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. XXXIX November-December, 1994 Nos. 11 - 12

"For unto you
is born this day...
a Saviour,
which is Christ
the Lord."

Luke 2:11

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, TX 78218
ASSISTANT EDITOR:
Rev. Mark W. Dierking
Box 33
Wilmot, SD 57279
LAY MEMBER:
Dr. John M. Steinke
5959 Wurzbach #F-7
San Antonio, TX 78238

Address all subscriptions, renewals, and remittances to: **Scriptural Publications, 8907 Brightwater St., San Antonio, TX 78250-2012.** A special notice of expiration will be inserted in the issue which terminates your subscription.

Officers of the Concordia Lutheran Conference
PRESIDENT:
Rev. M. L. Natterer
483 Tangent Street
Lebanon, OR 97355
VICE-PRESIDENT:
Rev. Mark W. Dierking
Box 33
Wilmot, SD 57279
SECRETARY:
Rev. David T. Mensing
17151 South Central Avenue
Oak Forest, IL 60452
TREASURER:
Mr. Victor K. Bloedel
10200 - 62nd Avenue South
Seattle, WA 98178

STATEMENT OF PURPOSE:

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

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

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

To demonstrate, by our Scriptural stand, that our **Concordia Lutheran Conference** is not a sect or 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 acknowledgment of such God-given unity. Thus we shall be able thereafter to practice a God-pleasing fellowship with them.

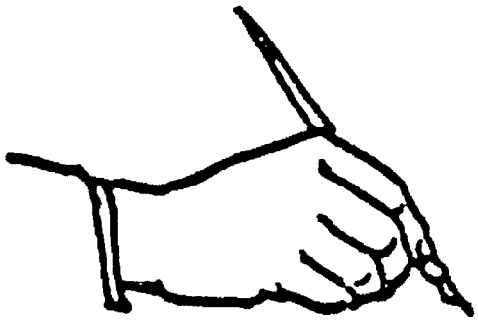
To show that we do not have among us a mixture of divergent teachings but that we are "perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment."

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

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

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

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



The President's Column

This last summer an interesting article appeared in our Sunday Oregonian (August 21, 1994). It stated, "In recent months, newsmakers seem to have made an art form of shrugging off responsibility: Baseball player Darryl Strawberry blamed his alcoholism and drug addiction on the demands of being a celebrity. Erik and Lyle Menendez say they were abused by their parents and therefore not guilty of their murders. And when tennis star Jennifer Capriati was arrested recently for possessing marijuana, her father took the public rap by saying he pushed her too hard to compete when she was young. Many of us remain perplexed: If a victim of privilege is not responsible for his actions, if a victim of poverty is not responsible for her misdeeds, if victims of addictions are blameless, if people who come from broken homes or dysfunctional families are not to be held accountable for their behavior ... well, who is? ... "It has become a kind of cultural reflex to think of people as being 'sick' rather than 'bad,'" says Charles J. Sykes, author of "A Nation of Victims: The Decay of the American Character." ... Fred Guy, co-director of the Hoffberger Center for Professional Ethics at the University of Baltimore, says, "It's almost as if there's a fail-safe mechanism that if you do good, then we give you credit. But if you do evil, then we excuse you."

Excuses! Excuses! It sounds so familiar! When God confronted Adam after he had disobeyed God, we hear his excuse, "***The woman whom Thou gavest to be with me, she gave me of the tree, and I did eat.***" Eve was no different. "***The serpent beguiled me, and I did eat***" (Gen. 3:12,13). Remember Saul, the first king of Israel? The Lord had given him a specific command concerning the Amalekites, but Saul disobeyed. Instead of promptly confessing his sin, we hear him attempting to shift the blame for his disobedience upon the people (1 Sam. 15:20,21).

God does indeed warn us to be on our guard lest we be led astray by our circumstances and the people with whom we associate. "***Blessed is the***

man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful" (Ps. 1:1). "***My son, if sinners entice thee, consent thou not***" .... "***My son, walk not thou in the way with them; refrain thy foot from their path***" (Prov. 1:10,15). In the final analysis, however, **before God we shall be held personally responsible for our own actions**. "***Rejoice, O young man, in thy youth,***" writes Solomon by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, "***and let thy heart cheer thee in the days of thy youth, and walk in the ways of thine heart, and in the sight of thine eyes: but know thou, that for all these things God will bring thee into judgment***" (Eccl. 11:9). Thus that individual who chooses to rob, steal, murder, lead a drunken and perverse lifestyle, etc., has no one to blame but himself/herself.

But man's sinful reason is so adept at offering specious excuses for his evil deeds. What foolishness, however, to make excuses when God looks in the heart and everything is visible before His all-seeing eye. All such excuses and every attempt to blame someone else for our misdeeds simply will not avail when standing before the Judgment Seat of God to give account!

Daily we Christians should come before God's Throne with a penitent confession and be comforted with the assurance that our sins have been forgiven for Jesus' sake. We should live in such daily repentance and faith lest we ever succumb to pride and refuse to follow the Word of the Lord which tells us, "***Confess your faults one to another***" (James 5:16). Remember, "***he that covereth his sins shall not prosper: but whoso confesseth and forsaketh them shall have mercy***" (Prov. 28:13).

