various committees, and that the chairmen of the committees be expected to keep in contact with their members as the need arises, soliciting their input and active participation. Two additional recommendations were held in abeyance until later in the Convention.

The initial report of the **Finance Committee** concerning the past fiscal year showed a cash balance on hand as of 6/1/91 of $34,961.23, receipts of $13,184.17, disbursements of $7,552.70, and an end-of-year balance of $40,592.70. And in its initial **Budget Proposal**, the Committee recommended the following items based on anticipated pledged receipts of $14,000.00: Scriptural Publications, $3,000.00; Telephone $2,000.00; Convention Expenses, $1000.00; Travel, $4000.00; and Miscellaneous, $2,500.00.

**Election of Officers and Standing Committees** yielded the following results:

**PRESIDENT:** Pastor Mark W. Dierking
**VICE-PRESIDENT:** Pastor Paul R. Bloedel
**SECRETARY:** Pastor David T. Mensing
**TREASURER:** Mr. Victor K. Bloedel

BOARD MEMBERS-AT-LARGE
**(Midwest)** Mr. David A. Steinke
**(Far West)** Mr. Raymond Kusumi

**EDITORIAL COMMITTEE:** Pastor E. R. Stallings, Jr. Editor; Pastor M. L. Natterer, Asst. Editor; Mr. Lloyd E. Martin, Lay Member

**COMMITTEE ON THEOLOGICAL EDUCATION:** Pastor E. R. Stallings, Jr. Chairman; Pastor Paul R. Bloedel; Mr. Raymond S. Kusumi; Mr. David A. Steinke

**COMMITTEE ON MISSIONS:** Pastor M. L. Natterer, Chairman; Pastor David G. Redlin; Mr. Daniel Bloedel; Mr. Lloyd E. Martin; Mr. Gary Neely

**COMMITTEE ON LUTHERAN UNION:** Pastor Paul R. Bloedel, Chairman; Pastor David T. Mensing, Secretary; Pastor M. L. Natterer; Mr. John Steinke

**FINANCE COMMITTEE:** Mr. Victor K. Bloedel, Chairman; Mr. Mark Natterer; Mr. John Steinke; Mr. Arden Lindflott

**PUBLISHING HOUSE BOARD OF CONTROL:** Pastor Paul R. Bloedel, Chairman; Pastor Mark W. Dierking; Mr. Robert Bloedel; Mr. Victor Bloedel; Mr. Ray Kusumi

All elections were declared to be unanimous by the Convention assembled.

The **Missions Committee**, chaired by Pastor Natterer, reported that it had been largely inactive this past year, but that it is open to advice and suggestions, as it seeks opportunities for the extension of the Lord's Kingdom.

The Saturday morning session opened with a devotion conducted by Pastor E. R. Stallings. Thereupon the **ESSAY** continued with Part II on "**the training** which our young men must have in order to be eligible for a call as pastor in any of our congregations." Highlighting this section was a printed hand-out summarizing the curriculum of our peripatetic seminary and the opportunity to hear from each instructor the particulars of the course-work he was to teach and his preparations to date. As with the first part of the essay, this section was interspersed with much lively discussion.

Pastor Stallings, the chairman, gave the **Report of the Committee on Theological Education** in two parts: 1) A brief update on the work of our professors during the past year, and 2) A brief analysis and evaluation of our peripatetic

seminary program at this present juncture. The Convention then heard a favorable **Review of the President's Report,** a positive **Auditing Committee Report** on the Treasurer's books and records, and the summary **Report of the Conference Statistician.**

Pastor Bloedel, **Editor of the CONCORDIA LUTHERAN,** briefly reported on our official organ, with only casual reference to its late appearance but with a more detailed summary of its content over the course of the past year. And, concerning the work of our **Publishing House,** SCRIPTURAL PUBLICATIONS, he reported on the printing efforts of our Conference, including the CONCORDIA LUTHERAN, our Sunday School materials with their revised worksheets, the "Sketch" of our doctrinal position, and the updated Constitution. In the discussion of the report, it was pointed out that reprints are needed of some of the documents and materials of the past, as well as a current list of available tracts, pamphlets and books. Following the report, the **Business Manager** of SCRIPTURAL PUBLICATIONS presented his end-of-the-year balance sheet showing our publishing house operation to be solvent.

