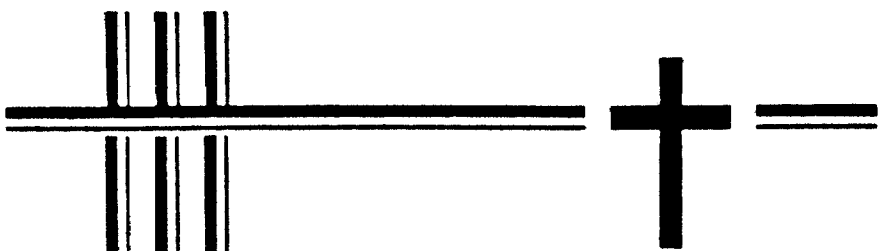
the Concordia Lutheran

"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.

Vol. XXXVII July--August, 1992 Nos. 7 & 8



Hold That Fast

Which Thou Hast!

—Revelation 3:11

OFFICIAL ORGAN
of the
Concordia Lutheran Conference

This publication appears in a monthly or bi-monthly issue at a subscription price of $3.00 per year.

EDITOR:
Rev. E. R. Stallings, Jr.
110 Grasmere Court
San Antonio, Texas 78218

ASSISTANT EDITOR:
Rev. M. L. Natterer
483 Tangent Street
Lebanon, Oregon 97355

LAY MEMBER:
Mr. Lloyd E. Martin
17400 Lockwood Ave.
Tinley Park, IL. 60477

Address all subscriptions, renewals, and remittances to: **Scriptural Publications, 110 Grasmere Court, San Antonio, Tx, 78218.** A special notice of expiration will be inserted in the issue which terminates your subscription.

Officers of the Concordia Lutheran Conference

PRESIDENT:
Rev. Paul R. Bloedel
9658 - 54th Avenue South
Seattle, Washington 98118

VICE-PRESIDENT:
Rev. Mark W. Dierking
P.O. Box 33 Wilmot, S.D. 57279

SECRETARY:
Rev. David T. Mensing
17151 South Central Avenue
Oak Forest, Illinois 60452

TREASURER:
Mr. Victor K. Bloedel
10200 - 62nd Avenue South
Seattle, Washington 98178

STATEMENT OF PURPOSE:

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

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

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

To demonstrate, by our Scriptural stand, that our **Concordia Lutheran Conference** is not a sect or 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

IF YOU WERE TO ASK people today, "What is the **greatest** blessing in the whole world?" what a variety of answers you would get—all the way from winning the lottery to enjoying good health and happy days. The lives of most people revolve around those things which they themselves enjoy personally and from these things they establish what they consider to be the best and greatest blessing in this world. Now **stop here** and think of some of the things which those people, friends, relatives, acquaintances, fellow laborers or employees in the work place or in the office, and perhaps yourself, perceive to be the **greatest** blessing. Some look to retirement and travel, some to entertainment and pleasure, some to home and family, some to some outstanding accomplishment, some to enjoying to the fullest extent the modern conveniences which this world has to offer.

The Amway Company entices and challenges its prospective distributors with questions such as: "What would you do if you would have ten or twenty thousand dollars to spend?" "What goal would you set for yourself if you had the opportunity to earn a lot of money?" "What is the first thing you would get for yourself if you had more money than you ever had before in your whole life?—a new car, a new home, a fine education for your children, etc. etc.?" Of course, in and of itself, wishing for such things is not wrong--as long as it does not become an obsession. It certainly would be far better to bring these matters to the Lord in prayer and **"wait on the Lord"** to answer our prayers in His own way and at His own time (which is always best for our spiritual and eternal welfare), and, in the meantime, to work hard at whatever job the Lord has given us to do in this life. Thus, **"Commit thy way unto the Lord; trust also in Him; and He shall bring it to pass,"** Psalm 37:5. Always remember that **YOU** do not bring real and lasting happiness

into your life. **The Lord** does, and He does this **through** His Word! And, through His Word, He puts everything into its proper perspective in our hearts and minds and lives.

This leads us then to the question suggested by the topic at the head of this column: What is the **greatest blessing** in this world? From the Bible we learn that the greatest blessing of all time is **THE FORGIVENESS OF SINS!** This greatest of all blessings is appreciated neither by the vast majority of the people of this world nor by the vast majority of those who claim to be Christians **because the NEED** for the forgiveness of sins is not felt in their hearts nor is it stressed in the vast majority of churches (even Lutheran churches) in external Christendom. People do not want to be told that there is NOTHING GOOD in them AT ALL as they are born into this world since the Fall of Adam; that they are **"all gone aside, they are all together become filthy; there is none that doeth good and sinneth not,"** Eccl. 7:20; that **"we are all as an unclean thing, and all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags,"** Is. 64:6; that, by nature, they have no true fear, love, and trust in God in their hearts and that they cannot even believe in Jesus as their Savior or come to Him by their own reason or strength; that, spiritually, they are dead and blind and enemies of God; that, day in and day out, they sin against God in all their thoughts, desires, words, and actions, and that, because of their sins, they deserve nothing but God's wrath and displeasure, death and eternal damnation. Only by knowing these things and recognizing ourselves as we really are and as the Lord pictures us in His Word, can we truly appreciate the FORGIVENESS OF SINS as the greatest blessing in this world!—far exceeding any other blessing of which we could possibly think or imagine.

In subsequent issues, in this President's Column, we will, God willing, consider more about this Greatest of All Blessings.

Your servant in Christ,

Rev. Paul R. Bloedel, President

CONVENTION ESSAY:

"Loyalty to the Scriptures"

(The essay delivered to the 41st Annual Convention of the Concordia Lutheran Conference by the Rev. M. L. Natterer, Pastor of St. John's Lutheran Church, Lebanon, Oregon.)

My Dear Fellow-Believers in Christ, Our Only Savior!

