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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Ask for the Old Paths,
Where is
The Good Way,
And Walk Therein!

—Jeremiah 6:16.

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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.

What about

Church Growth?

"And the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved." Acts 2:47b

During the Holy Epiphany season, we Christians traditionally focus our attention upon the "manifestation" of the Lord Jesus as **"the Christ, the Son of God,"** and the Savior of all mankind (John 20:31). Already before His incarnation, Jesus Himself, the Messiah, spoke in the Scriptures of the Old Testament and, through the mouth of His holy prophets (Luke 1:70), manifested Himself to men as the Light to lighten the Gentiles and the Glory of His people Israel (Luke 2:32). So clear and unmistakable was this manifestation of "epiphany" in "Moses and the prophets" (Luke 16:29 & 31) that St. Paul tells Timothy: **"The Holy Scriptures** (of the Old Testament)**...are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus,"** II Tim. 3:15.

After His incarnation, Jesus, our Divine Prophet (Deuteronomy 18:15), continued to manifest Himself as the Son of God and the Savior of the world—to the aged Simeon and Anna in the Temple, to the Wise Men from the East, and, through His preaching and in all His miracles, to His disciples and to the multitudes who heard Him and who witnessed the divine works which He performed. All those manifestations were intended also for US, and were recorded by His holy evangelists and Apostles **"that (we) might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing (we) might have life through His Name,"** John 20:31.

Moreover, after His ascension into heaven, Christ as our Prophet continued to manifest Himself to men in the preaching of His Apostles, and still to this day manifests Himself through the proclamation of His precious Word by Christians in general and very specially by incumbents of the

pastoral office of the local congregation, that office directly derived from the apostolic office and ordained by God Himself (Eph. 4:11; II Cor. 5:20; Luke 10:16; etc.).

Due therefore to our focus on "manifestation" during the Epiphany season, it is quite natural that **mission work** frequently emerges as the theme of sermons, Bible studies, and devotions; for the Lord Jesus has commissioned ALL of us, yea, all Christians, pastors and laymen alike, to go **"into the world"**--beginning in our own backyard, **"in Jerusalem"** (Acts 1:8)—to proclaim His precious Word **"to every creature,"** Mark 16:15. The context of that **Great Commission,** moreover, clearly shows that "the Gospel" in the **wider sense** is meant, both the **Law** and the **Gospel,** the **entire "counsel of God,"** in which our desperate **NEED for a Savior** as well as the **Savior Himself** is manifested. (See Mark 16:16, as well as Matthew 28:20a.)

What is NOT so "naturally" to be expected in the light of God's Word is the literal "bombardment" we are subjected to, particularly during the Epiphany season, on the part of self-professed "specialists," calling for **church GROWTH.** They offer us an astounding array of materials, programs, seminars, and even videos, practically guaranteeing increased church attendance figures, membership statistics, and levels of Christian stewardship (that is, a better "cash-flow" situation for our congregations). Indeed, the "Church Growth" movement is a big item nowadays, not only among the sects (including the so-called "Evangelicals"), but also among many who advertise themselves as "Lutheran" and "Evangelical Lutheran" churches and church-bodies. "Church Growth" is their number one agenda! And they're not talking just **mission outreach** in the Scriptural sense of that term; they're not talking **growth in grace** within the congregation, as the pastors feed the **"flock of God which is among (them),"** I Peter 5:2; and they're not **really** talking growth of "the Holy Christian Church, the Communion of Saints" either. They're talking (as their literature readily shows) in terms of **numbers**--demonstrable **statistical** growth of lists, rosters, and records. They promise to "double your attendance in Sunday School in just six weeks!" They ask, "Is your church struggling to raise its attendance level about 75-150 active members? and then claim, "This seminar is designed to help

you meet these challenges and "Break the 100...200 Barrier.'" This is not **church growth! REAL church growth "cometh not with observation,"** Jesus tells us in Luke 17:20. We can't see it; we can't measure it; we can't even "guesstimate" it based on such things as attendance and enrollment; but **"the Lord knoweth them that are His,"** II Tim. 2:19.