The Saturday afternoon session opened with a devotion conducted by Pastor Bloedel. Thereafter followed the **Report of the Committee on Lutheran Union.** While the Committee itself had made no official contacts with other Lutheran bodies this year, primarily because nothing on the scene-at-large had warranted any new overtures, there had been some contacts on the part of individuals. Pastor Mensing, while on a pastoral visit to his members in Australia, at the request of the Committee on Lutheran Union had several cordial and fruitful meetings there with the pastors of the **Evangelical Lutheran Congregations of the Reformation;** and a layman from St. Luke's congregation in Seattle had made contact with a theologian in **Germany.** It is the CLU's intention to follow up on these contacts during the coming year. Pastor Mensing then gave a more detailed interest report on his meetings in Australia. Following these reports, the final two **Recommendations of the Board of Directors** were presented and adopted, namely:

1) That the Conference underwrite the cost of travel to Australia for Pastor Mensing and the chairman of the Committee on Lutheran Union for an anticipated meeting there this year with the pastors of the E. L. C. R.; and,

2) That the Conference encourage the Committee on Lutheran Union to pursue contacts with Dr. Johannes Lerle of Germany, with the view toward a possible meeting here in the United States between him and our pastors.

In its interim report, the **Finance Committee** took into account these adopted recommendations of the Board and increased the **travel budget proposal** from $4,000 to $8,000.

The Sunday Divine Service began at 10:00 a.m. Pastor Dierking served as liturgist and Pastor M. L. Natterer of Lebanon, Oregon, preached the sermon on Romans 10:13-15. His theme was the question: "Why Is the Office of the Public Ministry Such a **Glorious** Office?" and the question was answered in two parts: I. Because the incumbents of this divinely-instituted office are sent by God; and II. Because their faithful labors bring forth glorious fruit. Following the sermon, the brethren present partook of the Lord's Supper as guests of St. Stephen's congregation. After the service, delegates and visitors assembled at the nearby senior citizen's center for the noon meal.

The Sunday afternoon session began with a devotion led by Pastor David G. Redlin of Tucson, Arizona. Thereafter the **ESSAY** was presented in its third and concluding portion, centering on "**our obligation,** both as pastors and laymen, with regard to our future ministry," obligations not only to **train** men for the future ministry of our Conference, but to **stand behind** such training with our **prayers,** with our **offerings,** and with **help** to our pastors to relieve them of the many mundane tasks which, if left to them to do, unnecessarily encumber their time and keep them from work in the Word and doctrine. Of special importance was noted the obligation of Christian parents to bring up their children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord; for the precious Gospel, Pastor Bloedel pointed out, is the "soil" from which

alone will spring our future ministry—from which alone spring the desire to be **fed,** as well as the desire to **"feed the flock of God"** at the calling of the Holy Spirit through the local congregation. The essay in its entirety was adopted by the convention with thanks to the essayist—pending the usual review by the Praesidium.

The **Final Budget Proposal** of the Finance Committee totaling $16,500.00 was adopted including the increased figure for travel previously proposed.

Thereafter seven **resolutions** were unanimously adopted, including the customary expressions of thanks to the hosts of the Convention. All of these in their full text will be found in the Convention PROCEEDINGS.

Following the final report of the **Committee on Registration and Excuses, St. Luke's Lutheran Church** extended its invitation to host the **41st Annual Convention** in **Seattle, Washington** on **June 26, 27,** and **28, 1992.** This kind invitation was unanimously adopted.

The business of the Convention having been completed, the final session adjourned at 4:25 p.m. with a brief devotion conducted by the President. It had been a brotherly and fruitful meeting; and the delegates and guests returned to their respective homes edified by the Word, rejoicing in the blessed unity of the Spirit preserved among us, and determined, by God's grace and with His help, to go forward in the work of His Kingdom among us, to the praise of His holy Name, beseeching Him in the words of the Psalmist: **"O send out Thy Light and Thy Truth."** (Psalm 43:3) —through our humble efforts and with His blessing upon us.