During this joyous Christmas Season we are especially reminded of the glorious truth that "***in this was manifested the love of God toward us, because that God sent His only-begotten Son into the world that we might live through Him***" (1 John 4:9). We who have been born again of "***water and of the Spirit***" (John 3:5) now willingly declare with the Apostle John, "***We love Him, because He first loved us***" (1 John 4:19). For He who "***was rich, yet for your sakes He became poor, that ye through His poverty might be rich***" (2 Cor. 8:9). Proving the sincerity of our faith in the Lord Jesus means that we strive to walk humbly before God by confessing and forsaking "***sin which doth so easily beset us***" (Heb. 12:1). And the strength to do this comes from the Lord through His Word "***which effectually worketh also in you that believe***" (1 Thess. 2:13). That means we must be hearers of His Word by regularly attending the public

worship services in our congregations, and also reading that Word daily in our homes, meditating upon it and asking the Lord to help us in applying that Word in our lives. May God grant that all of us seek to do this more faithfully!

Your servant in Christ,
Pastor M. L. Natterer, President

THE GRACE OF GOD...

for a Happy Christmas and a Blessed New Year

"The grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men, teaching us..." --Titus 2:11

The Christmas and New Year season is *supposed* to be the happiest time of the year filled with "joy and cheer far and near". And yet, *statistically*, more crime, more depression, more loneliness, more alcoholism, and more suicide is reported during these weeks than at any other time of the year. Sociologists and psychologists see a wide variety of "reasons" for this ironic phenomenon; and almost all of these have their roots in the fact that the children of this world are "carnal, sold under sin" (Romans 7:14) and therefore totally reliant upon the things of *this life* for whatever happiness they can find. When questioned about what it takes to make and to keep them "happy", most worldlings cite ***money*** and ***friends*** as the top two factors. Thus, when financial pressures mount at or around Christmastime, and interpersonal relationships are strained and often seem to go bad -- either in the family or in one's circle of friends-- the props that keep such people "happy" begin to give way; and they fall into a melancholy depression and eventually into despair.

We Christians, on the other hand, who *"know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ"* (II Corinthians 8:9) have the only true and absolutely reliable source of security and happiness here in this life and for the life hereafter, so that, come what may, we can in whatsoever state we find ourselves *"therewith be content"* (Philippians 4:11). It is **not**, as the Calvinists claim, that the grace of God has not been seriously offered to all men in the Gospel, for the Apostle Paul states in this Christmas Epistle text: *"The grace of God ... hath appeared to **all** men."* The universality of God's grace in Christ Jesus is an ***undeniable fact,*** based not only upon this precious text, but upon many others in which the Lord unequivocally declares His "primary will" that **all** men be **saved** and come unto the knowledge of the truth (I Timothy 2:4; Ezekiel 33:11; II Peter 2:4; etc.). This precious truth is also published far and wide in the angels' chorus, recorded in the Christmas Gospel, heard in word and in song not only in churches throughout the land but blaring from loudspeakers on almost every street corner: ***"On earth peace, good will toward men!"*** Can anyone honestly say that he has not heard it? St. Paul asks this question in Romans 10:18, and then answers concerning the testimony of the holy Prophets to this universal grace of God: *"Yes verily, their sound went into all the earth, and their words unto the ends of the world."*

The problem lies in the fact that the vast majority of those who have ***heard*** of *"the grace of God that bringeth salvation"* do not *"**know** the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ"* because it is apprehended (understood and laid hold on) *by faith*. The message of grace has simply and sadly been **rejected** by the children of this world, making their *present* as well as their *future* happiness an empty shell, as fragile as the fleeting treasures and pleasures of this transitory world. No wonder even Christmas joy evades them! Their smiles fall from their faces more quickly than the needles from the tree, and their "Merry Christmas" lasts only as long as the discarded giftwrap and broken ornaments --trashed and soon forgotten!

Indeed, if God had manifested only His other attributes to the shepherds on the first Christmas night --His omnipotence, His holiness, His glory, and His justice-- then not only they but we too would continue to be *"sore afraid"*, cringing in utter dread of His impending punishment! For our sins had separated us from our God, and we *"were by nature the children of wrath, even as others."* (Ephesians 2:3) To be sure, if the Lord dealt with us according to His divine justice, we would all be doomed to everlasting damnation, for *"the wages of sin is death!"* (Romans 6:23)

But, instead of **wages**, the Lord in His love and mercy toward us poor, wretched, undeserving sinners for Jesus' sake, presented us and all mankind with the most amazing Christmas Gift of all time: His *"unspeakable Gift"*, the Gift of His only-begotten Son to be our Savior! *"For God so loved the world that He gave His only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life."* (John 3:16) This Gift, *"the grace of God that bringeth salvation, hath appeared to all men,"* including you and me, in the Christmas Gospel; *"for unto you is born this day,"* said the Christmas angel, *"a Savior, which is Christ, the Lord."* This Savior, the Mighty God, humbled Himself for our sakes, put Himself under the Law in our place, rendered perfect obedience to its demands in our stead, suffered the wages of sin as our Substitute, and thus fully atoned for the sins of the world as the Lamb of God. He *"gave Himself for us, that He might redeem us from all iniquity,"* Paul writes in the Christmas Epistle, v. 14. And in view of that perfect, vicarious atonement which fully satisfied His justice, *"God was in Christ reconciling the world unto Himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them, and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation."* (II Corinthians 5:19) These *"good tidings of great joy"*, the angel announced, were intended not just for the shepherds, not just for the Jews, not just for believers, but for *"all people"*. Tragically, all those who reject this precious Christmas Gift in unbelief keep from themselves its *"great joy"* in the *"salvation"* He brings! For they insist on having *wages*, the wages of everlasting death in hell, when they could have, as God's free *gift*, everlasting life in heaven, by faith in His Son. No wonder the children of this world are often overcome with melancholy and depression and despair at Christmastime! They have nothing of real substance to be happy about! No wonder they look forward to the New Year with fear and apprehension and hopelessness! They have nothing positive to look forward to! And, while they *seem* to prosper here in this world, the Psalmist Asaph reminds us of their tragic **end** when their time of grace is past! (Psalm 73) For money and friends here in this world, and the imagined joy they bring, will avail them nothing before the judgment seat of Christ!

