the Concordia Lutheran

"The Scripture cannot be broken." John 10:35.

"Thy Word is a Lamp unto my feet, and a Light unto my path." Ps. 119:105.

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"Let your light
so shine before men,
that they may see
your good works,
and glorify your Father
which is in heaven."

Matt. 5:16

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STATEMENT OF PURPOSE:

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

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

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

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

To seek out all who truly share our Scriptural position in doctrine and practice, and to urge the mutual public 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

In Christ Jesus, our only Savior, my dear fellow-believers!

Those who truly believe in the Lord Jesus Christ as their Savior and strive with the aid of the Holy Spirit to reveal that faith in their lips and deeds are not regarded very highly by the unbelieving world! When the apostles were brought before the council of the Jews, we recall how they were severely whipped and commanded not to preach any more about Jesus (Acts 5). And so great was the hatred of the Jews against Stephen, that they refused to hear any more of his testimony; instead, they took him outside the walls of Jerusalem and stoned him to death (Acts 7). The Apostle Paul also experienced the bitter hatred of the unbelieving Jews time and time again (see Acts 21:31). In fact, all down through the history of the Church the true believing children of God through faith in Christ have been the object of the world's bitter hatred, ridicule, and scorn. This had been foretold by our dear Savior who reminded His disciples, "*If ye were of the world, the world would love his own: but because ye are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you*" (John 15:19). We must remind ourselves that the message which we publicly proclaim in our congregations and privately confess in our daily lives is foolishness unto the unbelieving world (1 Cor. 1:18ff.). Even the very presence of a sincere Christian often disturbs the conscience of the unbeliever since he is thereby reminded of his sin and the coming judgment. Although the world has little left over for the true Christians, the Lord God has bestowed unspeakably great blessings upon the Christians whom He loves very dearly. For it is only to the Christians that the Lord says -

YE ARE A ROYAL PRIESTHOOD
1=As such we Christians enjoy undeserved blessings, and,
2=As such we Christians show our thankfulness by our works

The Apostle Peter reminds the Christians of their high honor and their royal dignity. ***"But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people."*** When we look at the context we observe that the Apostle refers to the Christians "*as lively stones*," which "*are built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood*" (v.5). Thus he pictures the Christians as "*living stones*" of a "*spiritual house*": that is, the temple of God or the Holy Christian Church. The fact that the believer is a believer in Christ as his Savior from sin makes him a "*living stone*" in that spiritual building. Now the believer does not stand alone, but is a member of the Holy Christian Church, together with all the believers in Christ, as the Apostle Paul states in his Epistle to the Galatians, "*For ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus*" (Gal. 3:26). And also in his Epistle to the Ephesians, "*Now therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellowcitizens with the saints, and of the household of God*" (2:19).

Look at the terms which the Apostle Peter uses to impress upon us the glorious blessings which He has bestowed upon us! ***"A chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people."*** Let no one think that the Apostle is speaking of the Jews as a political entity as though all of the Jews were still the chosen people of God! O how often we hear and read such language within Protestantism today. The opinion is held by many so-called "evangelicals" that since the Jews are still God's chosen people God has given them back their land and according to these Biblical manipulators of some Old Testament passages torn out of context, it is their inalienable right to take possession of the entire land of Israel which the Lord had given to their father, Abraham. But what saith the Scriptures? "*For they are not all Israel, which are of Israel: Neither, because they are the seed of Abraham, are they all children: but, In Isaac shall thy seed be called. That is, They which are the children of the flesh, these are not the children of God: but the children of the promise are counted for the seed.*" (Rom. 9: 6-8). The Jews, as a political entity, are no longer God's chosen people! His chosen people are those whom He chose in Christ before the foundation of the world and who in the course of time were brought to faith by God the Holy Spirit through the Gospel and were thus made members of the Holy Christian Church, the Communion of Saints, this glorious Temple of which Christ Himself is the Corner Stone. Therefore all these terms employed by the Apostle here in our text describe the Christians, the believing remnant of the Jews and the believing Gentiles, as a unit belonging together. And what unifies them is

their faith in Christ, the Corner Stone. Here there "*is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus*" (Gal. 3:28).