Respectfully submitted,
Rev. David T. Mensing, Secretary

# A S K E T C H

# o f

# T H E D O C T R I N A L P O S I T I O N

# o f t h e

# C O N C O R D I A L U T H E R A N C O N F E R E N C E

**(Continued from previous issue)**

**FELLOWSHIP:**

We teach that, inasmuch as God has ordained that the Holy Scriptures be the only source and standard (norm) of Christian doctrine and practice, every Christian should carefully distinguish between ORTHODOX and HETERODOX churches, their teachers and their followers (Rom. 16:17a; I John 4:1), and to avoid the heterodox as dangerous to their very souls (Rom. 16:17b; Matt. 7:15; Tit. 3:10).

Orthodox churches and church-bodies are those which teach the Word of God in its truth and purity, administer the Sacraments according to Christ's institution, and consistently apply the pure doctrines of Scripture, not only in word but in deed—not only in theory but in practice. (Note that Practice must not be confused with the Christian's personal life of sanctification.) Official PRACTICE, that is, the application of God's Word in our congregations, must BE in conformity with sound doctrine, if it is not to deny what is taught. The Christian's life must of course be BROUGHT into harmony with God's Word, but this sanctification is a gradual process and unable perfectly to be achieved here on earth. If doctrine is to be sound, practice must be sound to the same degree; or else a mockery is made of Christian orthodoxy and of the Lord's Word through Paul in I Corinthians 1:10.)

Congregations and church-bodies in which false doctrine is persistently taught from the pulpit, in the classroom, and in official publications, as well as those which tolerate false doctrine and/or practice to stand side-by-side with the truth, are heterodox bodies. When false doctrine and practice rears its ugly head in an orthodox body, it must

be actively combatted and removed without long and dangerous delay if the body is to remain orthodox.

True Christian unity is based upon PERFECT AGREEMENT AND ONEMINDEDNESS IN DOCTRINE AND PRACTICE (Amos 3:3; John 8:31,32; Eph. 4:3; I Cor. 1:10). When those who truly share an orthodox position both in doctrine and in practice mutually acknowledge and confess the same, they are said to be in "confessional fellowship." (In this connection, we deplore the perversion of the true sense of Article VII of the Augsburg Confession by which the word "Gospel" is taken in its narrower sense; for if that were the actual and intended meaning, this article would stand in opposition to clear and certain passages which require agreement in ALL of God's Word: Matt. 28:20; John 8:31,32; I Cor. 1:10,13. It should be obvious then that "Gospel" in the context of Article VII is the Gospel in the wider sense, including the entire Word of God. See. p. 47, Triglot.)

Unless one's actions are to belie one's words, "Church Fellowship" (that is, altar-and-pulpit fellowship, prayer fellowship and joint church work) can be practiced only by those who are in "confessional fellowship" with one another (Amos 3:3; Rom. 16:17). Standing in violation of this clear principle of Holy Scripture are those who practice this sin of religious unionism or **"ecumenism"** (practicing fellowship without true unity in doctrine and practice, II Cor. 6:14-18; I Tim. 6:3-5), its opposite counterpart, sinful separatism (standing aside or separating from true brethren contrary to God's command, II Tim. 1:8; I John 2:19), and selective fellowship (practicing church fellowship between individuals without complete and committed unity in doctrine and practice and without the simultaneous agreement of already established brethren in the faith, I Cor. 1:10; Amos 3:3). The principles of God-pleasing fellowship based upon true unity in doctrine and practice are not man-made or humanly-devised principles, but they are principles set forth in clear and certain passages of God's Word. They apply equally to pastors and to laymen, and they must be carefully followed if the full truth of the Word is not to be compromised for the sake of mere temporal peace and tranquility. (Formula of Concord, Thorough Declaration, XI, Triglot, p. 1095, para 95.) Failure to observe these principles results in indiffe-

rence to the Word of God and ultimately to total denial of the truth (Gal. 5:9; II Tim. 2:16-18; Col. 2:8).

(**Bible References** were interspersed in this section for greater facility in reading.)

**WOMAN SUFFRAGE IN THE CHURCH:**

We teach that, according to God's ordinance, women are not publicly to teach in the church, nor even to speak in the public assembly where such speaking may usurp the authority of the men. Consequently women are not to have the right of suffrage in the voters' assembly, since their vote may indeed cancel out the vote of a man to whom Christ committed the decision-making power in the local congregation. Neither may women hold offices in the congregation since these involve the leadership which Christ has given only to men. It goes without saying, therefore, that women may not serve in the pastoral office—the office of preaching and teaching, of admonition and rebuke, of oversight and rule. The teaching of Sunday School or day-school classes of children and of adult Bible Classes consisting of women only does not fall under the Lord's prohibition since no instruction of men nor usurpation of their authority is involved; and these auxiliary offices are always under the oversight of the pastor.