And yet we see even "Lutheran" churches and church-bodies employing such business techniques as **gimmickry** (logo-recognition, memory-grabbing acronyms, and shallowly-worded bumper stickers) to attract the public's attention to their **identity,** but that's about **all.** They make little or no witness of substance; and what witness **is** made we find shallow at best, misleading at worst. The new LCMS logo we cite as an example in point: "Three crosses form one, symbolizing the Trinity," says the synod, a strange statement easily leading to "confounding the Persons" (Athanasian Creed); for it was Christ, who, according to His human nature, suffered and died on the cross as man's substitute, not the Father, nor the Holy Ghost. The logo simply **raises** more questions than it **answers.** —The cute little "wishing-well" logo of the Wisconsin Synod, while well-suited to the acronym "W.E.L.S.," gives no substantive Scriptural testimony to the body's position on **anything at all!** And, if the slogan "Come to the WELS" is intended to covey some reference to Jesus' visit with the woman of Samaria in John 4, it is all but lost on everyone except W.E.L.S. "insiders"...a sad waste of mission funds! —The same is true for the L.C.M.S. bumper sticker which bears the profound statement, "Lutherans Care." Care?? About **whom?** About **what?** And **WHY?** Is "caring" a characteristic **peculiar to L.C.M.S. Lutherans?** Who would buy that hollow claim? These and other similar "gimmicks" in the advertising arsenal of church bodies nowadays are a sad testimony to the "**skim**-milk-if-**any**-milk" message they want the world to hear from them! Can't they conceive of a **Scripture text** being equally "attractive" to the unchurched? Whatever happened to the principle that the **precious Gospel** is to be the church's real appeal, and that the church's "mission" is to **baptize and teach,** not advertise-and-reach with meaningless speech? And they're concerned about **church growth**? The question is: What do they **really** want? The salvation of **souls** or a **body-count**?

Some churches and church-bodies see their **Christian day schools** as an opportunity for "outreach" and a tool for church growth. Yet, according to recent survey conducted by this writer of local day schools (LCMS and WELS) in the Chicago metropolitan area, "outsiders" paid an average of $1700.00 per year to have their child "reached;" and the follow-up with regular church attendance and instruction of the entire family was sorely lacking or absent altogether! The LCMS schools contacted said **without exception:** "We do not expect or require children from the outside to come to church **here,** but we do encourage them to attend services regularly with their families at the church **of their choice.**" When asked whether this meant other LCMS churches in the area, the answer was: "No, children of Baptists go to services there, and children of Roman Catholic parents usually attend the masses in their local parish. We feel that **regular church attendance** is a **good habit** to encourage in children, **no matter what church it is.** We have no problem with that." Indeed, their problem will soon enough manifest itself when they are called to account for the souls of the "little ones" to whom they taught the saving truth of God's Word (if that is really what they are doing), and then sent off to wolves, to be devoured by them! (Matthew 18:6). Consider the carnage of souls for which they will have to answer! Consider **those** numbers!

"What about church growth?" Church growth, according to God's Word, is not **our business**! It is **the Lord's business**! We don't "grow" churches, neither do we make them grow. Luke writes in the title-verse of our article: **"The Lord added to the church." Our** role is really a very humble and limited one by Divine design, so that all glory for the growth of His church is due **"unto Him which is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think,"** Eph. 3:20. In His Parable of the Sower (Luke 8:5ff.), Jesus likens us to farm hands who sow the living seed of God's Word as we **"preach the Gospel to every creature,"** Mark 16:15; and this same imagery is repeated over and over again throughout the Scriptures. St. Paul writes in I Corinthians 3:6, **"I have planted, Apollos watered; but God gave the increase."** His precious **Word** is the **"incorruptible seed.... which liveth and abideth forever"** of which men are **"born again,"** converted to faith in Christ, as the vehicle or **means**

through which the Holy Spirit works in their hearts. **"Faith cometh,"** that is, Christ's church **grows** both in numbers and in stedfastness, **"by hearing and hearing by the Word of God,"** (Rom. 10:17). It is the **Word,** not the homiletical skill, rhetoric, and delivery of the preacher, which is **"the power of God unto salvation"** (Rom. 1:16) and which He promises **"shall not return unto Me void, but...shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it,"** Isaiah 55:11. Preaching and teaching merely gets the Word **out** regularly and consistently (Isaiah 55:10,11) so that it can be **heard,** Romans 10:14b. It is therefore **NOT** gimmicks, advertising, logos and slogans, not programs, video presentations, "Gospel rock," and charismatic "glitz" --not even Christian day schools and day-care centers--which **make** the church **grow**! Nothing that **we do, invent** or **develop** as "new wrinkles" or "creative approaches" **add** to the church! The **Lord** does that by His Holy Spirit through the power of His precious **Word.** Therefore we confess with Luther in the Second Petition: "The Kingdom of God comes indeed without our prayer, of itself." This should be of considerable comfort to **US** in our tiny Conference, whose congregations generally have seen **little net growth numerically** over many years. By God's grace, we have continued in our Savior's **Word** (John 8:31,32) and, on the basis of that **Word** as our only source and standard of divine truth, are **"perfectly joined together in the same mind and the same judgment"** (I Corinthians 1:10), **"endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace,"** Ephesians 4:3. We **have grown "in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ"** (II Peter 3:18) and should not be discouraged by the lack of **outward** growth, as if the Lord were withholding His blessing from us. **"Fear not, little flock,"** the Chief Shepherd assures us, **"for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom,"** Luke 12:32.