All those who are living stones in this temple are spiritual priests. In the Old Testament the priesthood was limited to the house of Aaron - now the priesthood consists of all those who are dressed in the blood and righteousness of Jesus. Whether an individual has been a Christian the greater part of his life or is newly converted - such an one is a royal priest in the sight of God. Being royal priests we Christians now have direct access to God through our Lord Jesus Christ. In the Old Testament only the priests were entrusted with the duty of mediation for others. Under penalty of death, everyone but the priest was forbidden to function in the Holy Place. We need only think of the example of King Uzziah whose heart was lifted up with pride. In spite of the vigorous protests of Azariah the priest and the other priests who told him, "*It appertaineth not unto thee, Uzziah, to burn incense unto the Lord, but to the priests the sons of Aaron, that are consecrated to burn incense: go out of the sanctuary; for thou hast trespassed; neither shall it be for thine honor from the Lord God,*" he stubbornly persisted and "*while he was wroth with the priests, the leprosy even rose up in his forehead before the priests in the house of the Lord, from beside the incense altar.*" Thus he suffered the consequences of his disobedience by being "*a leper unto the day of his death*" (2 Chron. 26:16-21).

All this has been done away with. The vail of separation in the temple has been torn asunder (Luke 23:45) and we Christians no longer require an earthly mediator! "*For through Him (Jesus) we both have access by one Spirit unto the Father*" (Eph. 2:18). Not so, the Roman hierarchy insists, we must approach God through a specific human priesthood, namely, that priesthood which it has established to reconcile men to God through teachings spun out of its own head. But God says otherwise! The Apostle writes that in Christ Jesus our Lord "*we have boldness and access with confidence by the faith of Him*" (Eph. 3:12). "*For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus*" (1 Tim. 2:5), "*by whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God*" (Rom. 5:2).

What glorious blessings we Christians enjoy! Here there is forgiveness of sin. The past is all forgiven and forgotten. The Christian can declare,

"*Behold, for peace I had great bitterness: but Thou hast in love to my soul delivered it from the pit of corruption: for Thou hast cast all my sins behind Thy back*" (Is. 38:17). Here there is peace of mind and heart. "*Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ*" (Rom. 5:1). Here there is the promise of comfort in the time of tribulation and distress. For thus saith the Lord, "*Fear not: for I have redeemed thee, I have called thee by thy name; thou art mine. When thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee; and through the rivers, they shall not overflow thee: when thou walkest through the fire, thou shalt not be burned; neither shall the flame kindle upon thee*" (Is. 43:1,2). Here there is the promise of an everlasting life in the joys of heaven with Jesus our dear Savior who assures us, "*I am the resurrection, and the life: he that believeth in Me, though he were dead, yet shall he live: and whosoever liveth and believeth in Me shall never die*" (John 11: 25,26). Are these not glorious blessings!

And what have we done to earn and merit such blessings? Note the answer of the Apostle Peter in our text! **..."*Who hath called you out of darkness into His marvellous light.*"** How this should humble us! These glorious blessings were not earned or merited by us. No, indeed, our rightful lot was nothing but punishment - temporal and everlasting punishment. For we have to confess with the Psalmist, "*Behold, I was shapen in iniquity, and in sin did my mother conceive me*" (Ps. 51:5). By nature we were in spiritual darkness - spiritually blind, dead, and enemies of God. We were inclined only toward evil, "*fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind; and were by nature the children of wrath, even as others*" (Eph. 2:3). Had it not been for the love of our dear heavenly Father who gave His only begotten Son who fulfilled the Law perfectly in our stead, suffered and died as our Substitute, then we would be forever lost. For "*the wages of sin is death*" (Rom. 6:23). Not only do we have this comforting message before us in the Gospel, but God the Holy Spirit has worked saving faith in our hearts so that we trust and rely, rejoice and take comfort, in Jesus our dear Savior. "*Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy He saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost; which He shed on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Savior; that being justified by His grace, we should be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life*" (Titus 3: 5-7). Therefore we must declare with the Apostle John, "*Unto Him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in His own blood, and*

hath made us kings and priests unto God and His Father; to Him be glory and dominion for ever and ever" (Rev. 1: 5,6).

II

As we meditate and ponder upon these marvelous and undeserved blessings as royal priests in the sight of God, this should not leave our hearts cold, lifeless and indifferent. On the contrary, as such royal priests **we Christians must now show our thankfulness by our works!** Is this not what the Apostle writes in crystal-clear language? "***That ye should show forth the praises of Him who hath called you out of darkness into His marvellous light.***" The Lord has not delivered us from sin, death and hell, to an inactive state; on the contrary, if there are no fruits of faith, there is no genuine faith, for "*faith without works is dead*" (James 2:20). True faith is a living and vibrant thing which can not remain bottled up within the heart but willingly expresses itself in works. Look at the example of Peter and John who declared, "*For we cannot but speak the things which we have seen and heard*" (Acts 4:20). Likewise the Apostle Paul exclaims, "*for the love of Christ constraineth us*" (2 Cor. 5:14).