Having been ratified by all of our congregations in 1957, our reorganized Conference became the Concordia Lutheran Conference. The name was new for us, but the doctrinal position of the Conference remained the same as it had been under the old name—Orthodox Lutheran Conference. Our Conference was not the first to adopt the name Concordia for a conference or synod. In 1882, 14 pastors, 6 lay delegates, and 1 teacher, who had withdrawn from the Ohio Synod because of its stand in the controversy on election and conversion, organized the Concordia Synod of Pennsylvania and Other States. By 1888 that Synod ceased to exist, having been absorbed into the Missouri Synod. In 1865 the Concordia Synod of Virginia which had been founded by former members of the Tennessee Synod eventually merged into the Eastern District of the then Joint Synod of Ohio by 1920. And the Concordia Synod of the West, formed about 1862 by four pastors, seems to have had a short existence.[1] By God's grace, our Concordia Lutheran Conference, formerly known as the Orthodox Lutheran Conference, has been privileged to have a much longer history. From 1951, when we officially organized, to the present time constitutes 41 years! During these 41 years we have experienced periods of joy and times of sorrow. The bitter

[1] The Concordia Cyclopedia, L. Feurbringer, Theo. Engelder, P.E. Kretzmann, p. 169

controversies which rocked our Conference and threatened to sink it into oblivion caused us much sorrow as we had to behold those with whom we had walked together in the unity of faith forsake our ranks and reject us to walk their own separate ways. On the other hand, however, we recall the moments of joy and praised the Lord when ever a controversy was settled on the basis of God's Word and the unity of faith was thus preserved. Throughout all these years a remnant has been graciously kept intact by the Lord to hold aloft the Word of Life in all its purity in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation (Phil. 2:15,16). There are those who sit on the side lines and wait for us to follow the example of the other little synods, who also used the name Concordia, in merging with those larger synods which desire to be known as conservative Lutheran synods, such as the Wisconsin Synod, the Evangelical Lutheran Synod, and the Church of the Lutheran Confessions. It is the sincere prayer of all of us that this were possible. But these larger synods have made it impossible for us to extend the hand of fellowship because of official positions taken by them contrary to the Word of God. We think particularly of their false doctrines concerning the Church and Ministry in which they reject the Scriptural teaching that the local Christian congregation is the only divinely ordained external fellowship and the Pastoral Office of the local congregation is the only divinely ordained office in the Church [2]. But we are not blocks of stone. We are flesh and blood as the Apostle Paul confessed to the Lycaonians, **"We also are men of like passions with you..."** Acts 14:15. The severe trials through which we must often pass inwardly and outwardly, the desire of the flesh to follow the line of least resistance, the specious argumentation of the devil and his followers—all combine in a concerted effort in tempting us to surrender our Scriptural positions. Let us then at this 41st Annual Convention of our Conference be exhorted and encouraged to hold steadfastly to all of God's Word in these evil days of the world. Join me as we pray the Holy Spirit to strengthen us in our pledge of

[2] "Northwestern Lutheran," the official periodical of the Wisconsin Synod, April 8, 1962, pages 103-105

LOYALTY TO THE HOLY SCRIPTURES

Loyalty is the tie which binds a person to something to which he is loyal and unswerving in allegiance [3]. There are those who think that an oath of allegiance to one's country means defending the country even when it is wrong. While our government, for example, has the right to wage war, it does not have the right to wage an unjust war [4]. Yet, a mistaken conception of loyalty prompts many to declare: "My country right or wrong!" Similarly in a family, there are those who are of the opinion that family loyalty also involves defending and excusing sins committed by the members of the family. While we Christians are certainly obligated to obey the existing form of government, we dare neither voice our approval of its sins nor assist it in carrying out something which is plainly contrary to the Word of God. *Here we must confess with the Apostles when they had been* commanded by the council to desist preaching Christ, **"We ought to obey God rather than men,"** Acts 5:29. While we are to honor and respect our parents, being loyal to them through whom the Lord has given us our bodies and souls, their authority ends when it conflicts with the Word of God. The Lord Jesus warns us, **"He that loveth father or mother more than Me is not worthy of Me: And he that loveth son or daughter more than Me is not worthy of Me,"** Matt. 10:37 (see also Mark 3:31-35).

How often it even happens within a church-body, as we have witnessed time and time again down through the years, that pastors and lay-people reveal a mistaken idea of loyalty by their continuance in an organization that has surrendered to false teaching. We are not talking about the casual intrusion of error which is being combatted and removed by means of doctrinal discipline [5], but where false teaching is openly tolerated without the required Scriptural

3 Webster's New Collegiate Dictionary

4 Luther's Small Catechism, page 67

5 "Brief Statement," Of The Church, paragraph 29

action. How sad to hear those who under the guise of loyalty excuse their disobedience to God's plain command, **"Now I beseech you, brethren, mark them which cause divisions and offenses contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned; and avoid them,"** Rom 16:17. The same applies to the local congregational members. "This is the church in which I was baptized, instructed, and married. And this is the church to which I owe my allegiance and where my funeral will be held." All of us have heard this and similar talk from the members of those congregations which have ultimately succumbed to the false teachings of their particular church-body. This, in spite of the fact that the Lord warns us to beware of false prophets (Mark 7:15) and their leaven of false teaching (Gal. 5:9) and not to be a partaker of their sin (I Tim. 5:22), but to hate the evil and love the good (Amos 5:15) by coming out from among them and being separate, saith the Lord (II Cor. 6:17).

Then there is also the misguided loyalty of those who are unswerving in their allegiance to a particular church leader's person and pronouncements. Such blind loyalty has produced terrible divisions within the pale of Christendom from early on. Think of Athanasius and Arius in the 4th century. Arius was indeed a gifted man, but he espoused the false teaching that the Father alone is God but not the Son or the Holy Ghost. Think of Luther and Zwingli in the 16th century. Ulrich Zwingli denied the real presence of Christ in the Lord's Supper and even succeeded in gaining adherents who professed their loyalty to him. Likewise with John Calvin, who appeared to take a "middle-of-the-road" position between Luther and Zwingli. Come up to the 19th century where we have two very prominent teachers in the Lutheran Church--Franz Pieper and August Pieper. Both of these men possessed outstanding gifts. Unfortunately, however, August Pieper together with Professors John Ph. Koehler and John Schaller veered from the Scriptural teaching of the Church and Ministry by setting forth the proposition that "the synod is Church in the same sense as each local congregation" and "there is no difference between the parish ministry in a local congregation and the synodical office of a professor of theo-

logy in the church at large" [6]. These are but a few examples culled from many which created so much confusion and disturbance among Christians because of misguided loyalty.

To whom we owe our allegiance is spelled out for us already in the very First Commandment. **"Thou shalt have no other gods before Me."** He is the only true God: the Father who has created us; the Son who has redeemed us with His holy precious blood; the Holy Ghost who has made us the dear children of the heavenly Father by bringing us to faith in Jesus so that we trust and believe, rejoice and take comfort, in Him alone. The only true God has revealed Himself to us in His Word to which He binds us and demands unswerving allegiance. Already at our baptism we pledged such allegiance and fidelity. Such a pledge was then renewed by us at our confirmation. How many of us still remember the oath of allegiance we were privileged to take? Allow me to refresh our memory.

1. Do you this day, in the presence of God and this Christian congregation, confirm the solemn covenant which at your Baptism you made with the Triune God?