But let us not on that account become lazy stewards of God's mysteries, His precious Means of Grace, and indolent laborers in the Lord's vineyard! For, while **no credit** for church growth belongs to us because of our efforts, yet we are chargeable before God for **mismanagement** of the Treasures He has committed unto us, for **hindering** the free course of the Gospel, for **hiding** the Lord's talent of grace **"in the earth"** and not putting it **"to the exchangers"**

(Matthew 25:25,27) in accordance with His Great Commission. Rather, the attitude of true Christians **grateful** for the grace of God that brought **them** salvation should surely be that of Peter and the other Apostles: **"For we cannot but speak the things which we have seen and heard,"** Acts 4:20, and that of the Prophet Isaiah: **"Here am I; send me!"** (Isaiah 6:8). For the spreading of the Gospel is not merely our **duty** as Christians -- it is our **privilege**, out of love to Him **"who hath called (us) out of darkness into His marvelous light,"** I Peter 2:9.

But the blessing upon our labors is **God's** to give, not ours to determine for ourselves. God earnestly desires **"all men to be saved and to come unto the knowledge of the truth,"** (I Timothy 2:4), **"not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance,"** II Peter 3:9. Let us therefore "plant" and "water" (I Corinthians 3:6), **"feed the flock of God which is among (us)"** (I Peter 5:2; Acts 20:28) faithfully and diligently **"as the oracles of God,"** serving in His vineyard **"as of the ability which God giveth; that God in all things may be glorified through Jesus Christ, to whom by praise and dominion forever and ever. Amen,"** I Peter 4:11. And let **God give the increase**, who **"add(eth) to the church daily such as should be saved,"** praying to the Husbandman of His precious vineyard:

"Yea, bless the Word alway, our souls forever feeding;
And may we never lack a faithful shepherd's leading!
See **Thou** the wandering sheep, bind up the sore oppressed,
Lift up the fallen ones, and grant the weary rest.

"Bring those into Thy fold who still to Thee are strangers.
Guard those who are within against offense and dangers.
Press onward with Thy Word till pastor and his fold
Through faith in Thee, O Christ, Thy glory shall behold."

(L.H. 485, 6 & 7)

D.T.M.

How should we regard the WRITINGS OF THE Church Fathers?

It has often been said that **"we stand on the shoulders of the fathers,"** and there is a good deal of truth to that statement. Down through the centuries the Lord God raised up men to defend the pure teachings of His Word against error or false doctrine. At the time of Christ the religious leaders of the Jews, primarily the Pharisees, taught a way of salvation by the deeds of the Law (even adding to the Scriptures hundreds of their own man-made laws). The Lord Jesus spoke out plainly against those who thought that they could earn salvation by their own works, revealing the base hypocrisy of the scribes and Pharisees, and pointing the people to eternal salvation only by the grace of God through faith in Him as the promised Messiah and Savior of mankind. Modernism was championed at the time of Christ by the Sadducees who denied the resurrection, the existence of the soul and of angels and devils. Gnosticism, a system which stressed salvation by head-knowledge and speculative thought (promoted by an Alexandrian Jew, Philo Judeas, 20 BC to 40 AD), also prevailed during our Savior's ministry. Such false teachings were amply spoken against by Christ Himself and in the writings of His Apostles throughout the New Testament.

As time went on (after Pentecost) and Christianity spread rapidly throughout the civilized world, writings appeared on the scene, many of which were written primarily in **defense** of Christianity, by devout Christian leaders some of whom evidently had been acquainted with the Apostles. These writings became more abundant as the centuries rolled by and their authors began to be categorized into groups, such as: The **Ancient Church Fathers** comprising the Apostolic Fathers (Polycarp, Ignatius, etc.), the Post-Apostolic Fathers to the Council of Nicaea in 325 A.D. (Justin Martyr, Iranaeus, Origen, etc.); and the Church Fathers of the Nicene

and Post-Nicene Era up to 590 A.D. (Athanasius, Chrysostom, Augustine, etc.); the **Church Fathers of the Medieval Period** up to and through the period of absolute Papal control, 600—1300 A.D. **Note:** These men can hardly be regarded as church fathers in the true sense of the term, but rather fathers of the Papacy, (Anselm of Canterbury, Peter Abelard, Bernard of Clairvaux, Thomas Aquinas, Bonaventura, etc.); the **Church Fathers of the Pre-Reformation and Reformation Period** from 1400 to Luther's death in 1546, (Wm. of Occam, Wyclif, Hus, Savanorola, Luther, etc.); the **Post Reformation Lutheran Church Fathers** up to the beginning of the 18th century (Chemnitz, Quenstedt, Gerhard, Baier, Hollaz, etc.), and the **Modern Lutheran Church Fathers,** (Walther, Franz Pieper, Theo. Graebner, Engelder, Feurbringer, etc.) up to the present time.