But this *"grace of God that bringeth salvation"* is not only the assurance of **peace on earth, good will toward men** through the forgiveness of sins; it's not only our source of comfort and joy at Christmastime and throughout the year; it's not only our "silver lining" in the dark clouds that hover about us in this vale of tears as we look ahead to the year lying even now before us; and it's not only the seal of our inheritance as joint-heirs

with Christ of glory everlasting. It's also our **teacher** regarding the **life of sanctification** we should lead here in this present world ***as the result*** *of our salvation by grace through faith in Christ Jesus.* For the Apostle Paul writes: *"The grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men, teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and Godly in this present world; looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Savior Jesus Christ, who gave Himself for us, that He might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto Himself a peculiar people zealous of good works."*

"The grace of God that bringeth salvation" educates us, trains us, disciplines and constrains us to lead lives here in this world that truly bespeak our appreciation for that grace. If we truly *"know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ"* (II Corinthians 8:9), if we *"are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus"* (Galatians 2:26), *"if we live in the Spirit"* (Galatians 5:25a), then surely we, motivated and coaxed by the grace of God in Christ Jesus, should *"also walk in the Spirit"* (v. 25b) as fruitful branches in the Vine of our Savior, bringing forth abundant fruit to the glory of that grace (John 15:5). After all, Christ did not *"redeem us from all iniquity and purify unto Himself a peculiar* (that is, *special) people"* for nothing! Paul writes to the Ephesians, following immediately upon that well-known passage, "By grace are ye saved...", with the RESULT of our salvation by grace, *"for we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them."* Those to whom *"the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared,"* those who *"know the grace of (their) Lord Jesus Christ"* by faith in His blood and have been cleansed from their sins and freed from its power, are to be *"zealous of good works,"* Paul says --eager to bring them forth, not because they HAVE TO by the injunctions of the Law and its threats for non-compliance, but because they WANT TO! It is the earnest desire, the constant endeavor, and the highest priority of the New Man of faith within true Christians to *"live unto Him which died for them and rose again"* (II Corinthians 5:15).

Such a life of sanctification from day to day, motivated and enabled by the grace of God, will fill our New Year with purpose, with productivity, with contentment, with joy, and, above all, with anticipation, as we find ourselves *"looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Savior Jesus Christ"* and the glory which shall be

revealed in us as the reward of His grace. And both the internal witness (our faith) and the external witness (our works) of God's Holy Spirit will confirm to us --no matter what the New Year might bring in terms of "bane and blessing, pain and pleasure"-- *"that we are the children of God; and if children then heirs, heirs of God and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with Him, that we may be also glorified together."* (Romans 8:16-17) How could we then, knowing by faith the grace of God that bringeth salvation, have anything short of a truly **HAPPY CHRISTMAS** and a **BLESSED NEW YEAR** in our precious Redeemer, *"for unto (us) is born this day ... a Savior, which is Christ the Lord!"*

Oh, may we keep and ponder in our mind
God's wondrous love in saving lost mankind!
Trace we the Babe, who hath retrieved our loss,
From His poor manger to His bitter cross,
Tread in His steps, assisted by His grace,
Till man's first heavenly state again takes place.

(L.H. 84,5)

--D.T.M.

(The following is the third and last segment of a serialized presentation of this year's Convention essay.)

THE LORD'S SUPPER INVOLVES OUR FIRM TRUST IN THE LORD AND IN THE PURE TEACHINGS OF HIS WORD

III. How We Are to Apply to Ourselves as Christians What the Bible Teaches Concerning the Lord's Supper.

A customary thing for a person to do who owns a business or much property or a lot of money is to make a will. In this will he would state just how he wants everything that he owns to be handled and disposed of after his death. That which people receive by having it willed or bequeathed to them is called an inheritance. Such a will usually has the title, *LAST WILL AND TESTAMENT*, and is set forth in all clearness and simplicity so that there is no misunderstanding. These things, of course, are obviously well known.

The Lord Jesus also made His *Last Will and Testament* on the evening before His bitter suffering and death on the cross. In this Last Will and Testament of our Savior, His followers of all time and of all places are given a priceless legacy. Now, Jesus didn't have any real estate. He didn't own a fine house, not even a little cottage. He had no money and no real earthly possessions, nothing of this world which He could call His own which He could bequeath to His loved ones. Even on Palm Sunday, only four days earlier, He rode into Jerusalem on an ass which was borrowed. His only earthly possessions were the clothes which He had on His back--and these He would not have regarded as being very valuable or worth leaving to anyone. The Roman soldiers simply divided these articles of clothing among themselves after Jesus was nailed to the cross.