2. Do you, then, renounce the devil and all his works and all his ways?

3. Do you believe in God the Father?

4. Do you believe in God the Son?

5. Do you believe in God the Holy Ghost?

6. Do you desire to be a member of the Evangelical Lutheran Church and of this congregation?

---

6 Concerning the Doctrine of the Church and its Ministry, with special Reference to the Synod and its Discipline by August Pieper, 1929, translated by Prof. H. J. Vogel in the Wisconsin Lutheran Quarterly, April 1962, pages 117, 84

7. Do you hold all the books of the Bible to be the inspired Word of God and the doctrine of the Evangelical Lutheran Church, drawn from the Bible, as you have learned to know it from Luther's Small Catechism, to be the true and correct one?

8. Do you also, as a member of the Evangelical Lutheran Church, intend to continue steadfast in the confession of this Church and suffer all, even death, rather than fall away from it?

9. Finally, do you intend faithfully to conform all your life to the rule of the divine Word, to be diligent in the use of the Means of Grace, to walk as it becometh the Gospel of Christ, and in faith, word, and deed to remain true to the Triune God, even unto death?

Remember our solemn vow! "I do so intend, by the grace of God." We pledged our allegiance and loyalty not to Martin Luther, not the Evangelical Lutheran Church, but to all the Scriptural doctrines which Martin Luther brought to light through the Reformation and publicly taught by the true Evangelical Lutheran Church and set forth in the Lutheran Confessions and which we Lutheran Christians accept not in so far as (quantenas) but because (quia) all their doctrinal statements are divine truth. "Loyalty to the Confessions, Lutheran Confessionalism, means loyalty to God's Word" [7]. Synods, conferences, congregations, may change, but God's pure Word **"liveth and abideth for ever,"** I Peter 1:23.

We make no mistake in pledging our loyalty to the Holy Scriptures for **"all Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works,"** II Tim. 3:16,17. The Bible is not man's word but the Word of God. The prophets of the Old Testament and the Evangelists and Apostles of the New Testament were given not only

7 Popular Symbolics, Th. Engelder, W. Arndt, Theo. Graebner, 1934, p. 14,15

the thoughts but also the very words which they wrote in Holy Writ. **"Holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost,"** II Peter 1:21. Thus we find the Apostle Paul declaring, **"We speak, not in the words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth,"** I Cor. 2:13. The true "Lutheran Church maintains that Holy Scripture is the sole source of the Christian doctrine and the sole norm of doctrine, hence the supreme, infallible, and sole authority in the Church" [8]. This truth was confessed by our forefathers in The Formula of Concord of 1580. "We receive and embrace with our whole heart the prophetic and Apostolic Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments as the pure, clear fountain of Israel, which is the only true standard by which all teachers and doctrines are to be judged" [9]. Such ringing testimony to the inspiration and authority of Holy Writ was still to be heard up through the early part of the 1900s. For example, the United Lutheran Church in America adopted the following resolution in 1909: "We herewith declare our adherence to the statement 'The Bible is the Word of God' and reject the error implied in the statement 'The Bible contains the Word of God'" [10]. Most of us are familiar with such men as Charles Porterfield Krauth, the author of The Conservative Reformation, and H.C. Little who wrote Disputed Doctrines in which he devoted an entire chapter on "Inspiration of Scriptures" emphasizing that "inspiration is the activity of the Holy Spirit by which He put into the hearts and minds of chosen men the impulse to write and so controlled and directed them that they produced in a real and verbal sense a correct

---

[8] ibid, page 25

[9] The Formula of Concord, "Thorough Declaration," Comprehensive Summary, Concordia Trig., page 851

[10] The Foundations Must Stand, 1936, P.E. Kretzmann, pages 11,12

and inerrant record of God's revelation to men" [11]. At the same time, however, we observe that the United Lutheran Church in America had begun to harbor within its midst men who discredited the doctrine of verbal inspiration. Unfortunately, loyalty to the synodical organization took precedence over the Word of God so that they continued to exist in the same organization by "agreeing to disagree."

Such a false loyalty to an organization has proved to be disastrous! Look what has happened with that segment of Lutheranism since the early years of this century! Especially since the merger of the United Lutheran Church in America with other Lutheran bodies beginning in 1960, the downhill course has been horrendous! The emphasis on synodical loyalty instead of unswerving fidelity to the Word of God has resulted not only in the open toleration of, but also the express approval of, such things as: the ordination of women pastors, the reception of homosexuals and lesbians, abortion, etc., etc. Such a false loyalty has also infested the once orthodox Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod. And lest I be accused of simply expressing my own personal opinion, I would like to quote from a pamphlet issued and circulated some years ago by a prominent Missouri Synod pastor who urged the members of that synod to terminate their membership because of the false doctrine being tolerated and taught in their midst. He wrote: "One of the reasons why some conservatives will not leave synod is because they, in reality, are not true conservatives. Another reason why some conservatives will not leave the Missouri Synod is because they have, perhaps without knowing it, made an idol out of it. The Missouri Synod reminds us of the great image mentioned in Daniel 2 verse 32 whose 'head was of fine gold, his breast and his arms of silver, his belly and his thighs of brass, his legs of iron, his feet part of iron and part of clay,' which was a description of five successive kingdoms. At the time of Dr. C. F. W. Walther, first President of the Missouri Synod, who kept the Synod on Scripture and the Lutheran Confessions, the Missouri Synod was an image of fine gold. His successors tried to keep synod pure, but without Wal-

[11] ibid

ther's dynamic leadership and theological learning, it deteriorated into an image of silver. After the death of Dr. Francis Pieper, the great dogmatician who by his synodical essay in 1893 laid the foundation for the BRIEF STATEMENT of 1932, further doctrinal deterioration set in and the image turned into brass. After the death of Dr. Pfotenhauer, president of the Missouri Synod from 1911 to 1935, the image deteriorated into one of iron. Today it is an image with feet and toes made partly of iron and partly of clay—a completely divided synod in which there is no more doctrinal unity than there is unity between iron and clay. But even if the image would still be made of pure gold, IT NEVER WAS MEANT TO BE WORSHIPPED! And that is exactly what many Missourians are doing. They are worshipping the man-made Missouri Synod as an idol, even though its feet and toes are made of "iron mixed with clay" [12]. When we speak of loyalty to the Scriptures, we mean to **ALL** of it. There are those within the pale of Christendom who in their teaching and practice attempt to make a distinction by insisting that only those sections in Holy Writ which deal with Christ and His work of salvation are definitely binding upon us while the rest of Scripture is not. But where are we told about Christ and His work of redemption? The answer is obvious to every Bible student! Christ is the very heart, core, and center of Holy Writ. Jesus told the Jews, **"For had ye believed Moses, ye would have believed Me; for he wrote of Me,"** John 5:46. He, **"in whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge"** (Col. 2:3); He, **"in whom we have redemption through His blood, even the forgiveness of sins: Who is the image of the invisible God..."** and by whom **"all things were created"** and in whom **"dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily"** (Col. 1:14-16; 2:9), has made Himself known unto us not by private dreams, revelations, and visions, but in His Holy Word. To reject any portion of Holy Writ or to cast doubt upon any of Its words makes the message of Christ uncertain. For if we cannot