Many of these church fathers, down through the years, were, by God's grace, great defenders of Christianity. Were it not for them, Christianity would have (humanly speaking) died out long ago, but the Lord God raised up these men that His Word might be defended and preserved, according to His promise in Matthew 24:35, and we are the beneficiaries of their work for which we praise and thank our dear God in heaven.

The writings of the church fathers must be read, however, **with great care** and always with the historical context of each writing well in mind and well understood. The outstanding importance of the writings of each church father; how a specific writing may be of benefit today; its useful points and what dangers in the writing need to be noted where the writer speaks incorrectly—all need to be carefully observed by one who wishes to become acquainted with such writings. Thus, Luther's **"Bondage of the Will,"** can lead an unwary person into Calvin's predestination to damnation if a person does not thoroughly understand scholastic argumentation. Erasmus, against whom Luther wrote **"Bondage of the Will,"** was an eminent scholastic humanist-having probably the sharpest mind of that period. What aggravated Luther was that Erasmus, which pretending to be a Christian, always placed human reason above God's Word. Against him Luther, therefore, leans heavenly on human reason to defeat the false and soul-destroying theology of Erasmus--actually

turning Erasmus against himself. If this is not well-understood, Luther's **"Bondage of the Will"** can be a confusing and misleading document. So also in Walther's **"The Proper Distinction Between Law and Gospel,"** page 15 bottom, we find the sentence, "We preach faith, and any person not wilfully resisting obtains faith." Walther evidently wanted to show, although even the context does not bear this out, that those who are lost, are lost by their own fault. His statement, however, as it stands, sets forth that position which we must thoroughly condemn in heterodox Lutheranism today, namely, that a person is brought to faith in Jesus **because** he refrains from wilful resistance. The Bible plainly teaches the opposite, namely, that **all** people by nature **wilfully resist** the Holy Ghost (I Cor. 2:14; Eph. 2:1; Rom. 8:7) and that saving faith is created in the human heart by the Holy Ghost through the power of the Gospel **only** by God's undeserved kindness—by His grace alone (Eph. 2:8,9)—**not by anything which we have done either actively or passively.** In the writings of earlier Lutheran theologians, such as **Baier**, 1647-1681; and **Hollaz**, 1646-1713, we find similar false statements such as Walther's above which, if built upon, lead squarely into the camp of heterodox Lutheranism.

It is therefore a mistake to place the writings of the church fathers of any period on a par with the Word of God or even on the same level with our Lutheran Confessions which correctly set forth what the Bible says. We must never think that the Bible was given by God only to theologians (or pastors) as though the common people need the writings of the fathers and the sermons of their pastors to make God's Word more clear to them. The Word of God is clear in and of itself (Psalm 119:105, 130) and the only legitimate interpretation of Scripture is to let the clear passages of the Bible (sedes doctrinae) interpret those passages which, because of our human frailty, are less clear. Then we are always safe and we are permitting God to speak to us fro His Word. Only where this principle is followed in the writings of the fathers are their writings important and worth while reading. The writings of the fathers must be accepted only insofar as their writings are 100% in agreement with the clear Word of our God as set forth in the Bible. It has not been unusual, down through the ages, for a church father to express his own opinion on a matter and

this opinion was embellished by others and finally adopted as a doctrinal position of an entire church body. Thus many false teachings evolved in the Roman Church, in the Calvinistic and Reformed church bodies, and in the vast majority of those groups which call themselves Lutheran. Everything that the Lord God wants us to know is set forth in the Bible in crystal-clear passages which need no human interpretation and this "analogy of faith" (analogia fidei) is the only Source and Rule of all Christian doctrine.

—PRB

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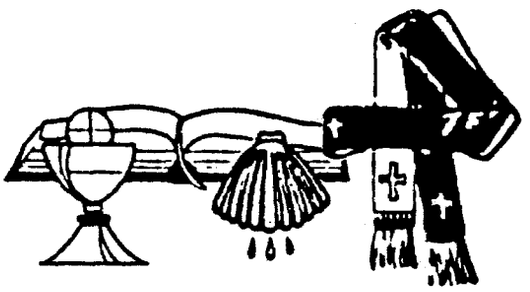

What SHOULD and SHOULD NOT be expected of a Christian Pastor?

(Based on I Timothy 3:1-7; I Corinthians 4:1-5; and other texts.)

The above title might lead some to conclude that this article will probably favor or be biased toward a pastor's view of the ministry and ignore a layman's view. However, the aim of this article is to present objectively what the Word of God says, being biased neither toward a human fleshly opinion by a pastor, nor toward a human fleshly opinion by a layman. As the Bible says, **"If any man speak, let him speak as the oracles of God,"** I Peter 4:11.