Nor have we been called out of darkness into God's marvelous light to continue in sin! When we observe the speech and behavior of many who call themselves Christians it would appear that they have allowed themselves to be controlled by this lie from the father of all lies (John 8:44). We are reminded of the words which the Lord spoke to the children of Israel in the Old Testament through the Prophet Jeremiah, "*Will ye steal, murder, and commit adultery, and swear falsely, and burn incense unto Baal, and walk after other gods whom ye know not; and come and stand before Me in this house, which is called by My Name, and say, We are delivered to do all these abominations?*" (Jeremiah 7:9,10). "*Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the Law, being made a curse for us*" (Gal. 3:13). Why? "*Shall we sin, because we are not under the law, but under grace? God forbid. Know ye not, that to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are to whom ye obey; whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness?*" ... "*But now being made free from sin, and become servants to God, ye have your fruit unto holiness, and the end everlasting life*" (Rom. 6:15-22).

There must be the **sincere desire and intention** on the part of the Christian, if he is sincere in his faith, to please Him who has called us out

of darkness into His marvelous light. Look at the example of the Apostle Paul who declared, "*for what **I would,** that do I not*" ... "*for the good that **I would** I do not: but the evil which **I would not,** that I do*" (Rom. 7:15,19). While our new man, which the Holy Ghost has brought into being at the time of our conversion, "*cannot sin, because he is born of God*" (1 John 3:9), there is still our sinful flesh which hinders our sincere desire and intention to serve God as we should. "*For the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh: and these are contrary the one to the other: so that ye cannot do the things that ye would*" (Gal. 5:17). But, let there be no mistake, **he who uses this as an excuse to live in the works of the flesh is certainly no Christian**! For this same Apostle writes, "*Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are these; Adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, envyings, murders, drunkenness, revellings, and such like: of the which I tell you before, as I have also told you in time past, that they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God*" (Gal. 5:19-21).While we Christians are to strive to please Him who hath called us out of darkness into His marvelous light we are, at the same time, aware that **our striving** after such holiness of living never reaches perfection in this life, but only in the life to come. We must confess with the Apostle, "*For the good that I would I do not: but the evil which I would not, that I do. Now if I do that I would not, it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me*" (Rom. 7:19,20). Consequently, we daily approach the Throne of Grace with the Fifth Petition on our lips, "*Forgive us our trespasses.*" For "*if we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us*" (1 John 1:8). When our hearts condemn us because of our sins (1 John 3:21), how thankful we can be that God comforts our hearts with His sweet Gospel, "*The blood of Jesus Christ, His Son, cleanseth us from all sin*" (1 John 1:7)

The Apostle urges us to "***show forth the praises of Him who hath called you out of darkness into His marvellous light.***" This, my dear fellow-believers, governs every aspect of our lives. Jesus says, *"Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father which is in heaven*" (Matt. 5:16). It should not be forgotten that the showing forth of the praises of God is done **not only by words but also by deeds**. For by our good works we Christians draw attention to the merciful and loving God "*who will have all men to be saved and to come unto the knowledge of the truth*" (1 Tim. 2:4). In the home **husband and wife** should give expression of their faith, the wife submitting herself unto

her own husband, as it is fit in the Lord, and the husband loving his wife even as Christ loved the Church and gave Himself for it (Col. 3:18,19; Eph. 5:25). What negative testimony is given when husband and wife constantly quarrel; when the husband is a tyrant who verbally abuses his wife and shows her no consideration and kindness but treats her as a slave instead of as a co-heir of eternal life; when the wife continually nags her husband and belittles him so that the husband expresses his feelings in the words of the wise man, "*It is better to dwell in the corner of the house top, than with a brawling woman and in a wide house*" (Prov. 25:24). Parents and children should show forth the praises of the Lord, the children honoring and obeying their parents as God's representatives, and the parents teaching and urging their children to walk in the way of God's Commandments. What negative testimony is given when we observe children impudently disrespectful of their parents and the parents tolerating such impudence without correction.

From the home to the work-place, social and recreational activities, we should at all times remember our high and noble calling and daily ask our dear heavenly Father for Jesus' sake to grant us His Holy Spirit that we may strive in an ever greater measure to "***show forth the praises of Him who hath called you out of darkness into His marvellous light.***" Amen.

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

CONVENTION DIGEST

MOTTO: "Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven." --Matthew 5:16

Appropriately named for the large tracts of native oak trees for which the area is known, the city of Oak Forest, a southern suburb near Chicago, Illinois, was the site of this year's **Forty-Fourth Annual Convention** of the Concordia Lutheran Conference. Hosting the convention was Peace Ev. Lutheran Church, the Rev. David T. Mensing, Pastor. Nestled among those oaks, the congregation's church building and Christian education facility provided ample room for the convention services and sessions, for the delicious meals served by the ladies, and for wholesome recreational activities during "off-hours". Guests from afar were welcomed by the members into their homes; and the loving, cheerful and generous hospitality of the local brethren contributed significantly to the success of the convention. The convention was preceded by a two-day **Pastoral Conference** (June 20 and 21) and the annual meeting of the Conference **Board of Directors** (June 22).