---

12 "Why True Christians in the Missouri Synod Are Conscience-Bound to Leave Missouri" by the Rev. Paul C. Neipp, pastor of Our Savior's Lutheran Church, Ridgecrest, California

be certain that every word in Scripture is God's Word, how can we then trust what that same Word tells us about Jesus, our dear Savior from sin, death, and hell. It is a trick of the father of all lies (John 8:44) to separate Christ from His Word. And we dare not be ignorant of his devices lest he should take advantage of us (II Cor. 2:11). Hence we find the Lord Jesus warning us, **"Whosoever therefore shall be ashamed of Me and of My words in this adulterous and sinful generation; of him also shall the Son of man be ashamed, when He cometh in the glory of His Father with the holy angels,"** Mark 8:38. Yes, that same Savior tells us by the pen of Paul who was **"an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God"** (Eph. 1:1) that **"ALL Scripture is given by inspiration of God,"** II Tim. 3:16.

At this point, the question may arise: To which translation of the Scriptures should we be loyal? There are so many of them! There have indeed been a number of Bible translations down through the centuries. In 1525 William Tyndale's translation of the New Testament was printed and then revised in 1535. This was followed by Coverdale's first printed English Bible, the Geneva Bible in 1560, and then the one translation which has stood the ravages of the years—the King James Bible in 1611. But even this translation has been revised at least four times since its appearance (1629, 1638, 1762, 1769). In 1901 the American Standard Edition of the English Revised Version was presented to the public. Since that time, the number of Bible translations has been legion. In 1952 there was the Revised Standard Version of the Bible which met with considerable success until the appearance of the New International Version (NIV) which has found wide acceptance also among the various Lutheran synods. Then in 1982 the entire New King James Bible was published by Thomas Nelson. "A special feature of the New King James Version is its conformity to the thought flow of the 1611 Bible" and the fact that "the New King James New Testament has been based on this Received text," that is, the Textus Receptus [13] while eliminating all the archaic and obsolete words of the 1611 translation. The congregations of our Conference, recognizing the confused condition that

[13] See Preface to the New King James Version

can exist where a multitude of translations are publicly used, have very wisely chosen to abide by the King James Bible translation, thus ensuring to our people a uniform use of the same text in all our official acts [14]. By the same token, however, we dare not become guilty of fanaticism by insisting that the other translations such as the New King James Bible dare not be used alongside our King James Bible to assist us in better understanding the text. Whatever has been faithfully translated from the original Hebrew and Greek Scriptures is certainly the Word of God. Dr. Pieper's comments written in 1924 are still applicable: "There is ample Scripture proof for the fact that translating does not deprive Scripture of its character of being the infallible Word of God. According to Scripture the infallible Word of the Apostles and Prophets will to the end of time, at all places, among all nations and tongues, be the foundation of faith for all Christians and the norm and standard according to which all Christians judge whether the doctrine is true or false. Since, however, the vast majority of Christians possess the written Word of the Apostles and Prophets only in translations, it is clear that Scripture does not lose its character of being the infallible Word of God by being translated, God's protecting hand has guarded not only the original text, but also the translations. As we have a firm and fixed Word of God in the original despite the variae lectiones, so the current versions of the Bible present a firm and fixed Word of God, and this despite the fact that every existing translation contains occasional mistakes and is subject to continuous correction in the light of the original" [15].

Loyalty to the Scriptures means the right use of our reason. We confess with Luther in the explanation of the First Article of the Apostles' Creed: "I believe that God has

---

14 "Which Bible Translation Shall We Use?" by Pastor H. D. Mensing, presented to the CLC Pastoral Conference, June, 1975

15 Christian Dogmatics, Volume I, Francis Pieper, pages 349,349

made me and all creatures; that He has given me my body and soul, eyes, ears, and all my members, my reason and all my senses, and still preserves them" [16]. Reason is one of the characteristics which distinguishes man from the animal. God has indeed given us our reason, but ever since the Fall of our first parents our reason has become so darkened and perverted that we must confess that we are by nature spiritually blind, dead, and enemies of God. We cannot, therefore, by our own reason and strength believe in Jesus as our Savior from sin, death, and hell. It is the enlightening power of the Holy Spirit through the Gospel that we have been translated out of the kingdom of darkness into the marvelous light of Christ's glorious kingdom. As His subjects we now seek to walk in all holy obedience to His Word. This means **"casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ,"** II Cor. 10:5. Being loyal to Scripture is expressed in the attitude of Samuel, **"Speak, Lord; for Thy servant heareth,"** I Sam. 3:9. Ah, but such an humble attitude is a rare bird in our day! There are those pseudo-Lutherans who in their pride deny many of the plain teachings of Holy Writ. Although God condemns in no uncertain language such things as abortion, homosexuality, women in the pastoral office, such "wise-acres," as Luther would call them, exalt themselves above God's Word and brazenly determine such things to be right. God says, **"Woe unto them that call evil good...,"** Isaiah 5:20. Instead of being loyal to the Scriptures and **"speaking to warn the wicked from his wicked way to save his life"** (Ezek. 3:18), such are referred to by the Lord as **"dumb dogs which cannot bark"..."greedy dogs which can never have enough, and they are shepherds that cannot understand: they all look to their own way, every one for his own gain, for his quarter,"** Isaiah 56:10,11.

Loyalty to the Scriptures also involves following the hermeneutical principle that Scripture interprets Scripture (Scriptura Scripturam interpretatur). We are incessantly bombarded with the charge: That is simply your interpreta-

[16] Luther's Small Catechism, page 9

tion. But our faith dare never rest upon man's interpretation of Holy Writ. To do so would be building our faith upon sinking sand and, more precisely, would actually constitute idolatry. For God the Holy Ghost is the interpreter of His Word since He is the One who gave it to writers. **"Holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost,"** II Peter 1:21. Therefore we must allow the Scriptures to speak for themselves and to interpret themselves. But what about those passages which are difficult? In 1919 Dr. Theodore Graebner presented an essay on How to Read the Bible and referred to this very thing. Listen to his comments: "There are passages in the Scriptures which we call difficult. There are cases in which the exact sense of a word or phrase is not evident at first reading. In such a case we study an entire passage in which the words stand, and also passages where the same or similar words and expressions are used, or where the same doctrine is treated in plainer language. But in all such investigations the rule must be observed that the words of Scripture are to be taken in their proper and ordinary sense unless we are compelled to do otherwise. Unless this rule is carefully observed, the languages of the Bible will be made to convey not what the Holy Spirit intended to convey, but what human reason or fancy wants the words to say" [17]. What havoc has been wrought within visible Christendom by those who wrest passages out of their context to suit the teaching which they have spun out of their own heads! We need but think of the millennialists who have permeated Protestantism with their millennialistic theories which they have erroneously deduced chiefly from Revelation chapter 20. Those apparently dark and difficult passages must be interpreted according to the clear passages of Holy Writ (analogia Scripturae) and never reversed" [18]. Only then can we truly declare: I know my faith is founded on God's Word which alone is the Truth (John 17:17)!