These principles are not based upon mere custom nor upon arbitrary discrimination against women, but they are God's own ordinance since creation and the fall into sin.

(**Bible References:** I Cor. 14:34ff; I Tim. 2:11-14.)

**METHOD OF FINANCING THE LORD'S WORK:**

We teach that the work of Christ's kingdom on earth is to be supported exclusively by free-will offerings. Such offerings are to be given cheerfully, richly, and sacrificially according as God has prospered the giver, regularly as part of Christian worship, and cooperatively so that all the Christians share in the responsibility of giving and that some are not unnecessarily burdened because of the neglect of others. The Christians' offerings are to be motivated by the love of their Savior — first of all His for them, and then also theirs

for Him to prove the sincerity of their love. We reject the practice of merchandizing in or on behalf of the church, either to substitute for or to supplement Christian giving. Nowhere in Scripture is merchandising even suggested as a legitimate, God-pleasing method of financing the Lord's work. On the contrary, the Savior Himself condemns merchandising in the church outright in John 2:16, regardless of whether the business aspects of the money-making activities are honest or not. Instead we find numerous passages in which free-will offerings are enjoined.

(**Bible References:** II Cor. 9:7; I John 4:19; II Cor. 8:7-9; I Cor. 16:2; Matt. 6:33; Acts 5:11; II Cor. 8:13,14; 5:14,15; 8:8; John 2:16.)

**SUPPORT OF THE MINISTRY:**

The Word of God plainly commands and ordains the full financial support of the pastoral office. Therefore it is not a God-pleasing situation when a congregation calls a pastor with the expectation that he provide all or even part of his living by engaging in secular work, or for pastors to volunteer themselves for such work outside of their office. It is our position on the basis of Scripture that the pastoral office is indeed a full-time work and that it is not to be despised as an easy part-time arrangement. Also we affirm our stand on that Word of God which solemnly obligates the members of a Christian congregation to "communicate," that is, to share or sacrifice of the temporal blessings which the Lord has bestowed upon them toward the financial support of their pastor, and that they make every effort to sacrifice to the extent that their pastor enjoys the same living conditions with which the average among them is blessed. We hold according to Scripture that only when these injunctions of the Lord are upheld and followed among us are we truly demonstrating our sincere concern for retaining the pure teachings of God's Word and our faith and love in Christ Jesus, our Lord.

(**Bible References:** I Cor. 7:9-14; II Tim. 2:15; 4:2; I Tim. 3:1-7; 4:12-16; 5:17; Gal. 6:6,7; Luke 10:7; Gal. 6:8.)

Where a pastor because of unusual conditions finds it necessary, in obedience to another Word of God, I Tim. 5:8,

to be engaged in some secular work for the provision of his household, he himself cannot be faulted for seeing to the support of his family under conditions over which he has no control. His congregation, however, should strive to rectify such a deplorable situation as soon as possible in an evangelical manner and arrive at arrangements which are in full accord with God's Word; for this is the Scriptural duty which hearers owe to their pastors (Gal. 6:6).

We do not speak of "exceptions" being made to an ordinance of God, except where God Himself makes such exceptions in clear and certain passages. Mere examples in Scripture, without a corresponding injunction, are not sedes or proof-texts which establish Christian doctrine; neither do mere examples of unusual situations and seeming exceptions have any binding force in the general case, namely, for all Christians of all times, unless clear and certain passages establish this. The mere example of St. Paul engaging in secular work, therefore, does not determine an "exception" for us, since the clear statement of God's ORDINANCE in I Corinthians 9:14 is the principle which is binding upon all Christians. While we cannot presume to make exceptions to God's ordinances, we do recognize that particular cases arise in which we find the application of clear Scripture principles difficult (cases of casuistry). Nevertheless we dare not, for the sake of expediency, set aside a divine ordinance, but must apply it properly and evangelically as the will of our Lord and Savior (Matt. 28:20).