The convention itself began on Friday, June 23rd, with a service of convocation at 9:30 a.m. The local pastor served as liturgist; and the Conference President, the Rev. M. L. Natterer, preached an edifying keynote sermon on the basis of I Peter 2:9, centering his message upon the glorious blessings which the Lord has bestowed upon us and the works whereby we should show our gratitude for the same in our lives. His theme was taken directly from the text: ***"Ye Are a Royal Priesthood"*** and was divided into two parts which focused on the result of our being God's chosen people, namely that: **I. As such, we Christians enjoy undeserved blessings,** and **II. As such, we Christians show our thankfulness by our works.**

Following the service, the first session was called to order with a brief devotion conducted by the President. During this first brief session, *ad hoc* convention committees were appointed; the delegates were officially seated; and the assembled convention heard the *Annual Report of the*

President. Thereafter the *Convention Agenda* was adopted as printed, and the *Report of the Press Committee* was heard. Following that report, the convention stood in recess for the noon meal.

The afternoon session 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.* Delivered by Pastor Paul R. Bloedel of Seattle, this essay was entitled: ***"The Absolute Necessity of Good Works in the Life of Every True Christian."*** The first part of the essay centered on *"What It Means to be a True Believing Christian."* (The essay in its entirety will appear in the Convention *PROCEEDINGS*, so that all our people can benefit from it in their personal study at home.) The first part of the essay was interspersed with and followed by lively and edifying discussion on the floor.

Following the first part of the essay, a recommendation from the Board of Directors was unanimously adopted that the pastors' travel expenses to the 1995 Fall Pastoral Conference be defrayed from the General Treasury. A second recommendation concerning subsidy for one of our congregations was held in abeyance, since the same recommendation would constitutionally come before the convention in the *Report of the Committee on Missions.* That report then followed, so that any monies authorized for subsidy could be included in the Finance Committee's initial budget proposal. The committee's chairman, Pastor Stallings, reported that St. Stephen's Ev. Lutheran Church of Wilmot, South Dakota, had requested a subsidy for fiscal year 1995-96 in the amount of $2,000.00; and the convention authorized that expenditure on behalf of our dear brethren in Wilmot by unanimous decision. The *Treasurer's Report* concerning the past fiscal year, given by Victor K. Bloedel, was then heard and adopted, as was also his *Initial Report of the Finance Committee* with its preliminary proposed budget for fiscal year 1995-96. Then followed the *Report of the Editorial Committee*, which concerned chiefly the publication of our *CONCORDIA LUTHERAN*, and the *Report of the Publishing House Board of Control*, which regulates *SCRIPTURAL PUBLICATIONS*, the publishing arm of our Conference, these reports presented by the chairman of both committees, Pastor Stallings. Then came the *Report of the Business Manager of SCRIPTURAL PUBLICATIONS*, David A. Steinke, who was not present at the convention but had sent along his report in written form. All of these reports in their detail will be found in the official *PROCEEDINGS*, which

will appear later this year. Following the reading and approval of the day's minutes, the Friday Session adjourned for the supper hour.

The Saturday morning session was opened with a devotion conducted by Pastor Dierking of Wilmot, South Dakota. Thereupon Pastor Bloedel continued the presentation of his essay with its second part which examined *"Which Works Are Good Works or Works Pleasing to God."* He began with an examination of what constitutes *self-chosen* works and merely *outward* works including works of *civic righteousness*. He then proceeded to a discussion of the role of God's Law in the matter of good works, the fact that, although it is the *norm* of good works, it cannot *produce* them in man's heart and life. It only shows man his sins and his inability by nature to please God. It is the *Gospel alone* which produces good works *in the believer*. The essayist also reviewed the general characteristics of good works and the fact that they remain imperfect in the Christian because of his sinful flesh. The discussion of this section was again very edifying, with wide participation on the part of the delegates and visitors.