At the very outset, it should be clearly evident that what God Himself expects, yes, what God requires, of a pastor is what matters. What God requires is more than what is required of any other calling on earth. No one would deny that the demands and requirements of the President of the United States are high. His schedule is hectic

and utterly taxing. As Commander-in-Chief he also holds in his hands the lives of every individual in the military. What a responsibility to go to Congress to seek a declaration of war! Yet what is required of a pastor is greater. He is accountable to God for the eternal welfare of people's souls, **"as they that must give account,"** Heb. 13:17. Although this accountability is not absolute, since the individual member is ultimately responsible for his own soul, a pastor as a shepherd of the flock is accountable to the extent that God's Word requires. He is to watch for their souls. He must be concerned for the spiritual welfare of each of the members, giving admonition where warning is needed, and giving comfort and encouragement where they are needed. Is there any higher accountability or responsibility than this?

What is more, a pastor is a steward or trustee of the Word of God. Paul says, **"Let a man so account of us, as of the ministers of Christ, and stewards of the mysteries of God,"** I Cor. 4:1. A pastor must faithfully preach and teach the Word of God in all its truth and purity. He must not handle the Word of God deceitfully (II Cor. 4:2). Moreover and most importantly he must be **"apt to teach,"** I Tim. 3:2. This means that he must be able rightly to divide the Word of Truth, to rightly distinguish and divide the Law and the Gospel. When a pastor preaches, he is not presenting something on the order of an after dinner speech! He is not an entertainer. He is not preaching the words of wisdom of men, but as it is in truth the Word of God, I Thess. 2:13. He is not preaching to be admired of men, but to be faithful to God! **"Moreover it is required in stewards, that a man be found faithful,"** I Cor. 4:2. Hence, he is to be **"holding fast the faithful Word as he hath been taught, that he may be able by sound doctrine both to exhort and convince the gainsayers,"** Titus 1:9. Again, **"If any man speak, let him speak as the oracles of God,"** I Peter 4:11. Therefore, he must neither add to nor take away from what God's holy Word says. **"Ye shall not add unto the word which I command you, neither shall ye diminish ought from it,"** Deut. 4:2. By such strict adherence to God's Word, the faithful pastor will not always be proclaiming what people want to hear. As Paul says, **"Preach the Word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine,"** II Tim. 4:2. And this is all the more urgently required since

the time will come when they shall 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.

Added to this, the pastor's life, both publicly and privately, is to exemplify the teachings of the Word of God. It is not as we hear from the world when it talks about candidates for some public office. The world says, "As long as he does his job, it doesn't matter what he does in his private life." Accordingly, for many in the world, it does not matter to them if their public servants are homosexual, adulterous (including divorced), and addicted to alcohol. Yes, as with any Christian, so the pastor is not to live in sin, either publicly or privately. In fact, his life is to be exemplary! Scripture says, **"A bishop then must be blameless, the husband of one wife, vigilant, sober, of good behavior, given to hospitality, apt to teach; not given to wine, no striker, not greedy of filthy lucre; but patient, not a brawler, not covetous; one that ruleth well his own house, having his children in subjection with all gravity; (for if a man know not how to rule his own house, how shall he take care of the church of God?) Not a novice, lest being lifted up with pride he fall into the condemnation of the devil. Moreover he must have a good report of them which are without; lest he fall into reproach and the snare of the devil,"** I Tim. 3:2-7. Just this list alone should eliminate many men who are currently in the pastoral office. Thus, while the pastor, like all other Christians, is still a sinner who must daily repent of his sins, his life must be one of consecration and an example of a devout Christian life. Indeed, it needs to be said, not every Christian, not everyone who is a member of the priesthood of all believers, qualifies for the pastoral office! Added to this, James warns: **"My brethren, be not many masters, knowing that we shall receive the greater condemnation,"** James 3:1. This means, let not many rush to be a teacher of God's Word as more is expected of and the judgment is more stringent for the teachers.

Now that we see what the Lord God not only expects but even requires of a pastor, what should not be expected of a pastor? It seems at times that men require more than

God requires! Many believe their pastor must also be a great orator, a sparkling personality, a great conversationalist, a great mixer, a man of style who will make the members proud of him before the world, well-read in all the literary classics, a man conversant on virtually every subject, the epitome of self-confidence in every situation, truly a man for all seasons! And he will be the more appreciated if he does not preach or teach anything which might be controversial! All of these things would eliminate none other than the Apostle Paul! Before the congregation at Corinth, Paul conceded, but without shame, the following: **"And I, brethren, when I came to you, came not with excellency of speech or of wisdom, declaring unto you the testimony of God. For I determined not to know any thing among you, save Jesus Christ, and Him crucified. And I was with you in weakness, and in fear, and in much trembling. And my speech and my preaching was not with enticing words of man's wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power: That your faith should not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God,"** I Cor. 2:1-5. Paul was not an excellent speaker, did not claim to be an authority on anything except Christ crucified, and did not feel so confident of himself, but was at times afraid and even trembled. Concerning controversy, Paul even acknowledges that he was in prison frequently (Cf. II Cor. 11:23). Would you have him as your pastor?