**LODGES, SCOUTING, AND SIMILAR ORGANIZATIONS:**

We hold to the principle of Holy Scripture that a Christian should avoid all false churches and other organizations which teach a religion that is false (Rom. 16:17, etc. See also section on **FELLOWSHIP.**) Hence a Christian should not affiliate with or join organizations that are decidedly anti-Christian or that deny certain truths of the Bible, expecting their members to share, confess and practice their principles. Most lodges, their auxiliaries, scouting organizations, some fraternities and sororities, and some other fraternal and service groups fall into this category and share many identifiably false principles which are inconsistent with

Christian faith. Some of these are the following: 1) They profess belief in a god which is not the Triune God, and they require their members to do likewise. 2) They claim to be dedicated to the moral betterment of man by his own efforts, insisting that man can do good and God-pleasing works apart from faith in Christ. 3) They deny the deity of Christ, His vicarious atonement, and the central doctrine of the Christian religion, that a man is saved eternally alone by God's grace in Christ Jesus, through faith in His blood, totally apart from works or merits of the Law. 4) They require of their members oaths in sinful, uncertain and unimportant matters. In these and still other principles, these organizations are diametrically opposed to the religion of Christ. Our people are encouraged thoroughly to investigate all organizations in which they may be interested as to whether their programs involve prayer, ritual, or other religious aspects before they become involved in their membership or support.

(**Bible References:** II Cor. 6:14-18; I John 4:1-3; I Cor. 10:21.)

**ADIAPHORA:**

This term refers to matters which are neither commanded nor forbidden by the Word of God. They are also known as "non-essential matters" and "matters indifferent." Since such matters are not settled by Scripture, they are left to the Christians in their liberty to decide for themselves, not by the rule of one over the other, but by their mutual consent according to love. In dealing with adiaphora, a vote is taken to ascertain what the majority regards as best; and for love's sake, it is expected that the minority will cheerfully yield to the majority, not by compulsion, but because Christians according to their New Man of faith desire to serve one another. This is not to say that a majority vote in non-essential matters is binding upon the individual conscience, as would be the case with a resolution passed in accordance with a direct command of God; and it may happen that, for love's sake, the majority may yield to the minority in an adiaphoron, or at least postpone the passage of a proposition until sufficient time can be given to patient and loving discussion and study. While the majority should

never tyrannize the minority, neither should the minority or an individual arbitrarily insist on having his own way and thus use Christian liberty as an occasion to the flesh. In discussion of adiaphora, it is essential that vehemence and acrimony be put aside, and that a spirit of love, humility and brotherliness prevail, as becometh saints walking in the Spirit.

(**Bible References:** Matt. 23:8-12; I Cor. 7:23; 14:40; Phil. 4:14,15; Gal. 5:13-16,25,26; Eph. 4:31,32; I Pet. 5:5,6.)

**OPEN QUESTIONS:**

These are defined as questions in the domain of Christian doctrine which Holy Scripture itself has not answered definitively. They are "open" only in the sense that they are incapable of being solved in this life because the Word of God furnishes no conclusive data. Unlike adiaphora which are settled by mutual consent, OPEN QUESTIONS are not subject to the decisions of men; for not human authority but only the authority of Scripture determines what is to be taught in the Christian Church. In agreement with the scope and purpose of Holy Writ, we find that it does not answer every question which men may desire to have answered. Attempts to speculate as to their solution and to know the mind of the Lord, where He Himself has not revealed His thoughts and will in His Word, are anti-Scriptural and unscientific; for the Christian is to speak as the oracles of God, that is, according to Scripture, and not to presume to know what cannot be known. Rather, when confronted with truly open questions, the Christian must take his reason captive to the obedience of Christ in His precious Word and humbly admit and confess, "I do not know."

(**Bible References:** Matt. 28:20; II Thess. 2:15; John 8:31,32; I Pet. 4:11; Rom. 11:33,34; I Cor. 13:12; II Cor. 10:5.)

Not to be included among open questions are such matters as the following, which are clearly taught and defined in Scripture: 1) The local visible congregation is the only divinely-ordained external fellowship. 2) The pastoral office of the local congregation is the only-divinely-ordained office in the Church. 3) The Roman Pope, with his entire

system, is the very Antichrist spoken of in II Thessalonians chapter two. 4) Women are prohibited from incumbency in the pastoral office and from any public speaking in the assembly so as to usurp authority over the men. 5) Homosexuality is not a legitimate "sexual preference," but is clearly an abomination to the Lord (Rom. 1:26-32). 6) Premarital sexual intercourse and the widespread practice of "living together" outside the bond of holy marriage is a sin against God's Sixth Commandment. 7) Sunday is not the so-called "New Testament Sabbath," nor has Sunday been ordained as the day of worship in the New Testament, nor has the frequency of public worship in the New Testament been established at a minimum of one day each week (Col. 2:16,17). 8) The whole of M'llennialism (Chiliasm) is contrary to Holy Scripture and therefore must be rejected as false doctrine. 9) Agreement to disagree in matters of doctrine and practice (religious unionism) is sin and a mockery of true Christian unity.