Before the lunch hour, the *Report of the Committee on Theological Education* was heard and discussed. Pastor Mensing, the chairman, pointed out that, although we have a model theological training program in place and "ready to roll", such a program without students is like a Rolls Royce without an engine. In and of itself, it accomplishes nothing. And he urged young men to consider training now as "reservists" for the future. He also reported that the committee completed this year a thorough inventory of the Seminary Library in Oak Forest and has made it available to the pastors and others interested in pamphlet form. The committee also recommended that a *Seminary Bookstore* be established as a repository for out-of-print or scarce theological books that can still be obtained even on the used-book market, so that students of the future will have access to core materials for a good pastoral library. As a start, the committee recommended that the Conference, through the Committee on Theological Education, purchase a lockable metal cabinet for this purpose, keep it at a location of its choice, and maintain and publish to the pastors a running inventory of books and materials on hand, including prices. The Conference can then purchase from our pastors and others who find them used books and surplus volumes from their own libraries to build up the bookstore's inventory. These recommendations of the C.T.E. were

committed to the convention's *Resolutions Committee* for the formulation of a final proposal to be brought to the floor.

The afternoon session began with a devotion conducted by Pastor Stallings of San Antonio, Texas, after which the *Report of the Committee on Lutheran Union* was presented by Pastor Dierking. He updated the convention on our heretofore fruitless efforts to meet in exploratory talks with the *Fellowship of Lutheran Congregations*, an off-shoot of the Lutheran Churches of the Reformation. Despite several friendly conversations with Pastor Lietz of that body, both by the chairman and by Pastor Mensing, and an open invitation for him to attend our convention, no further word was heard from him, nor was anything further reported to us as to the desire of the F. L. C. to meet with our committee. (In a further effort to reach Pastor Lietz during the convention with the hope of arranging at least a brief meeting with him, the chairman learned that he was out of town.) From *our* standpoint, at least, the door is still open for future discussions, and we pray that these will one day materialize. The report was unanimously adopted.

Following a brief recess, the convention heard and adopted the *Report of the Committee to Review the President's Report* and the *Report of the Auditing Committee.* It also heard the *Further Report of the Finance Committee Concerning the Budget*, which had not been revised since its report on Friday, and proceeded to the *Election of Officers and Standing Committees* for 1995-96. The following were elected:

PRESIDENT: The Rev. M. L. Natterer

VICE PRESIDENT: The Rev. Paul R. Bloedel

SECRETARY: The Rev. David T. Mensing

TREASURER: Mr. Victor K. Bloedel

BOARD MEMBERS-AT-LARGE:
Midwest--Mr. Phillip R. Martin
Far West--Mr. Paul L. Natterer

EDITORIAL COMMITTEE: Pastor Stallings, Editor; Pastor Mensing, Asst. Editor; and Mr. John Steinke.

COMMITTEE ON LUTHERAN UNION: Pastor Bloedel, Chairman; Pastor Mensing; Pastor Stallings; and Mr. Robert G. Bloedel.

COMMITTEE ON THEOLOGICAL EDUCATION: Pastor Bloedel, Chairman; Pastor Mensing; Mr. Phillip Martin; Mr. Robert Bloedel.

COMMITTEE ON MISSIONS: Pastor Redlin, Chairman; Pastor Bloedel; Mr. Raymond Kusumi; Mr. Paul Natterer; and Mr. John Steinke.

FINANCE COMMITTEE: Mr. Victor K. Bloedel, Chairman; Mr. John Steinke; Mr. Rodney Reyelts; and Mr. Mark Natterer.

PUBLISHING HOUSE BOARD OF CONTROL: Pastor Stallings, Chairman; Pastor Natterer; Mr. Daniel Bloedel; Mr. David Steinke; and Mr. Phillip Martin.

At the Sunday morning service, the host pastor again served as liturgist, and Pastor David G. Redlin of Tucson preached the sermon on *Galatians 5:25*. His theme was: "***Our Spiritual Walk Is Evidence of our Spiritual Life,***" and he divided the sermon into two parts taken from the words of the text itself: ***I. "If we live in the Spirit, ..."*** and ***II. "...Let us also walk in the Spirit."*** Delegates and visitors from the congregations of our fellowship then partook of the Lord's Supper together as guests of Peace Congregation --for the remission of their sins, for the strengthening of their faith and of their walk in sanctification, and in testimony of their blessed unity in the Word of their Savior.

After a sumptuous dinner, sessions reconvened with a devotion conducted by Pastor Natterer of Lebanon, Oregon. The final portion of the *Convention Essay* was then presented by Pastor Bloedel subtitled: *"Doctrines and Scripture Passages which Encourage Christians to do Good Works."* Following spirited and fruitful discussion of this section -- discussion which was broadly-based throughout a "packed house"-- this informative and edifying essay was unanimously adopted with thanks to the essayist, pending of course the usual review by the *praesidium* before any publication.