Furthermore, many expect a pastor not to expect too much of them! If he admonishes them for irregular church attendance, or if he admonishes them about their not attending Bible Class, he is deemed a legalist. If he expects the children in Catechism class to memorize proof texts, if he expects them to memorize all six Chief Parts of the Catechism, he is too demanding and unreasonable. He's just not good with children! If he conducts his work with a serious look on his face, he is lacking in personality. If he requires adults to undergo a thorough instruction in the Catechism and will not take in members on the basis of a brief, cursory course, he is against growth. Here is where Paul says, **"For I know nothing by myself; yet am I not hereby justified: but he that judgeth me is the Lord,"** I Cor. 4:4.

Obviously, a pastor should take care not to be in fact

overbearing and overly demanding such that sincere, conscientious Christians are made to be discouraged. He is not to be dictatorial, or conduct himself in a legalistic, popish, arrogant manner or attitude. As the Apostle Peter says, **"Neither as being lords over God's heritage, but being ensamples to the flock,"** I Peter 5:3. A pastor should be a genuinely humble person. He must not even try to give the impression that he has no faults or weaknesses and never makes a mistake. He must take care that he does not make subjective judgments about his members and make them feel under suspicion or on probation or as if they will never quite measure up. While the pastor has the oversight of the members, he does not own them! The sheep still belong to Christ! **"For one is your Master, even Christ; and all ye are brethren,"** Matt. 23:8. A pastor should sincerely love his members and show that he is ever a forgiving man who is all for them in the Lord. This he will be, by God's grace, as he remembers to apply the Word of God to his own soul.

Undergirding the entire matter of the proper regard for the pastor is the Gospel of God's grace in Christ. Where a pastor has found himself to be wanting in any of those things where he is accountable to God, let him repent and take his failures and shortcomings to the Lord for forgiveness. Let every pastor remember to pray what Luther prayed in his sacristy prayer: **"Thou seest how unfit I am to administer rightly this great and responsible Office; and had I been without Thy aid and counsel I would have ruined it all long ago."** Let every pastor rejoice that he also is able to repent and be forgiven and to make amends. He also can take comfort in the fact that **"if any man sin, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous,"** I John 2:1. Let every pastor say with Paul, **"But by the grace of God I am what I am,"** I Cor. 15:10. And may every pastor also be able to say with Paul, **"And His grace which was bestowed upon me was not in vain; but I labored more abundantly than they all: Yet not I, but the grace of God which was with me,"** I Cor. 15:10.

In the same spirit of the Gospel, let the church members be a forgiving and understanding people toward their pastor. Without fail, let the people pray daily for their pastor as he both needs and deeply desires their prayers.

Commend them to the grace of God. As Paul the Apostle said: **"Finally, brethren, pray for us, that the Word of the Lord may have free course, and be glorified, even as it is with you,"** II Thess. 3:1. In their prayers, let the people be sure to thank the Lord of the Church for graciously sending them an orthodox pastor in these last days of great apostasy and sore distress.

As both the pastoral office and the Christian congregation are divine institutions, instituted by Christ Himself, they should find strength and comfort in the fact that Christ is the Chief Shepherd and the Head of the Church. As such, He will guide and bless them through His Word for the sake of His holy precious blood by which He purchased and won them. Therefore, both pastor and people are upheld in the gracious hands of their dear Savior! For all this we thank Him and say, **"PRAISE BE TO THEE, O CHRIST!"**

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"God of the prophets, bless the prohets' sons;
Elijah's mantle o'er Elijah cast.
Each age its solemn take may claim but once;
Make each one nobler, stronger, than the last.

"Anoint them prophets, make their ears attent
To Thy divinest speach, their hearts awake
To human need, their lips make eloquent
To gird the right and ev'ry evil break.

"Anoint them priests, strong intercessors they,
For pardon and for charity and peace.
Ah, if with them the world might, now astray,
Find in our Lord from all its woes release!

Anoint them kings; aye, kingly kings, O Lord.
Anoint them with the Spirit of Thy Son.
Theirs not a jeweled crown, a blood-stained sword;
Theirs, by sweet love, for Christ a kingdom won."

(L.H. 483, 1-4)

WHY USE LUTHER'S

SMALL CATECHISM?

"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," Deuteronomy 6:6,7.