---

[17] "Proceedings of the 26th Convention of the Southern District," 1919, page 29

[18] Theological Hermeneutics, 19245, page 15, #30

Loyalty to the Scriptures is the real solution in helping men to solve their problems. What confusion abounds today as men struggle to find solutions to their perplexing problems. How many grope for the wall like the blind and stumble at noon day as in the night (Isa. 59:10). They look for guidance from the sin-blinded reason of their fellow-sinners, in their cults and "isms," in their philosophical and psychological schemes, only to find more confusion. True enlightenment comes only from the Holy Spirit through the Scriptures. For here we find the solution to the greatest problem to befall mankind—sin.

"All mankind fell in Adam's Fall,
One common sin infects us all;
From sire to son the bane descends,
And over all the curse impends,"
(Hymn 369, vs. 1).

No man was able to extricate himself from the bonds of his captivity. **"For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God,"** Rom. 3:23. **"But God, who is rich in mercy, for His great love wherewith He loved us, even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, (by grace ye are saved;) And hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus,"** Eph. 2:4-6. **"(God) hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of His dear Son: In whom we have redemption through His blood, even the forgiveness of sins,"** Col. 1:13,14. Now, by God's grace, we Christians have Jesus, the Light of the world, who assures us **"he that followeth Me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the Light of Life,"** John 8:12. Just as the Samaritans were filled with great joy when Philip preached Christ to them (Acts 8:5-8), so also we Christians today can and should rejoice as we are privileged to bask in the glorious sunlight of the Holy Scriptures in which God assures us that all of our sins have been cast into the depths of the sea because of the substitutional sacrifice of Christ. Heaven is now our Home. What an undeserved blessing to have the Scriptures as **"a Lamp unto (our) feet, and a light unto (our) path,"** Psalm 119:105. For this is not a dead Word, but the **"power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth,"** Rom. 1:16. It effectually works also in us who believe (I

Thess. 2:13). Now we can fight successfully against the sins which so easily beset us (Heb. 12:1) with this Sword of the Spirit (Eph. 6:17).

Loyalty to the Scriptures means not compromising with false teaching. God wants us to keep His Word pure as He has entrusted it to us. We have no right to do with it as we please. For this reason we are exhorted in many passages to abide by the pure doctrine of the Word. Jesus commands us, **"Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you...,"** Matt. 28:20. He also declares, **"If ye continue in My Word, then are ye My disciples indeed,"** John 8:31. Furthermore, we are warned against false teaching. **"Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves,"** Matt. 7:15. Just think of the strong language used by the Apostle Paul in his Epistle to the Galatians: **"But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed,"** Gal. 1:8. And in his first epistle to Timothy he writes that **"if any man teach otherwise, and consent not to wholesome words, even the words of our Lord Jesus Christ, and to the doctrine which is according to godliness; he is proud, knowing nothing,"** (6:3,4.). Inevitably when one doctrine of God's Word is compromised, the whole body of Christian doctrine becomes permeated so that one teaching after another falls to the wayside. **"A little leaven leaveneth the whole lump,"** Gal. 5:9.

Loyalty to the Scriptures also includes willingness on our part to endure persecution and suffering patiently without murmuring. The Apostle Paul exhorts his co-laborer, Timothy: **"Thou therefore endure hardness, as a good soldier of Jesus Christ,"** II Tim. 2:3. As the life of a soldier often involves hardships in the execution of his duties, so also with us Christian soldiers if we would be truly loyal to all of the Scriptures. The Apostle reminds us that **"that we must through much tribulation enter into the kingdom of God,"** Acts 14:22. Look what the faithful soldiers of Christ and His Word endured down through the years! That first Christian congregation in Jerusalem concerning which we are told: **"And at that time there was a great persecution against the church which was at Jerusalem; and they were all scat-**

tered abroad throughout the regions of Judaea and Samaria," Acts 8:1. To this present day, the persecution has not ceased! True, we are not arrested, thrown into the dungeon to await being served as a meal to the wild animals, but the persecution is still there for every loyal adherent to the Scriptures. **"All that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution"** as **"evil men and seducers shall wax worse and worse,"** II Tim. 3:12,13. The persecution has simply assumed a more insidious form. Those who would remain faithful to all of God's Word are branded as being "out-of-date, obstructionists to liberty and progress, narrow-minded and intolerant bigots," etc., etc. Such sneering and sarcastic mockery and slander are the darts which the devil hurls at us through his followers, the unbelieving children of the world. Remember the last verse of that fine hymn, "Come, Follow Me, the Savior Spake" (421)?

"Then let us follow Christ, our Lord,
And take the cross appointed
And, firmly clinging to His Word,
In suffering be undaunted,
For who bears not the battle's strain
The crown of life shall not obtain."

There is one way in which we do not have to expose ourselves to such opposition and persecution, and that is by keeping silent. But Jesus says, **"He that is not with Me is against Me,"** Matt. 12:30. There is no middle road. He who lays claim to being a Christian and then refuses to confess the Savior and His Word is a disloyal soldier. The Apostle reminds us, **"If thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised Him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation,"** Rom. 10:9,10. The faith of the heart and the confession of that faith with the mouth go hand in hand! Note well the words of the Captain of our salvation who warns us: **"Whosoever therefore shall confess Me before men, him will I confess also before My Father which is in heaven. But whosoever shall deny Me before men, him will I also deny before My Father which is in heaven,"** Matt. 10:23,33. If we are sincere in pledging our loyalty to Christ and His Word, then we shall strive not only

to confess Him with our mouths but also with our whole lives. How often Christians will profess their allegiance to the Scriptures and, at the same time, discredit that testimony by their examples! Remember how the Apostle Paul accused the Jews of such shameful hypocrisy? **"Behold, thou art called a Jew, and restest in the Law, and makest thy boast of God, and knowest His will, and approvest the things that are more excellent, being instructed out of the Law; and art confident that thou thyself art a guide of the blind, a light of them which are in darkness, an instructor of the foolish, a teacher of babes, which hast the form of knowledge and of the truth in the Law. Thou therefore which teachest another, teachest thou not thyself? thou that preachest a man should not steal, dost thou steal? Thou that sayest a man should not commit adultery, dost thou commit adultery? thou that abhorrest idols, dost thou commit sacrilege? Thou that makest thy boast of the Law, through breaking the Law dishonourest thou God? For the Name of God is blasphemed among the Gentiles through you,"** Rom. 2:17-24. If we would be loyal soldiers in our Lord's Kingdom, then we dare not ignore His commandments but always seek to apply them to OURSELVES, praying with the Psalmist, **"Make me to go in the path of Thy commandments; for therein do I delight,"** Psalm 119:35.