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NOTE: Even in the matters covered, the preceding pages were not meant to be an exhaustive treatment, and many things were not included, not because they were deemed unimportant, but simply due to limitations of space. Inquiries concerning our Scriptural position are invited and encouraged.

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# Around the World

*with editorial comment*

*by M. L. Natterer*

Small "mom and pop" grocery stores have the charm of first-name familiarity, and you can get credit if needed, but despite the personal touches, most people patronize supermarkets.

The contrast says church planner Lyle E. Schaller, is

a key pointer to the effectiveness of today's Christian congregations and a hallmark of their future.

"The emergence of the 'megachurch' is the most important development of modern Christian history," he said.

"In today's world, big churches are more attractive to younger adults," he added. "People nowadays want a church that offers a broad range of choices in teaching, scheduling and programming."

Schaller, a widely respected expert on strategies for strengthening churches and adjusting to the needs of a changing world, said evidence is mounting that large, multifaceted congregations now work best.

"The record is pretty clear that small churches are not attracting people as they did before," he said in an interview.

"Adults born in the '50s and '60s don't carry the institutional loyalty of older generations," he said. "People today expect to make choices about things - about a new TV, an automobile, what they eat, their housing."

He said the same approach applies increasingly in choosing a church, which is done mainly on the basis of large, varied, well-run programs, with little regard for denomination.

He said huge congregations with manifold ministries, educational classes and other programs, both weekends and through the week, have multiplied in growing evangelical and non-denominational sectors.

"Numerical growth is a product of the increase in big churches," he said.

"The future is here," he said. "Denominations don't count much anymore..."

**The Lord Jesus instructed His Church to teach all things that He had commanded (Matt. 28:19,20) and warned against those who would preach contrary to His Word (Matt. 7:15; Gal. 1:8,9). What should we, therefore, consider to be of prime importance in seeking a church-home? Should it be the large number members, their "broad range of choices in teaching, scheduling and programming"? For a sincere Christian it dare never be the personality of the pastor and the various social programs of the congregation,—it must always be: THE TEACHING. For this is what the Lord insists upon and only those who continue in His Word does**

**the Savior declare to be His disciples (John 8:31,32). The denominational name "Lutheran" regretfully does not mean much anymore. For many it is simply an empty name because many of the Scriptural teachings which Luther proclaimed have been removed. IT IS THE TEACHING THAT COUNTS. Does the congregation which I want to join teach and preach God's Word in all of its truth and purity, administering the Sacraments in accord with Christ's institution? Does its practice also bear witness that the congregation is sincere in its declaration that God's Word is the only source and norm of its teaching? Where that is the case, the Christian has found an oasis in the middle of the desert of this life. For it is by means of that Word that the Holy Spirit has brought us to faith and preserves us in the same unto a blessed end.**

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The provocative Jesus Seminar concluded six years of voting Sunday (March 3rd) on what the Jesus of history most likely said, ruling out about 80 percent of words attributed to Him in the Gospels and emerging with the picture of a prophet-sage who told parables and made pithy comments. Virtually all of Jesus' words in the Gospel of John were voted down by scholars meeting in Sonoma, California, including a pulpit favorite, **"For God so loved the world, that He gave His only-begotten Son..."** (John 3:16). The Jesus Seminar, a 200-member group of mainline biblical scholars from all over the United States, was formed in part to counteract literalist views of the Bible. It has stirred controversy since its first meetings in 1985. Seminar member Marcus Borg of Oregon State University, who also heads the Historical Jesus Section of the large Society of Biblical Literature, said his experience of teaching adults is that the findings will "feed a hunger" in the churches. "Many mainstream Christians can no longer believe the picture of Jesus they got as children," Borg said.