Some "Lutheran" churches no longer use Luther's Small Catechism nor the catechetical form of teaching. In their longing for change, and in their desire to be "modern" and "in step with the times," they have discarded that 450 plus year-old book and its method of teaching.

Now, a particular method of teaching has not been commanded by God for His Church. That is an adiaphoron. But the question and answer type of teaching the Bible for young and old alike has stood the test of time and proved itself to be an excellent way of implanting God's Word in the minds and hearts of children and adults.

Some "modern" methods of teaching also reject testing of students by means of questions and answers, or by having them memorize word for word the subject matter. We hold, however, that these are "time-tested" and "proven" methods of teaching children, and even adults, God's Word. And is not this method of careful instruction also strongly implied in the 8th and 9th verses of Deuteronomy, chapter 6?—**"And thou shalt bind them for a sign upon thine hand, and they shall be as frontlets between thine eyes. And thou shalt write them upon the posts of thy house, and on thy gates,"** (vs. 8 & 9).

We also still use Luther's Small Catechism because it, like the other Lutheran Confessions, is an excellent presenta-

tion of Bible doctrine. For some "Lutherans" the Confessions of the Lutheran Church as found in the Book of Concord of 1580 are of little or no value. While the Confessions do not supersede or equal the Scriptures, they are a faithful exposition of the Holy Scriptures. We use Luther's Small Catechism because it outlines Scriptural truths in a clear, accurate, and concise way. And many have benefited by the instruction of that little book to their eternal salvation.

Because Scripture has a two-fold purpose, namely, **"to make one wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus,"** and secondly, to **train us in holy living,** (I Tim. 3:15-17), so also the Catechism follows that two-fold purpose. First, a person must know that he is a sinner, and so God's Law is taught through the Ten Commandments in all its force and with all its severity. And through God's Law, the student not only learns that he has not kept that Law and can never keep it perfectly, but it also shows him why he needs the perfect fulfillment of the Law by His Savior. So already the Ten Commandments point the catechumen to the Gospel, the truth that a man is saved by grace through faith in Christ Jesus, without the deeds of the Law. This sweet Gospel message of salvation through faith in Christ Jesus is further emphasized and taught to the student through the Apostles' Creed. Then the Catechism brings to the student the other fundamentals of the Christian faith. It teaches the catechumen what baptism really means and works, it teaches him about prayer, about the blessings received and sealed to us in the Lord's Supper, about Christ's Church on earth, both visible and invisible, and her office of the ministry, as well as the Office of the Keys. When the student has been shown and reminded of his sins and his salvation by grace through faith in Jesus, the catechism also shows him the way that God would have him live out his faith in service to God and neighbor, out of loving gratitude to His Savior for his salvation, always pointing the student to that day when his journey through this present life comes to an end and the Christian enters into his eternal rest by the grace of God.

The Catechism was designed to be a simple aid to teachers, most especially to parents. Luther opens it with these words: "As the head of the family should teach them

(the chief doctrines of God's Word) in a simple way to his own household." In our text, Deuteronomy 6:6, parents play no small role in the instruction of their children. Indeed, their role is a God-commanded role. The text clearly says: **"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."** However, before the parents can diligently teach their children, they themselves must have the Word well established in their own hearts. Too often parents cease to grow in the Word and render themselves babes, unable to apply the Word to themselves much less to their children, Heb. 5:12-14. Here again, the Catechism can be of great help in bringing to the parents' remembrance the things they once learned so that they can faithfully bring the same to their children. As Luther himself pointed out, no one can ever outgrow the Catechism; indeed, only he who can fully understand just the first two words of the Lord's Prayer, "Our Father," can say that he has begun to grasp the depth of the Word of God as it is faithfully exposited in that little book.

The spark of faith and love is implanted in one's heart at baptism. It is nurtured and increased through the Word of God and the Lord's Supper, and Luther's Small Catechism is a valuable tool to accomplish this nurturing. The Children of Israel might have wondered if God really expected them to follow all the commands He gave them regarding studying Scripture verses day and night and binding them on their foreheads and wrists. He did! For God ordained that His Word is the Means, the very Power He uses to work faith in the human heart heart. He knew that His power alone could bring about the restitution of what man lost in the fall into sin. Thus, He urges us into His Word, to grow in grace, in the knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, and has provided other worthwhile tools, such as the Catechism, to further that growth in us.

We should, therefore, thank God for giving us a Catechism by the pen of Martin Luther. Let us diligently use it to teach our children, ourselves, and others, the love of God manifested in Christ Jesus and how they are to show in their

lives their love for Him by striving to keep His commandments.