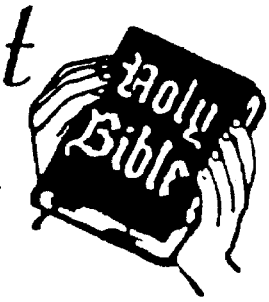
And, finally, loyalty to the Scriptures means serving and working for Him in our local congregations with an ever greater measure of devotion! For, after all, this is where the Scriptures are proclaimed to us in all their truth and purity by that man whom the Holy Ghost has made the overseer of the flock (Acts 20:28). If we are truly appreciative of this blessing, then we shall strive to be faithful in our church attendance and frequent guests at the Lord's Table so that our souls might be fed and nourished with the Bread of Life. Our Christian lay-people obligate themselves to receive their duly-called pastor as a minister of Jesus Christ, to accord him the love and honor which they owe him as such according to the Word of God (Heb. 13:17; II Cor. 5:20; Luke 10:16); to obey him in all things which he teaches the members of the flock in accordance with God's Word (II Tim. 4:2; Acts 20:28; Heb. 13:17); to support the ministrations of him in the divine call with their diligent and faithful prayers (II Thess. 3:1,2); and to render the discharge of his duties

pleasant for him by cordial one-mindedness and willing readiness, by their peaceable conduct, and in every other way possible (I Thess. 5:12,13) [19]. Toward that end may our dear heavenly Father grant us the aid of His Holy Spirit for the Savior's sake who will say to His loyal subjects who have faithfully sought to show their love for Him and His Word, **"Well done, thou good and faithful servant...enter thou into the joy of thy lord,"** Matt. 25:21.

"Verbum Dei Manet in Aeternum..."
I Peter 1:25

= + = + = + = + = + = + = + =

Convention Digest



MOTTO: "Hold that fast which thou hast!"

Seattle, Washington, in the scenic Pacific Northwest, was the site of the **Forty-First Annual Convention** of the Concordia Lutheran Conference, hosted this year by St. Luke's Lutheran Church, the Rev. Paul R. Bloedel, Pastor. The convention itself was preceded by a two-day **Pastoral Conference** (June 23 and 24) and the annual meeting of the Conference **Board of Directors** (June 25). The pastor and members of the congregation welcomed guests from afar into their homes, provided delicious meals in the church's fellowship hall and in a nearby community center, and arranged for welcome opportunities for Christian recreation and wholesome fun during "off-hours." In all these and other ways, the local brethren showed themselves by God's grace patterns of loving, cheerful and generous hospitality; and this atmosphere contributed significantly to the success of our convention.

[19] See our CLC Diploma of Vocation

The **Convention** itself opened on Friday, June 26th, with a service of convocation in which the local pastor served as liturgist and the Conference President, the Rev. Mark W. Dierking, delivered the keynote sermon based on the Convention Motto, Revelation 3:11, **"Hold that fast which thou hast!"** He divided this theme into two parts: **I. What** we have and **why** we are to hold fast to it, and **II. How** we are to hold it fast. He reminded those assembled of the priceless blessings we have enjoyed as a Christian fellowship in Jesus and His precious Word and how scarce those blessings are in these latter days of sore distress; and he pointed out that only through faithful continuance in the Word can we, by God's grace, hold fast to those blessings both now and in the future.

Following the service, the first session of the convention was called to order with a brief devotion. Ad hoc committees for convention business were appointed by the chair and the initial report of the Committee on Registration and Excuses was heard to determine the seating of delegates. In his annual report, President Dierking briefly summarized the business of the Conference during the past fiscal year and expressed his thanks to the brethren and to the Lord of the Church for a peaceful and fruitful year—his last for awhile, since he is ineligible for another consecutive term of office as president. His report was accepted pending the customary review by a special committee appointed by the Vice-President. The convention Agenda was then adopted as printed with one minor addition: The hearing of a report by the ad hoc **Committee to Investigate Alternative Methods for Printing the "Concordia Lutheran"** on Saturday afternoon. Following the report of the Press Committee, the morning session was adjourned for the noon meal.

The Friday afternoon session was opened with a brief devotion conducted by Pastor Mensing of Oak Forest, Illinois. This session was then highlighted by the presentation of the **Convention Essay**, Part I. The essay, delivered by Pastor M. L. Natterer of Lebanon, Oregon, was entitled: **"Loyalty to the Scriptures"** in keeping with the motto of the convention. He introduced the essay with a brief summary of the controversies which have plagued outward Lutheranism over the past fifty years or so, all of which were occasioned by

disloyalty to the very Scriptures by which the Holy Spirit preserves in Christ's Church on earth true **"concordia"** or unity. Pastor Natterer first defined "loyalty" as "unswerving allegiance"--to country, to family, but above all to the Lord Himself; and he characterized many of the problems we encounter in our land, in our homes and in our churches and church-bodies as the direct result of **misguided loyalty** -- loyalty to men, to organizations, to synods and conferences. On the other hand, the loyalty that **prevents** controversies, upheavals and schisms is **"Loyalty to the Scriptures"** by which we hold fast to Christ, the Church's Head, and to the truth of His precious Word. The presentation of the essay was, as usual, interspersed with lively discussion and edifying comments from the floor.

Before the afternoon recess, two recommendations of the Board of Directors regarding the Publishing House and its relationship to the "Concordia Lutheran" were heard, but were tabled until after the report of the Publishing House Board of Control. Another recommendation, namely, to purchase a "notebook" computer for use by the Conference Secretary (much lighter and more compact than our current one) was unanimously adopted.

Following the recess, the **Treasurer's Report** concerning the past fiscal year was heard and adopted, as was also the **Initial Report of the Finance Committee** with its proposed budget for fiscal year 1992-93.

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

PRESIDENT: The Rev. Paul R. Bloedel
VICE PRESIDENT: The Rev. Mark W. Dierking
SECRETARY: The Rev. David T. Mensing
TREASURER: Mr. Victor K. Bloedel

BOARD MEMBERS-AT-LARGE--Midwest: Mr. David A. Steinke; **Far West:** Mr. Raymond S. Kusumi
EDITORIAL COMMITTEE: Pastor Stallings, Editor; Pastor Natterer, Asst. Editor; Mr. Lloyd E. Martin.