But while the Lord Jesus had no valuable earthly possession to leave to His faithful followers, He did leave them a priceless **spiritual** legacy in His Holy Supper which we have discussed in the two previous sections of this essay. In the Lord's Supper, our Savior doesn't merely give us a small morsel of bread and a swallow of wine with which we are to remember Him, but as we are given the bread, He tells us, **"Take, eat; this is My body which is given <u>for</u> you"**--in your place, on the cross, **"This do in remembrance of me."** And, as we are given the wine, He tells us, **"Drink ye all of it, this cup is the New Testament in My blood, which is shed <u>for</u> you for the remission of sins. This do, as oft as ye drink it, in remembrance of Me."** Should we ever have any reason to think that Jesus doesn't mean what He says in this His Last Will and Testament--that He really means that He is giving us *merely a symbol* of His body and *a mere representation* of His blood in that small piece of bread and in that swallow of wine?? To teach that Jesus is using figurative language in His Last Will and Testament would be similar to accusing Him of **perjury**! If anywhere plain and unmistakeable language would be used, it would be here! And so, we are to take Jesus at His Word, yes, to trust in the Lord with all our heart, and lean not unto our own understanding--firmly believing that in this precious Sacrament we receive **"in, with, and under"** (as Luther and all orthodox Lutheran theologians have described this mysterious and incomprehensible union) --yes, in, with, and under the bread we receive the <u>true</u> <u>body</u> of Christ and in, with, and under the wine, we receive His <u>true</u> <u>blood</u>.

At our last convention at Peace Ev. Lutheran Church in Oak Forest, Illinois, we listened to an excellent essay on *The Proper Interpretation and Use of the Holy Scriptures* delivered by Pastor E. R. Stallings of San Antonio, Texas. In accordance with the 9th Hermeneutical Principle set forth in Pastor Stallings' essay on pages 19 and 20 in the 1993 PROCEEDINGS of the 42nd Annual Convention of our Conference, we find the very first argument for a literal interpretation of our Savior's words of institution of the Lord's Supper, namely, that the burden of proof rests upon the advocates of a figurative interpretation. A declaration in the Word of God must be presumed to be literal unless sufficient reasons are alleged to the contrary from the Bible itself--and not from our own human reason. Anything taught in the Bible must be carefully guarded from a figurative interpretation (Creation, the Fall of Man, etc.) when no reason is given for such an interpretation in the immediate context or anywhere else in Scripture. Here we may also remember this important fact, namely, that

everything that God wants us to know and to believe, every command or promise, every warning, threat, and article of faith is always expressed somewhere in Scripture in plain and unmistakable language as distinguished from figurative terms (see Principle #4 on page 14 of the 1993 PROCEEDINGS referred to above). In other words, every figurative passage must have the key of its interpretation in one that is literal (see Principle #3 on page 13). If, then, the Words of Institution of the Lord's Supper are interpreted figuratively, and this figurative interpretation has absolutely no support in any literal declaration in Scripture, we must then conclude that such a figurative interpretation must come entirely from human wisdom and ingenuity *outside of* the Bible and *NOT FROM* THE BIBLE. God, then, is not allowed to put His own interpretation upon His own words. In the Lord's Supper a new and hitherto unknown action is being instituted which is to continue unto the end of time. Would it be likely that we should expect the Lord to use figurative language under such circumstances? More even than this: This divine institution is called a "New Testament" which is to replace the Old Testament Sacrament of the Passover Feast to which it is related as shadow to substance (see: Colossians 2:17; Hebrews 10:1). To interpret the Lord's Supper figuratively would cause it to be related to the Old Testament as shadow to shadow which would be highly unlikely and without purpose.

Let us always bear in mind that no man, not even an angel from heaven, has the authority to change the Words with which our Savior instituted His Holy Supper. If we cannot rely on these plain words which the Lord Jesus spoke to His disciples as a solemn testament before His suffering and death for the sins of the world, then there would not be a single Word of God in the Bible upon which we could rely or in which we could place our trust. Those who **"trust in the Lord with all their heart"** show this when they humbly bow to the plain words of Jesus in this Sacrament, when the Sacrament is administered and received according to Christ's institution, and when every false teaching by which others either add to or take away from the Savior's Words is rejected as a mockery and profanation of God's Name.

✝ ✝ ✝ ✝ ✝ ✝ ✝ ✝ ✝ ✝ ✝

In applying what the Bible teaches about the Lord's Supper to ourselves as Christians, we must first of all distinguish between the Sacrament of the Altar as an *action of God* and *our use* of the Sacrament; between Christ's

institution and our compliance and response to what is provided in the Sacrament; between the ***sacramental*** side and the ***sacrificial*** side of what happens when the Sacrament is administered. The **Sacrament** of the Altar, as an action of God, cannot be an act of worship, or a means of confessing Christ before others, or a declaration of our unity with one another; for these things belong to something that we do instead of to something that God does. We should always differentiate between the *sacramental* and *sacrificial* side of the Lord's Supper. In a Sacrament, God offers and gives something to man; in a sacrifice, man offers something to God. As a Sacrament, the Lord's Supper is for the nourishment of our souls. In it God gives to us bread and wine, with the assurance that the body and blood of Christ are received in, with, and under them as the pledge of His forgiveness, love, and favor. In this respect, the Lord's Supper has exactly the same power as the Gospel. In fact, as Luther says, **"The words, 'Given and shed for you for the remission of sins,' besides the bodily eating and drinking, are the chief thing in the Sacrament; and he that believes these words has what they say and express, namely, the forgiveness of sins."** (*Luther's Small Catechism*, CPH, 1943, p. 21). Here we must remember that the Son of God has a human body and human blood for no other purpose than that His promise of the forgiveness of sins, life and salvation might be accomplished and bestowed upon all mankind. And, unless this promise is appropriated by faith, the body and blood of Christ are abused; and condemnation instead of an eternal blessing ensues. In the Sacrament there is, therefore, a ***natural*** eating and drinking of the bread and wine. This, of course, is subordinate to the ***sacramental*** eating and drinking of the true body and blood of Christ in, with, and under those earthly elements. And the sacramental eating and drinking is, in turn, subordinate to *faith* or the ***spiritual*** eating and drinking without which the communicant is unworthy and unprepared **"for the words 'for you'"** says Luther, **"require all hearts to believe!"**