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Around the World

with editorial comment

by M. L. Natterer

AN OPEN LETTER TO THE PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES - GEORGE BUSH

"We, as Bible believing evangelicals consider the support of Israel a Biblical mandate. Regardless of contrary opinion, we do not believe that Israel has to offer an excuse for its existence. Israel lives today as a right. A right that has been hallowed by the Bible, by sacrifice, by prayer, and by the yearning for peace. Amos 9:14-15. We believe that Jerusalem is indeed Israel's capital...God Almighty, back to the days of Abraham, gave this land to the Jewish people declaring that Jerusalem was their capital and that the Messiah, according to ancient prophecies, will rule and reign from Jerusalem...We appeal to you, President Bush, to recognize Jerusalem as Israel's capital...President Bush, you are not speaking for a great percentage of Americans in your vow to veto any constitutional endorsement of Israel's request for $10 billion in loan guarantees needed to house Soviet immigrants and your refusal to approve them later.... We are appealing to the Nation of Israel and the Jewish people worldwide to proclaim a fast and intercede as they did in the ancient days of old in time of need, and to stand on II Chronicles 7:14..."

The above are some excerpts from a letter sent out by "Lovers of Israel" located in Euless, Texas. They are requesting "generous donations" so that the complete text of the above can be "placed in newspapers across the world."

The Jews are no longer God's chosen people! Those Old Testament texts to which the millenialists often refer speak not of the earthly Israel, but of the spiritual Israel to which all believers in Christ belong. Read Romans 2:28-29; Romans 9:6-8; Galatians 3:26-29; Hebrews 12:22-24. Jesus, the promised Messiah and a Jew according to the flesh, "came unto His own, and His own received Him not," **John 1:10. Jesus said of the Jews,** "This people's heart is waxed gross, and their ears are dull of hearing, and their eyes they have closed....," **Matt. 13:15. Stephen told his countrymen,** "Ye stiffnecked and uncircumcised in heart and ears, ye do always resist the Holy Ghost: As your fathers did, so do ye," **Acts 7:51. The Apostle Paul told his fellow Jews,** "It was necessary that the Word of God should first have been spoken to you: but seeing ye put it from you, and judge yourselves unworthy of everlasting life, lo, we turn to the Gentiles," **Acts 13:46. The Jews still refuse to acknowledge that *Jesus alone is the Way, the Truth, and the Life: no man comes unto the Father but by Jesus* (John 14:6). Whether Jew or Gentile, man's greatest need is to repent and believe that Jesus is his Savior from sin, death, and hell! For** "he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him," **John 3:16.**

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A new poll found that nearly two out of three Americans favor physician-assisted suicide and euthanasia for terminally ill patients who request it. The poll was done as Washington state residents voted on Initiative 119, a measure that would make it legal for doctors in the state to help certain terminally ill people kill themselves. "People are trying to tell us something," said Dr. Marcia Angell, executive editor of the New England Journal of Medicine. "There's a great perception out there that high-tech medicine has gotten out of hand." The poll shows that 64 percent of those questioned favored physician-assisted suicide for terminally ill people who ask for it; 79 percent under the age of 35 approve of the idea compared to 53 percent of those over 50 years of age. "We live in a libertarian culture in which freedom to choose in these personal matters is very important to us," said Professor Robert Blendon of the Harvard School of Public Health, who helped design the poll and analyze the

results. "People clearly want the widest latitude possible."

As we now know, of course, Initiative 119 was voted down by the people of Washington. But, look at the figures released; 699,564 voting against the bill with 604,494 voting to allow euthanasia! The measure was defeated by less than 96,000 votes! All this in spite of the fact that The American Medical Association and Washington state's medical association officially opposed the measure. Daniel Callahan, who directs the Hastings Center, an institute of medical ethics, said: "People favorable to physician-assisted death have not thought it through. They're captured by the argument of self-determination and have not begun to think about what are the implications for the medical profession or the potential for abuses." For us Christians the issue is settled by the Word of God! In the Fifth Commandment the Lord protects human life and forbids us to take the life of another by murder or to take our own life by suicide. For every sincere Christian the matter is neither decided by a vote of the people nor by the specious and emotional argumentation of those who insist that they should be assisted in the carrying out of their personal choice. God, the Author of life ("in Him we live, and move, and have our being" **Acts 17:28), has decided the matter for us in His Word. To that Word we are bound and he who says otherwise follows the father of all lies (John 8:44)!**

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CLARIFICATION

On page 116 of our November/December, 1991 issue in the paragraph carried over from the previous page, the sentence which reads, **"God grants it to us in view of our righteousness, which we have received by grace through faith in Jesus' suffering and death for our sins,"** should read: **"God grants heaven to us by grace through faith in Jesus' suffering and death for our sins."**

NOTE: As we strive diligently to make sure that all our articles are fully Scriptural, we therefore do not hesitate to make a clarification and/or correction to any statement where such would be warranted. ...Editor

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

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