COMMITTEE ON THEOLOGICAL EDUCATION: Pastor Mensing, Chairman; Pastor Bloedel, Mr. Raymond Kusumi, and Mr. Phillip Martin.
COMMITTEE ON MISSIONS: Pastor Stallings, Chairman; Pastor Redlin, Mr. Daniel Bloedel, Mr. Phillip Martin, and Mr. John Steinke.
COMMITTEE ON LUTHERAN UNION: Pastor Dierking, Chairman; Pastor Mensing, Pastor Natterer, and Mr. Daniel Bloedel.
FINANCE COMMITTEE: Mr. Victor Bloedel, Treasurer; Mr. John Steinke, Mr. Phillip Martin, and Mr. Mark Natterer.
PUBLISHING HOUSE BOARD OF CONTROL: Pastor Stallings, Chairman; Pastor Bloedel, Mr. Victor Bloedel, Mr. David Steinke, and Mr. Mark Natterer.

The **Report of the Committee on Missions** highlighted three contacts received by its chairman requesting information about our Conference. The requested information was furnished, but nothing further has been heard from those inquiring. The chairman also reported a subsidy request from our sister congregation, St. Stephen's of Wilmot, for up to $2000.00 for the coming fiscal year. The motion was carried that a subsidy in this amount be included by the Finance Committee in its final budget proposal so that it is authorized and available if needed by our South Dakota brethren.

The Saturday morning sessions were opened with a devotion conducted by Pastor Stallings of San Antonio. After the reading and adoption of Friday's minutes, it was announced that Board Members Steinke and Kusumi, accompanied by the Secretary, had the previous evening purchased the notebook computer authorized by the convention, and that, after the two laymen had spent practically the whole night down-loading files from the other machine, the Secretary was now using the new equipment. The President expressed the thanks of the convention to the brethren for their selfless labor of love on behalf of the Conference.

In the second part of his essay, Pastor Natterer then briefly sketched the deterioration of outward Lutheranism

over the past half-century, particularly in its view of the Holy Scriptures. No longer is the verbal inspiration of the Bible, its inerrancy and supreme authority embraced by most of the Lutheran bodies today; and, of those which subscribe **on paper,** many deny these principles **in practice** for the sake of outward unions, numerical growth, and easier religion. The essayist rightly pointed out from Scripture the impossibility of separating Christ from His Word; and he stressed the absolute reliability of the Scriptures in the original languages, so that, even with variant readings from manuscript to manuscript, not one doctrine is compromised. The numerous translations, on the other hand, are fraught with errors in many places, so that we should be duly careful to choose a translation that faithfully renders the original languages of Scripture.

In the **Report of the Committee on Theological Education,** its chairman, Pastor Stallings, briefly referred to the on-going preparation of our instructors and the progress to date of our one pre-seminary student, Dr. John Steinke. He also appealed to the boys and young men of our Conference to consider preparing for the Office of the Holy Ministry, inasmuch as the need for well-trained pastors for the future is critical.

Vice President Bloedel, reporting for the **Committee on Lutheran Union,** summarized the committee's work during the past fiscal year, especially its meetings with the pastors of the Evangelical Lutheran Congregations of the Reformation in Australia. He gave a brief overview of discussions with them and provided for the record copies of agreements reached and documents identifying areas where differences still exist between our groups. In spite of the Committee's positive impression of how those talks had gone on the whole, it had just prior to the convention received a written communication from the ELCR to the effect that its board had bound its pastors NOT to hold further exploratory talks with us because of their perception that we hold positions opposed to those of the orthodox fathers. It was the recommendation of the Committee to wait with a response until more information is available about the ELCR's real intention. The confessional documents filed with the Committee's report were read in their entirety for the information of the

delegates.

The **Report of the Auditing Committee** showed the books of the Conference Treasurer, as well as those of the Business Manager of SCRIPTURAL PUBLICATIONS, in good order; and the **Further Report of the Finance Committee** regarding the budget included the new items authorized, namely, the computer purchase and the subsidy for St. Stephen's.

In his report for the **Editorial Committee**, Pastor Stallings summarized the publication of the **"Concordia Lutheran"** from its new "home-base" in San Antonio, with assistance from Pastor Dierking on word-processing and from Pastor Mensing on graphics. He expressed his thanks to these brethren and his pleasure at the economical price per issue we are being charged by the printer in San Antonio: $282.78 per issue (500 copies, printed, collated, stapled, folded and trimmed). He closed his report with special thanks to Pastor Natterer, the Assistant Editor, for his help and counsel, as well as to all the pastors for their timely and edifying articles.

Mr. David Steinke reported for the ad hoc **Committee to Investigate Alternative Methods for Printing the "Concordia Lutheran."** Its proposal included producing the "C.L." with a desktop-publishing computer program beginning with the March-April, 1993, issue as a "prototype back-up" of the regular production of that number, and then thereafter as the regular production mode. This report was adopted.

The Agenda was then amended to use time more profitably toward the end of the Saturday sessions, and the **Time and Place of the 1993 Convention** was next considered. The invitation of **Peace Ev. Lutheran Church, Oak Forest, Illinois** was accepted with thanks for the site of the 42nd Annual Convention to be held June 25, 26 and 27, 1993.

At the Sunday morning service, the host pastor served as liturgist and Pastor David T. Mensing of Oak Forest preached the sermon on John 8:31-32. His theme was: **"Why** we must hold fast to Holy Scripture as the only Source and Norm of Christian faith and life," namely, because **I.** Scrip-

ture alone has the power to make and keep us Jesus' true disciples; **II.** Holy Scripture is the only Source of genuine Truth; and **III.** Holy Scripture frees us from the tyranny of man-made doctrines. Delegates and visitors from the congregations of our fellowship then partook of the Lord's Supper as guests of St. Luke's for the remission of their sins, for the strengthening of their faith, and in demonstration of their blessed unity in the Word of their Savior.

After a sumptuous dinner served by the ladies of the host congregation, sessions reconvened to hear the last portion of Pastor Natterer's essay in which he showed that "Loyalty to the Scriptures" means never permitting our sin-blinded reason to exalt itself above the Word of God, letting Scripture interpret itself, rightly dividing between Law and Gospel, and not compromising its truth with false teachings. Finally, the essayist pointed out that "loyalty" includes willingness both to suffer persecution for the sake of the Scriptures and to serve our Savior by working in our various congregations with an ever greater measure of devotion to keep for ourselves and to share also with others the precious truth which we have by His grace and mercy as our priceless heritage.