The presence of the body and blood of our Savior in the Lord's Supper must therefore be regarded as **"real," "substantial,"** and **"sacramental."** **"Real,"** is the opposite of figurative and refers to Christ's natural, human body and blood, which was given and shed for us on the cross for our redemption. **"Substantial,"** is the opposite of potential, namely, that not only the effect of the sacrifice of Christ's body and blood is present in the Sacrament (as the Reformed churches like to portray in glowing terms) but the very body and blood which was sacrificed on the cross for the

remission of sins (which they, of course, reject). **"Sacramental,"** distinguishes the presence of Christ's body and blood in the Sacrament from every other type of presence. It is a presence found only in the Lord's Supper, and nowhere else.

"Thus," according to the ***Formula of Concord***, **"we are simply to *believe* with all humility and obedience the plain, firm, clear, and solemn words and command of our Creator and Redeemer, without any doubt and disputation as to how it agrees with our reason or is possible. For these words were spoken by *that Lord* who is infinite Wisdom and Truth itself, and also can execute and accomplish everything which He promises,"** (*Triglotta*, p. 989:47). When through such faith, by God's grace alone, we believe, accept, and observe all that Christ has spoken in His Words of Institution of the Lord's Supper and carefully **DO** all that He has commanded, each communicant receives special assurance and comfort from the promise of Christ in His Holy Supper. Even though the same promise of the Gospel has been heard a thousand times outside of the Sacrament, this promise acquires new force for each individual Christian when he receives, as a pledge and seal of the forgiveness of all his sins, the very body and blood which paid the price for such forgiveness.

✝ ✝ ✝ ✝ ✝ ✝ ✝ ✝ ✝ ✝ ✝

Every **act of** a Christian **in response to** or **evoked by** a command or promise of God is ***sacrificial***--not *sacramental*. Our **coming to** the Lord's Table, **taking, eating**, and **drinking** are <u>sacrifices</u>. They are **not** propitiatory, as though they purchase reconciliation, for this has been already accomplished for us by Christ. But they <u>are</u> sacrifices or offerings of gratitude and praise for His undeserved kindness and love which surpasses all human understanding. Thus, the Bible speaks of the sacrifices of our hearts, lips, and hands, saying, **"My son, give Me thine heart, and let thine eyes observe My ways,"** Proverbs 23:26; **"The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit: a broken and a contrite heart, O God, Thou wilt not despise,"** Psalm 51:17; **"I will sacrifice unto Thee with the voice of thanksgiving; I will pay that that I have vowed. Salvation is of the Lord,"** Jonah 2:9; **"To do good and to communicate (share) forget not: for with such sacrifices God is well pleased,"** Hebrews 13:16. Therefore Scripture says, **"As often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do <u>show</u> the Lord's death till He come,"** I

Corinthians 11:26; and it teaches that, by our participation in the Lord's Supper, we also confess our oneness of faith with those with whom we commune; for we read in I Corinthians 10:17, **"For we being many are one bread, and one body: for we are all partakers of that one bread."**

✝ ✝ ✝ ✝ ✝ ✝ ✝ ✝ ✝ ✝ ✝

The Lord's Supper was not instituted until the very close of Christ's ministry, after His disciples had been under His instruction for many years. It is the Sacrament for *mature Christianity* or, as we mentioned in the introduction to this essay, the Sacrament of *Confirmation* (of faith) while Baptism is the Sacrament of *Initiation*. Jesus did not offer this Sacrament to the multitudes who were attracted by His miracles and thronged to hear Him preach, or to the children who cried, **"Hosanna to the Son of David,"** BUT to "The Twelve," the close, inner circle of His disciples. In Paul's First Epistle to the Corinthians, chapter 11:20-34, he speaks in particular about the preparation required for the profitable use of the Sacrament. Here we find the words, **"But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of that bread and drink of that cup."**

The Lord's Supper should therefore NOT be given to those who are not capable of a proper, Scriptural, examination of themselves, such as children or those who are mentally deficient, or adults who have not had sufficient instruction. The ***Augsburg Confession*** states, **"None are admitted except they be first examined."** Each congregation has the right, according to its own circumstances, under the guidance of its pastor, to make policies or guidelines to guard the Sacrament from abuse and to retain a strong and well-instructed membership. A Christian congregation may therefore introduce a purely human ordinance, such as *Confirmation*, as a requirement for admission to this Sacrament, especially on the part of those who have been baptized when they were infants, that they might be given the opportunity publicly to renew their Baptismal Vow and, through examination, profess their oneness in faith with those with whom they will come to the Lord's Table. Such policies also may pertain to *announcements for Communion* which are received and recorded by the pastor.