Concluding the business of the convention, the delegates first acted on the recommendation of the *Committee on Theological Education*, which had been committed to the *Resolutions Committee*. Now in the form of Resolution #1, the convention established a ***Seminary Bookstore***, authorized purchase of the recommended equipment, and set up necessary minimal regulations for its operation. The bookstore will be directly overseen by the C. T. E., and all purchases will be authorized by that committee, as well as exceptions to the general rule that sales will be limited to seminary instructors and their students. In a second resolution, the convention authorized a figure of $500.00 for the 1995-96 fiscal year for the purchase of books to begin building the bookstore's inventory and stipulated that a report of its inventory be made to the convention each year in conjunction with the C. T. E.'s regular report.

The convention then proceeded to ratify the *Final Budget Proposal of the Finance Committee*, which included that modest additional expenditure, as well as the subsidy for St. Stephen's in Wilmot. It then heard and accepted the *Final Report of the Committee on Registration and Excuses* and the *Report of the Conference Statistician*, Mr. Raymond Kusumi, who was re-appointed to that post.

The convention also unanimously accepted the gracious invitation of St. Luke's Lutheran Church of Seattle, Washington, to host the **45th Annual Convention** (June 21, 22, and 23, 1996), immediately preceded as usual by the ***Plenary Pastoral Conference*** on June 18 and 19, and the ***Board of Directors Meeting*** on June 20th. Our people are encouraged NOW ALREADY to mark these dates on their calendars, so that they can plan ahead to attend.

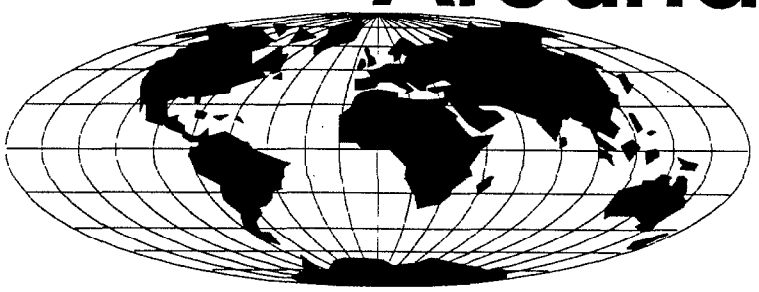
Finally, the convention acted on six resolutions of thanks offered by the *Resolutions Committee* -- to the outgoing officers and standing committees for their faithful labors during the previous fiscal year; to Pastors Natterer and Redlin for their sermons at the convention; to the various pastors for their devotions and to Pastor Bloedel for his instructive and edifying essay; to Pastor Mensing (the *pastor loci*) for his work under specially trying local circumstances this year; to Mr. Lloyd E. Martin, organist and choir director, and to the choir of Peace Congregation (augmented by the voices of visiting brethren) for the musical offerings at the services; and to Pastor and Mrs. Mensing and the members of Peace Congregation for their hospitality.

For the sake of conserving time, the day's *minutes* were not read but were committed to the *praesidium* for the usual review. Immediately thereafter the convention adjourned at 5:00 p.m. right on schedule, and it concluded with the customary closing devotion led by President Natterer. All in all, it had been a most brotherly and constructive meeting; and the delegates and visitors returned to their respective homes edified by the Spirit, encouraged by the precious fellowship that He had preserved among them, and determined by His grace ever better to *"walk in the Spirit"* to the praise of the glory of His grace *"who hath called [us] out of darkness into His marvellous light."*

Respectfully submitted,

Rev. David T. Mensing,
Secretary

Around the World



with editorial comment

by M. L. Natterer

A 16-year-old Maryland boy who is serving time in a juvenile-detention center for sexually molesting his 9-year-old sister wants to go home. But before Montgomery County court officials will release him, the boy must convince his family that he feels an emotion that for decades has been either scorned as destructive to self-esteem or dismissed as hopelessly old fashioned. He must prove that he feels a sense of shame.....Juvenile proceedings in Maryland are confidential, but the boy's family has agreed to let the session be videotaped as a teaching tool. As the second therapy session begins, the therapist tells the boy that he must prove "whether you're going to live the rest of your life as a man or as a criminal rapist." At first, he looks stunned. When he realizes that his freedom depends on apologizing, he cocks his head in his sister's direction and says, "Sorry, Sarah" (not her real name). But everyone in the room rejects the apology as insincere.....Even after other family members get down on their knees to apologize to the sister for not seeing the signs of abuse, the boy refuses and is returned to detention. After another week away from his family, he changes his mind. The room is still. He drops to his knees and says: "Sarah, I'm sorry for taking advantage of you. I'm sorry for sexually molesting you.....I'm sorry for blaming it on you. And I'm sorry for not apologizing last time." Tears all around. Of the 65 similar offenders that county officials have tracked for at least two years, 97 percent have never been brought back for a repeat offense, including his case. Child abuse has a relatively low recidivism rate. Even so, this is an astonishing result. (Newsweek, February 6, 1995)