Following the essay, the **Board of Control of Scriptural Publications** presented its report on the publishing activities of the Conference (aside from the printing of the "C.L."), including the Sunday School lessons and other printed materials; and the Committee's Business Manager reported on the financial condition of the publishing house. After hearing these reports, the convention took up the remaining recommendations of the Board of Directors, and these were passed: a) That an **ad hoc** committee consisting of the Praesidium, the Secretary, the chairmen of the Editorial Committee and the Publishing House Board of Control, and the Business Manager of Scriptural Publications study a possible conflict in our Constitution between the publication responsibilities of the Editorial Committee and the Publishing House Board of Control, and that this committee bring its recommendations for a solution to any such conflict to the next convention; b) That, in the meantime, the Publishing House Board of Control be directed to continue renting suitable storage facilities to keep both its current inventory of

In its final report, the **Finance Committee** recommended a budget for fiscal 1992-93 of $15,500.00. Items for "C.L." printing and postal expense were deleted, and the expenses for Scriptural Publications were raised to $4000.00 to accomodate these. The final budget was then adopted, as were the customary resolutions of thanks offered by the **Resolutions Committee,** the **Report of the Conference Statistician,** and the **Final Report of the Committee on Registration and Excuses.** Finally, after approval of the minutes of the Sunday sessions, the Convention adjourned just prior to the scheduled supper hour with the customary closing devotion conducted by our new President, Pastor Bloedel. All in all, it had been a most brotherly and fruitful meeting; and all of us who were present returned to our respective home congregations edified with the Word and determined by God's grace to **"hold fast"** to Christ and His precious truth with steadfast loyalty to the Scriptures as our priceless treasure, **"that no man take (our) crown!"**

Respectfully submitted,

Rev. David T. Mensing, Secretary

+ + + + + + + + + + + + +

Around the World

with editorial comment

by M. L. Natterer

"Cults are everywhere. The people are ready to accept some form of religion. The only question is, What religion will they follow? The Moonies or Hare Krishnas? Jehovah's Witnesses or Mormons? New Kingdoms for the Cult-Aberrant and unorthodox groups join Christians in filling Eastern Europe's spiritual vacuum," reports the January 13 Christianity Today. It reports that the famed Mormon Tabernacle Choir completed a highly successful tour through Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union last summer. It states that the Mormon publication "The Ensign" said that the

choir's appearances revolved around a carefully planned, four-point strategy for spreading the Mormon message to formerly communist countries. "First, the choir 'elicited waves of advance publicity;' second, its musical message drew people in; third, national dignitaries were invited to receptions and dinners held in several countries; finally, top U.S. Mormon leaders offered more information about their church at eight informal gatherings, reportedly attended by thousands. If the Mormon campaign sounds highly organized, it is. And like the Latterday Saints, other aberrant Christian groups, sects and Eastern religions have big plans for growth in former Eastern Bloc countries. In the past year, Sun Myung Moon, leader of the Unification Church, met with Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev and promised him he would pump money into the ailing Soviet economy. In exchange, he was allowed to fly more than 1,400 Soviet students for field trips in the U.S. More than 800 eventually committed to study full time under Moon. Moon is also reportedly offering $100,000 to any Soviet university that will allow his scholars to teach there. Many are accepting his proposal. (Christian News, Jan. 13, 1992).

Eastern Europe is indeed fertile ground for these cults seeking to inundate these ex-communist countries of East Europe. Their economic plight reminds us of Germany after the 1st World War which was in a similar state of chaos. Plagued with unemployment and inflation Germany proved to be very fertile soil not only for the cults (Jehovah Witnesses, etc.) but also for a dictatorship (Adolf Hitler). All these events once again remind us Christians that we are living in the closing days of the world. The Lord Jesus tells us, "MANY false prophets shall rise, and shall deceive many," **Matt. 24:11. Therefore the fact that these false prophets are springing up and multiplying so rapidly should not surprise us since the Savior reminds us,** "Behold, I have told you before," **Matt. 24:11. Surely, this should prompt us to spread the blessed tidings of salvation before** "the night cometh when no man can work!" John 9:4.

+ - + - + - + - + - + - +

A team of Lutheran and Reformed theologians are proposing "full communion" among their four churches

following more than three years of conversations which concluded at a meeting in Chicago, March 7-8. The report called "A Common Calling: The Witness of Our Reformation Churches in North America Today" was issued by the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), the Reformed Church in America and the United Church of Christ. They are being asked to "recognize each other as churches in which the Gospel is rightly preached and the sacraments are rightly administered according to the Word of God." The recommendation for full communion encourages the sharing of the Lord's Supper and provision for joint services. It calls for recognition of each other's ministries and provision for "the orderly exchange of ordained ministers of Word and sacrament." It includes the withdrawal of any historical condemnation of one side by the other from earlier centuries and calls for continuing dialogue among these four churches on remaining differences as well as new issues confronting the churches today. The full document of about 80 pages now awaits the approval from the participating denominations.

The above taken from the Christian News, March 23rd, shows us how far the ELCA continues to stray from the precious truths of God's Holy Word! The Lord makes it very plain in His Word that there can by no true unity without full agreement in all Scriptural teachings. "Now I beseech you, brethren, by the Name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you; but that ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment," **I Cor. 1:10. Altar, pulpit, and prayer fellowship is not to be carried on with those who teach contrary to God's Word.** "Now I beseech you, brethren, mark them which cause divisions and offenses contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned; and avoid them," **Romans 16:17. This has always been the Scriptural position of orthodox Lutherans! Now it is being set aside by specious argumentation and the insatiable desire for numbers and recognition. Those Scriptural teachings for which our orthodox Lutheran forefathers so valiantly fought have been surrendered by the pseudo-Lutherans (the Person of Christ, Baptism, Lord's Supper, Predestination, etc.).**

+ - + - + - + - + - + - +

he CONCORDIA LUTHERAN
110 Grasmere Court
San Antonio, TX 78218

Non Profit Organization
U. S. Postage
P A I D
San Antonio, Texas
Permit No. 322

CONCORDIA LUTHERAN CONFERENCE CHURCH DIRECTORY

GOOD SHEPHERD EV. LUTHERAN CHURCH
4050 South Melpomene Way
Tucson, Arizona 85730
Worship Service..... 10:00 a.m.
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

HOLY SCRIPTURE EV. LUTHERAN CHURCH
San Antonio, Texas 78218
(Currently meeting at Continental Motor Inn, 9735 I-35 North)
Worship Service..... 10:00 a.m.
Sunday School and
Bible Class..... 11:15 a.m.
REV. E. R. STALLINGS, JR., Pastor
110 Grasmere Court
San Antonio, Texas 78218
Telephone: (512) 656-2125

PEACE EV. LUTHERAN CHURCH
Central Avenue at 171st Place
Oak Forest, Illinois 60452
(South Suburban Chicago)
Sunday School and
Bible Class..... 8:30 a.m.
Worship Service..... 10:00 a.m.
REV. DAVID T. MENSING, Pastor
17151 South Central Avenue
Oak Forest, Illinois 60452
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:
Worship Service..... 7:30 p.m.
Sunday School and Bible Class following the service.
(Taped services on other Sundays)

ST. JOHN'S LUTHERAN CHURCH
6th and Tangent
Lebanon, Oregon 97355
Sunday School and
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

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.

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