Because the pastor is placed into his office by the Holy Ghost through the call of a Christian congregation, he is responsible for the souls entrusted to his care, as we read in Hebrews 13:17, **"They watch for your souls as**

they that must give account." It is, therefore, his responsibility to withhold the Lord's Supper from those who are known to be ungodly and impenitent; from those who have given offense and have not removed it, (Matthew 5:23,24); from those who do not discern the Lord's body in the Sacrament, (I Corinthians 11:29); and from those of a different faith since participation in the Lord's Supper requires oneness in faith (I Corinthians 10:17). To administer communion to a person who is known to believe differently than the other communicants would be the sin of unionism, namely, that joining together in religious worship which is forbidden in Romans 16:17 and is contrary to I Corinthians 1:10 which requires those who worship together to be **"of the same mind and of the same judgment."**

Because of our sinful flesh, we often forget to examine ourselves carefully before coming to the Lord's Table. Before partaking of the Lord's Body and Blood in this Sacrament we should diligently examine our spiritual condition, the condition of our souls, in all seriousness and earnestness. Of what we should examine ourselves may be outlined as follows: **1)** Whether we humbly acknowledge that there is not one good thing in us by nature of which we can boast; **2)** Whether we truly repent of our sins and shortcomings in the light of God's Holy Law, considering our station in life according to the Ten Commandments; **3)** Whether we truly believe in Jesus Christ as God's Son and as our only Savior from sin, death, Satan, and hell; **4)** Whether we acknowledge that our salvation is only by God's grace, for Christ's sake, through faith, without our own good works or merits; **5)** Whether we are ready and willing, with the help of God's Holy Spirit, to amend our sinful lives and constantly to strive after holiness of living out of love for our Savior; **6)** Whether we are ready and willing, at all times, to cling to the pure teachings of God's Word, to renounce the devil and all his works and ways, and to reject everything that is contrary to Scripture; **7)** Whether we have a truly forgiving spirit toward all people and do not harbor any malice, bitterness, envy, hatred or any hard feelings in our hearts toward any fellow human being or think ourselves better than others; and **8)** Whether we, by God's grace, accept wholeheartedly the Scriptural teaching of the Lord's Supper and believe that the Lord's body and blood are indeed in this Sacrament. Those who are not willing thus to examine themselves ought not to partake of this Holy Supper of the Lord lest they eat and drink the body and blood of Christ to their damnation.

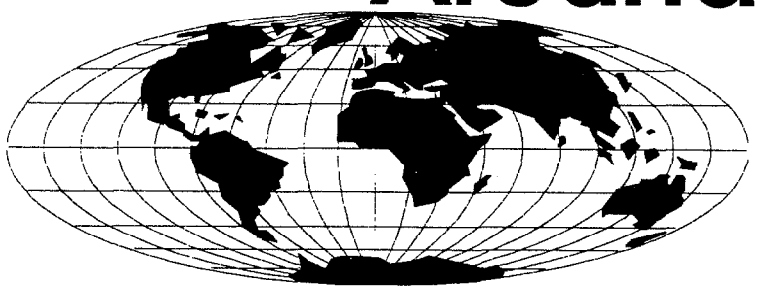
But will not such an examination make us fearful that our faith is much too weak to partake worthily of the Lord's Supper? If it does, we should remind ourselves of the fact that the Lord's Supper was not instituted to condemn, but to comfort and strengthen those who are weak in faith. We read these precious words in the ***Formula of Concord*** (*Triglotta*, p. 997:69), **"For Christians who are of weak faith, diffident, troubled, and heartily terrified because of the greatness and number of their sins, and think that in this their great impurity they are not worthy of this precious treasure and the benefits of Christ, and who feel and lament their weakness of faith, and from their hearts desire that they may serve God with stronger and more joyful faith and pure obedience, they are the truly worthy guests for whom this highly venerable Sacrament (and sacred feast) has been especially instituted and appointed; as Christ says, Matt. 11:28: *'Come unto Me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest'*."**

In conclusion, the Lord Jesus wants us to come to His Holy Supper *frequently* (I Corinthians 11:25,26). Those who refuse to come **often** to this Sacrament, actually show that this precious Means of Grace is of very little concern to them. Yes, they show that, in their hearts, they may actually *despise* that which their Savior has instituted for their soul's health and for their eternal salvation. Let all of us in our beloved Conference, who are communicant members in one of our congregations, show that we *cherish the Lord's Supper highly* by coming **OFTEN** to partake of this Holy Sacrament, yes, by partaking of the true body and blood of the Lord, and considering it the *greatest privilege and blessing*, every time the opportunity is given to us; and may each of us be able to pray: **"Lord, may Thy body and Thy blood Be for my soul the highest good."** Amen.

SOLI DEO GLORIA

--PRB

Around the World



with editorial comment

by M. L. Natterer

When Harold Camping says the world is going to end in September, people listen. In two books and a nightly national radio talk show, Camping has convinced thousands that one day this September, the "saved" will be raised up and the "unsaved" living and dead condemned to everlasting damnation. "The judgment throne is coming. In a few days, it will be here," Camping said in a telephone interview from his office in Oakland, Calif. What distinguishes Camping is the media forum offered by the 40 radio stations owned by his company, Family Radio. Camping, whose background is in engineering, has devised his own system for dating biblical events that fits into a plan of salvation history in which key events occur in 1,000-year periods. According to Camping's dateline, the period of tribulation forecast in biblical books as leading up to the end began in May 1988, 13,000 years after the world was created in 11,013 B.C. It was in 1988 that Satan was turned loose on the Earth. Working from the May 1988 date, he arrived at September 1994 as the date of the end of the world by taking literally a reference in the eighth chapter of the Book of Daniel to a vision of a sanctuary being rebuilt 2,300 days after it was desecrated. (The Sunday Oregonian, July 17, 1994)