This article is extraordinary in view of the fact that the liberal press generally seeks excuses for crimes that are committed and centers the public's attention upon the "poor" criminal while the victims are expected to forgive and forget! In all probability the tactics described in the above article will be challenged by the liberal establishment and

ultimately be declared to be a violation of the perpetrator's constitutional rights. But we know that we should be ashamed of our sins! Look at the example of Ezra, the prophet, who wrote, "*And at the evening sacrifice I arose up from my heaviness; and having rent my garment and my mantle, I fell upon my knees, and spread out my hands unto the Lord my God, and said, O my God, I am ashamed and blush to lift up my face to Thee, my God: for our iniquities are increased over our head, and our trespass is grown up unto the heavens*" (9:5,6). Read how Jeremiah takes the inhabitants of Jerusalem to task for not being ashamed of their sins (Jer. 8:12). Such shame is worked in our hearts by the Law, "*for by the Law is the knowledge of sin*" (Rom. 3:20). And when the Law has done its work in our hearts by arousing and accusing our conscience that we have offended God so that we are ashamed of our sins and repent of them, then comes the sweet message of the precious Gospel announcing to us, "*Son, be of good cheer; thy sins be forgiven thee*" (Matt. 9:2). "*The blood of Jesus Christ, His Son, cleanseth us from all sin*" (1 John 1:7). And he who sincerely believes this will then bring forth the fruits of his faith by making the necessary amends.

****

Dr. Etienne-Emile Baulieu, developer of the controversial RU 486 "abortion pill," had Paris in a tizzy last week. In a cover story in the French weekly Le Point, he touted the potential of an antiaging pill based on a hormone that might ease many of the discomforts of the elderly.....He stresses that the pill would not extend life but might, after further testing, enable people to "age well." ... The drug in question is known as DHEA, a hormone secreted by the adrenal glands and also found in the bloodstream in another form, called DHEAS ... Since Baulieu first encountered DHEA more than three decades ago, it has been scrutinized by many researchers, most extensively by Dr. Samuel Yen, an endocrinologist at the medical school of the University of California at San Diego ... Results of Yen's most recent trial, which involved giving elderly people small doses of DHEA daily, were published last June in the Journal of Clinical Endocrinology & Metabolism. They showed improved well-being, which Yen defines as "the ability to cope," increased mobility, less joint discomfort and sounder sleep. Yen is currently giving DHEA to another group of older patients to determine whether it will halt or reverse the

natural decline in their strength and muscle mass... (Time, January 23, 1995)

With Martin Luther we Christians confess the Biblical truth, "that God has 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"... Within the worldly realm man may use his reason for the temporal welfare of his fellow beings or for their detriment. In the case of Dr. Baulieu he used his reason in two ways. On the one hand, he developed the "abortion pill" which obviously is a detriment since it is so plainly contrary to God's Commandment, "*Thou shalt not kill.*" There is basically no difference whether it be by pill or suction method to snuff out the life of the unborn infant. On the other hand, Baulieu's use of his mental gifts to ease the aches and pains of the elderly and to increase their ability to function is commendable. There is no doubt about it, the application of man's reason has resulted in outstanding discoveries brought to light in recent years also within the field of medicine. Cures have been discovered for various diseases which formerly either took the lives of the individuals so afflicted or rendered them physically incapacitated (polio, etc.). While tremendous strides have been made particularly in recent years in virtually all fields, there is one affliction for which men, regardless of their natural ability and skill, have not and will not find a cure. That is the cure for sin! While man's reason may shine forth ever so brilliantly within the realm of earthly matters, in spiritual matters it still remains alienated from God, since man by nature is spiritually blind, dead, and an enemy of God (1 Cor. 2:14; Eph. 2:1). But, thanks be to God, our dear heavenly Father has provided the cure in the substitutional sacrifice of His dear Son. And "he that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life" (John 3:36). Whoever repents of his sin and believes in Jesus as his Savior from sin is truly cured for time and eternity, for "*the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanseth us from all sin*" (1 John 1:7) !