**What unbridled and presumptuous arrogance on the part of these so-called scholars whom the Lord in His Word denounces as being "proud" (I Tim. 6:3,4). Such are puffed up in their estimation of themselves and imagine that they who are but dust and ashes have the right to sit in judgment on the Word of the Creator of heaven earth.** "Who art thou that

repliest against God" (Rom. 9:20)? **Such will only succeed in bringing God's righteous wrath down upon their own heads. Sadder still, however, is the fact that such mouth-pieces of the father of all lies (John 8:44) often lead weak Christians astray by instilling doubt within their minds concerning the creditability of the Holy Scriptures. It is the work of the devil to destroy the reliability of the Bible. For all Christian doctrine is based on the authority and trustworthiness of the Holy Scriptures. When the authority of the Bible is undermined, then the Christian doctrine cannot stand. This the devil knows only too well. Therefore the true Lutheran Church has always insisted upon a verbally inspired Bible, that is, the very words of Holy Writ are God-breathed.** "All Scripture is given by inspiration of God" **(II Tim. 3:16);** "Holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost" **(II Pet. 1:21);** "We speak, not in the words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth" **(I Cor. 2:13). A Christian loves the Bible because in it God tells him his sins are forgiven and heaven is his heaven. God's Word gives the Christian certainty, comfort and light, in a sin-darkened world.**

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How precious is the Book Divine
By inspiration giv'n|
Bright as a lamp its doctrines shine
To guide our souls to heav'n.

Its light, descending from above
Our gloomy world to cheer,
Displays a Savior's boundless love
And brings His glories near.

It shows to man his wand'ring ways
And where his feet have trod,
And brings to view the matchless grace
Of a forgiving God.

O'er all the straight and narrow way
Its radiant beams are cast;
A light whose never weary ray
Grows brightest at the last.

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4050 South Melpomene Way
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**Sunday School and**
**Bible Class..... 11:15 a.m.**
**REV. DAVID G. REDLIN, Pastor**
4050 South Melpomene Way
Tucson, Arizona 85730
**Telephone:** (602) 721-7618

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**HOLY SCRIPTURE EV. LUTHERAN CHURCH**
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**Sunday School and**
**Bible Class..... 11:15 a.m.**
**REV. E. R. STALLINGS, JR., Pastor**
110 Grasmere Court
San Antonio, Texas 78218
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**Worship Service..... 10:00 a.m.**
**REV. DAVID T. MENSING, Pastor**
17151 South Central Avenue
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**Telephones** -- Church Office and Pastor's Study: (708) 532-4288
Parsonage: (708) 532-9035

**Note:** On the 1st & 3rd Sundays of each month, services are held in our Midland, Michigan chapel at 2409 Rodd Street:
**Sunday School and**
**Bible Class..... 6:30 p.m.**
**Worship Service..... 7:30 p.m.**
(Taped services on other Sundays)

**ST. JOHN'S LUTHERAN CHURCH**
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**Bible Class..... 10:00 a.m.**
**Worship Service..... 11:00 a.m.**
**REV. M. L. NATTERER, Pastor**
483 Tangent Street
Lebanon, Oregon 97355
**Telephone:** (503) 258-2941

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**ST. LUKE'S LUTHERAN CHURCH**
55th Ave. S. & S. Fountain St.
Seattle, Washington 98118
**Telephone:** (206) 723-1078
**Sunday School and**
**Bible Class..... 9:15 a.m.**
**Worship Service..... 10:30 a.m.**
**REV. PAUL R. BLOEDEL, Pastor**
9658 - 54th Avenue South
Seattle, Washington 98118
**Telephone:** (206) 723-7418

**Note:** Services are also held in Victoria, British Columbia on the 1st and 3rd Sundays. Please call the Pastor for current location.
**Sunday School..... 3:00 p.m.**
**Worship Service..... 3:45 p.m.**
**Bible Class..... 5:30 p.m.**

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**ST. STEPHEN'S EV. LUTHERAN CHURCH**
Wilmot, South Dakota 57279
**Worship Service.....**
(June 1st thru September 30th)
**..... 9:30 a.m.**
(October 1st through May 31st)
**..... 10:00 a.m.**
**Sunday School and Bible Class...**
**.....after the service.**
**REV. MARK W. DIERKING, Pastor**
Box 33
Wilmot, South Dakota 57279
**Telephone:** (605) 938-4710

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