The above reminds us of a similar prediction made in the 1800s by William Miller who began the movement culminating in the 7th Day Adventist denomination. It is interesting to note that he, too, based his findings on a study of the Old Testament book of Daniel, especially chapter 8:13,14. From this and similar passages Miller first calculated March 21, 1843 which he then changed to October 22, 1844 as the date when Christ would return. Later under Ellen White and her husband, James, "the heavenly sanctuary" theory was adopted which stated that William Miller was right with regard to the date but wrong concerning the event. His was simply a "sanctified

miscalculation" according to Ellen White who held that on October 22, 1844 Christ entered the Holy of Holies in the heavenly sanctuary to begin His "investigative judgment" which, when completed, would usher in the return of Christ. But all such predictions are doomed to failure! Concerning His final return the Lord Jesus emphatically declares, "*But of that day and hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels of heaven, but My Father only*" (Matthew 24:36). We have no right to pry into God's secret counsels. Remember how the Savior answered that prying question of His disciples prior to His Ascension? *"It is not for you to know the times or the seasons, which the Father hath put in His own power*" (Acts 1:7). We Christians are bound to what the Lord gives us in His Word! And He tells us that "*the Day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up. Seeing then that all these things shall be dissolved, what manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy conversation and godliness, looking for and hasting unto the coming of the Day of God*" ... (2 Peter 3:10-12).

✳ ✝ ✳ ✝ ✳ ✝ ✳ ✝ ✳ ✝ ✳ ✝ ✳ ✝ ✳

In Sabana Grande, Puerto Rico mist and low clouds routinely brush the mountain tops here, and there is something about the way sudden sunlight breaks through that suggests the flickering of a celestial spotlight. But for tens of thousands of visitors each year, what happens in this remote corner of the island is less meteorological than miraculous. Since 1953, when three schoolchildren reported seeing a vision of the Virgin Mary floating in a well, growing numbers of pilgrims have hiked up the mountain to draw water from the well and pray for everything from good fortune to miracle cures. And apparently, prayers have been answered. "I know that we owe the life of our youngest daughter to the Virgin of the Well," said Edmee Roumain, in reference to Katia, now 10, who was born with several heart defects. "This has been a transformation in our lives." The next transformation to take place could be the one that changes this quiet town of 22,000 people - a place well off the main tourist trails through this scenic U.S. commonwealth - into a major Christian mecca. Where there is now a rustic chapel, a small stone well and a modest gift shop selling postcards and rosaries, a group of devotees headed by a San Juan dentist has plans to develop a virtual Virgin Mary theme park - a multi-million-dollar project that would include overnight accommodations, trams to

shuttle pilgrims up the mountain and a statue of the blue-robed virgin that, at 25 stories tall, would dwarf the Statue of Liberty. Already the group has spent $200,000 to buy 200 acres of adjacent land for what would be called Monte Mistico de Maria (Mary's Mystical Mountain). (The Sunday Oregonian, July 24, 1994).

"I am the Lord, thy God" **(Exod. 20:2);** ***"thou shalt have none other gods before Me"*** **(Deut. 5:7);** ***"thou shalt worship the Lord, thy God, and Him only shalt thou serve"*** **(Matt. 4:10);** ***"I am the Lord: that is My Name: and My glory will I not give to another, neither My praise to graven images"*** **(Is. 42:8). The Law commands that we are to fear, love, and trust in God above all things and condemns all who worship a creature as God, or fear, love, or trust in a creature as we should fear, love, or trust in God alone. When the Apostle John** ***"fell at his (the angel's) feet to worship him. And he said unto me, See thou do it not: I am thy fellow-servant, and of thy brethren that have the testimony of Jesus: worship God!"*** **(Rev. 19:10). After the Lord through the Apostle Paul had healed** ***"a certain man at Lystra, impotent in his feet, being a cripple from his mother's womb, who never had walked,"*** **the people were prepared to give Paul and Barnabas divine homage by bringing oxen and garlands unto the gates and would have done sacrifice. Paul and Barnabas, however, were horrified when they heard of this and tore their clothes running** ***"in among the people, crying out, and saying, Sirs, why do ye these things? We also are men of like passions with you,"...."and with these sayings scarce restrained they the people, that they had not done sacrifice unto them"*** **(Acts 14:8-18). We Christians honor Mary because God had chosen her to be the mother of the promised Messiah. The angel Gabriel told her,** ***"Blessed art thou among women, and blessed is the fruit of thy womb"*** **(Luke 2:42). But to elevate, honor, and praise her, as the Roman Church does, is plain idolatry !**

✳ ✝ ✳ ✝ ✳ ✝ ✳ ✝ ✳ ✝ ✳ ✝ ✳ ✝ ✳

According to evolutionary psychology, it is "natural" for both men and women - at some times, under some circumstances - to commit adultery ... According to evolutionary psychologists, our every, ever shifting attitudes toward a mate or prospective mate - trust, suspicion, rhapsody, revulsion, warmth, iciness - are the handiwork of natural selection that remain with us today because in the past they led to behaviors that helped spread genes

... women are not by nature paragons of fidelity. Wanderlust is an innate part of their minds, ready to surface under propitious circumstances...men seem much more deeply inclined to actually acquire a second or third mate - to keep a harem. They are also more inclined toward the casual fling. Men are less finicky about sex partners. Prostitution - sex with someone you don't know and don't care to know - is a service sought overwhelmingly by males the world round.....Given the toll of divorce - on children, on low-income men, and for that matter on mothers and fathers - it would be nice to come up with a magic monogamy-restoration plan. Alas, the importance of this task seems rivaled only by its difficulty. Lifelong monogamous devotion just isn't natural, and the modern environment makes it harder than ever. What to do?.....