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Is there room today within the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod for those who defend the position taken by Dr. C.F.W. Walther, Dr. Francis Pieper and the LCMS on woman suffrage until 1969? A move, encouraged by

some members of the LCMS's Commission on Theology and Church Relations, is under way to have congregations get rid of pastors who still agree with Walther and Pieper that woman suffrage is not in accord with Holy Scripture... The CTCR has not recommended that any action be taken against the liberals within the LCMS who are promoting the ordination of women. Overture 3-79 "To Authorize the Ordination of Women to Pastoral Office" in the LCMS's 1995 Convention Workbook is asking the LCMS's 1995 convention to authorize the ordination of women for pastoral ministry in the LCMS. The pastor of the congregation submitting the overture is the First Vice-President of the English District. A survey has shown that some 1,000 LCMS clergymen maintain that the Bible does not oppose the ordination of women. (The Christian News, June 19, 1995)

How sad to observe that formerly staunch church-body be a "*house divided against itself*" (Matt. 12:25). It now allows a diversity of teaching whereas in years gone by it insisted upon unity in all the teachings of Holy Writ (1 Cor. 1:10) and would not tolerate those who taught contrary to the pure doctrine of Holy Scripture (Rom. 16:17, 18). Instead of taking decisive action against those who espoused false teachings it gave way to toleration, compromising with error. As the Apostle states, "*a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump*" (Gal. 5:9). Such compromising and indifference will ultimately result in the loss of the entire truth. If the false teachers are not dealt with and finally expelled from the church body they become more brazen and impudently disseminate their false doctrine until it is not only tolerated but actually replaces the true teaching. We have observed this in other church bodies and now we must sadly witness it taking place in the Missouri Synod. What the orthodox Lutheran fathers (Walther, Pieper, etc.) fought so valiantly to uphold and defend has been gradually torn down by the false teachers. "*Can two walk together, except they be agreed?*" (Amos 3:3). Not to be joined together "*with one mind and one mouth*" (Rom. 15:6) in all teachings of God's Word gives a false appearance of a unity that simply does not exist. God does not give us the right to accommodate the teachings of His Word to the sinful whims and desires of men and thus to be like children "*tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight (trickery) of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive*" (Eph. 4:14). The Lord of the Church declares, "*If ye continue in My word, then are ye My disciples*

***indeed*" (John 8:31). And His Apostle writes, "*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...*" (1 Tim. 6:3,4).**

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Christianity is maturing. Many churches, clergymen, and theologians are no longer insisting that Christianity is the only true and saving faith and that Jesus Christ is the only way to heaven, says Dr. Norman Beck, Professor of Biblical Theology and Classical Languages and Chairman of the Department of Modern and Classical Languages at Texas Lutheran College, Seguin, Texas. Texas Lutheran is one of the colleges of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America. Beck is on the clergy roster of ELCA. Crossword Publishing Company, 370 Lexington Avenue, New York, N.Y. 10017 recently published an expanded and revised edition of Beck's **Mature Christianity in the 21st Century - The Recognition and Repudiation of the Anti-Jewish Polemic in the New Testament,** 370 pages, $26.95. According to the ELCA professor, many sections in the Bible should be repudiated because they are anti-Jewish and anti-semitic. He contends, along with the Jesus Seminar theologians, that numerous statements attributed to Jesus in the New Testament, were not actually said by Jesus. Although the ELCA professor rejects such basic historic Christian doctrines as the deity of Jesus Christ, he has not been disciplined by ELCA officials. ELCA allows its theologians to teach that Jews, Muslims, and other non-Christians can get to heaven without saving faith in Christ. This major Lutheran church body in the U.S. allows its theologians to deny such doctrines as the virgin birth, deity and resurrection of Christ. (Christian News, June 5, 1995)

One by one the blessed doctrines of God's holy Word are being subjected to the scrutiny of man's perverted reason and rejected. While we expect this to be the case with those who openly declare that they are modernists, what shall we say about those who still use the name "Lutheran?" The ELCA official periodical "Lutheran" reported in its July issue that the Rev. Andrea F. DeGroot-Nesdahl, Bismark, ND, was elected June 2 to become bishop of the South Dakota Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America. Prior to her election she served as assistant to the Western North Dakota

Synod bishop, graduated from Wartburg Seminary, Dubuque, Iowa, and served congregations in Wisconsin and North Dakota and as a hospital chaplain. And next month, August 14-16, the ELCA will celebrate the "25th Anniversary of Ordained Women" in Minneapolis. Add to that the terrible document to come out of the ELCA which literally excused the abomination of homosexuality. No, the ELCA does not deserve the name "Lutheran." Why not? Because the true Lutheran Church is the Bible Church which receives the Word of God as the only source and norm of doctrine, the sole authority in the Church, and whatever is contrary to that Word must be rejected! Martin Luther wrote in 1537, "The Word of God shall establish articles of faith and no one else, not even an angel" (Smalcald Articles, P. II, Art. II, 15). The ELCA is on a course that will have tragic eternal consequences!

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