The above are merely a few excerpts from a very lengthy article entitled Our Cheating Hearts appearing in TIME, August 15, 1994. There is "a magic monogamy-restoration plan." It is found in God's Word. It was the Lord Himself who instituted a monogamous marriage in the Garden of Eden when He created Adam and Eve (Gen. 2), and repeated by Jesus, (God manifest in the flesh, 1 Tim. 3:16), in the Gospels (e.g., Matt. 19:4-6), and the epistles (e.g., 1 Cor. 7:2-4) of the Apostles, *"who spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost"* (2 Pet. 1:21). It is therefore blasphemous to declare that a "lifelong monogamous devotion just isn't natural." The fact that there is so much "cheating" going on is not God's fault but due to man's sinfulness and the refusal of husbands and wives to obey God's Word! For many the sacred vow taken in marriage to remain faithful to each other (this also includes sexual relationship) means nothing. As soon as they have an opportunity to engage in sexual relations with someone to whom they feel attracted other than their spouse they think it to be perfectly natural that they do so. Unfortunately, this sinful behavior is advocated by many worldly psychologists and psychiatrists and even sanctioned by some so-called Christian denominations. We know that sexual feelings have indeed been implanted in us by God but they are to find their fulfillment not in adultery and fornication (1 Cor. 6:15-20) but only in marriage, for *"marriage is honorable in all and the bed undefiled: but whoremongers and adulterers God will judge"* (Heb. 13:4). Christian husbands and wives are to *"watch and pray" because "the spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak"* (Matt. 26:41). Husband and wife should always be filled with love for one another (Prov. 5:19), and carefully avoid those

situations in which they may be tempted to disobey God by having sex outside of marriage (Prov. 7).

✳ ✝ ✳ ✝ ✳ ✝ ✳ ✝ ✳ ✝ ✳ ✝ ✳ ✝ ✳

Why can't we live forever? There are several theories on what causes aging - ranging from entropy to a death gene. "Which do you think is closest to the mark?" I asked Professor Hayflick. "And why can't we have physical immortality?" "That last question, of course, is the key question in the field," Hayflick said. "Why should Nature spend this enormous amount of development to raise an animal to maturity and then squander that miraculous achievement (by letting it die)? Why produce any more? Why not simply maintain indefinitely the series of miracles already here? Well, we have theories, if not direct answers." ... "Longevity - the potential of an animal or human to live a particular number of years - is indirectly determined genetically," he continued. "Nature originally designed humans to live about 30 years - the time needed to reach sexual maturation and raise children to independence. For the survival of any species, that's all that's needed. (Parade, The Sunday Oregonian, August 21, 1994)

Must we age? was the question raised in the article appearing in Parade (excerpts above) written by Hugh Downs who interviewed Prof. Leonard Hayflick, a cell biologist and founding member of the Council of the National Institute on Aging and also professor of anatomy for the University of California at San Francisco School of Medicine. It is most unfortunate that this "distinguished gerontologist" either does not know or refuses to acknowledge aging and death to be the consequences of sin. God had told our first parents concerning the fruit of the tree of knowledge of good and evil, "*thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die*" (Gen. 2:17). When they disobeyed, they not only died spiritually but now they would also die physically. The Apostle writes, "*By one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned*" (Rom. 5:12). When Adam attained the age of 930 we are told that he died (Gen. 5:5). It is inevitable that all of us must die. And prior to our death we experience various sicknesses and the infirmities of advancing age. The Psalmist speaks of this when he writes, "*The days of our years are threescore years and ten; and if by reason of strength they be fourscore years, yet is their strength labor and sorrow; for it is soon cut off, and we*

***fly away*" (Ps. 90:10). God has set the time for our death and when we have reached that allotted time we shall die. And the various illnesses which we experience are the messengers announcing to us that we are frail mortal beings subject to the word which the Lord spoke to our first parents after they had sinned, *"Dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return*" (Gen. 3:19). God alone is the Fountain of Life (Ps. 36:9). And only the believers in Christ can confidently look forward to an eternal life in heaven (John 3:16).**

W E L C O M E

TO ALL OLD AND NEW SUBSCRIBERS

We appreciate your concern for true orthodox Lutheranism and are certain that, by God's grace, you will receive rich spiritual benefits from your faithful reading of **CONCORDIA LUTHERAN** articles which are based solidly upon the pure and unerring Word of God.

Only $3.00 per year!

Give a subscription to a relative or friend.

CONCORDIA LUTHERAN CONFERENCE
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, AZ 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, AZ 85730
Telephone: (602) 721-7618

HOLY SCRIPTURE EV. LUTHERAN CHURCH

San Antonio, TX 78218
(Currently meeting at **La Quinta Inn-Airport East**, 333 NE Loop 410)
Worship Service ..... 9:30 a.m.
Sunday School and
Bible Class ..... 11:00 a.m.
REV. E. R. STALLINGS, JR., Pastor
110 Grasmere Court
San Antonio, TX 78218
Telephone: (210) 650-9053

PEACE EV. LUTHERAN CHURCH

Central Avenue at 171st Place
Oak Forest, IL 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, IL 60452
Telephones: Church office and Pastor's Study: (708) 532-4288
Parsonage: (708) 532-9035

Note: Services are also held each Sunday in our Midland, Michigan chapel at the **Ramada Inn**, 1815 South Saginaw Road:
Sunday School and
Bible Class ..... 6:30 p.m.
Worship Service ..... 7:30 p.m.

ST. JOHN'S LUTHERAN CHURCH

6th and Tangent
Lebanon, OR 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, OR 97355
Telephone: (503) 258-2941

ST. LUKE'S LUTHERAN CHURCH

55th Ave. S & S. Fountain St.
Seattle, WA 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, WA 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, SD 57279
Worship Service .....
(June 1st through 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, SD 57279
Telephone: (605) 938-4710