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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"For the Lord
is a Great God,
And a Great King
Above all gods."

— Psalm 95:3

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

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

LAY MEMBER:
Dr. John M. Steinke
5959 Wurzbach F-7
San Antonio, TX 78238-1733

Address all subscriptions, renewals, and remittances to: **Scriptural Publications, Central Avenue at 171st Place, Oak Forest, IL 60452**. A special notice of expiration will be inserted in the issue which terminates your subscription.

Officers of the Concordia Lutheran Conference

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

VICE-PRESIDENT:
Rev. David T. Mensing
17151 South Central Avenue
Oak Forest, IL 60452

SECRETARY:
Rev. Mark W. Dierking
Box 33
Wilmot, SD 57279

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.

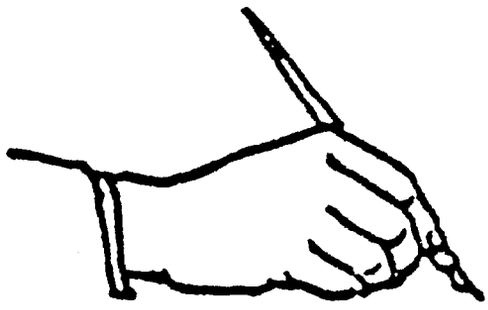
To show that we do not have among us a mixture of divergent teachings but that we are "perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment."

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

WHY OUR CONFERENCE IS SO GREAT

The First Church Body Formed as the Result of Doctrinal Error in the Missouri Synod

The **Concordia Lutheran Conference** was the **first church body** which was formed as the direct result of the obvious and persistent toleration of error in the LCMS — where the Missouri Synod would not retreat from its arbitrary course of giving truth and error equal rights, even giving superior rights to false teachers and treating those who desired to uphold the traditional Scriptural position of the Missouri Synod with disdain and intolerance. The founders of our Conference were neither afraid nor ashamed to stand up boldly for the pure teachings of Scripture even though it meant, in most cases, to be ousted from their congregations. This was accomplished through the instigation of synodical officials who were hierarchically motivated to usurp the authority of the respective autonomous local congregations. (Of course, such an invasion of local congregations on the part of a synod would **not** be improper in the Wisconsin Synod, the Evangelical Lutheran Synod, or the Church of the Lutheran Confession because of their false doctrine on the church and ministry which these heterodox bodies publicly teach and defend — after all "synod is church"! We understand, however, that there are some in these bodies who do not hold to their own teaching.)

The CLC (Concordia Lutheran Conference) was **originally** called the OLC (Orthodox Lutheran Conference), at its formation in Okabena,

Minnesota, in September of 1951, and continued in 1957 as the CLC. The factious group which broke fellowship with us who continued as the CLC, later disbanded — some going into the WELS (Wisconsin Synod) and others into the LCR (Lutheran Churches of the Reformation). This, of course, demonstrated that even though they had been *with* us, they were not really *of* us — they did not desire to preserve with us that heritage which had been initially started, by God's grace, at Okabena in 1951. Our Concordia Lutheran Conference was therefore organized way back in 1951, being the bonafide Orthodox Lutheran Conference, in harmony with the Scriptural position set forth in **The Brief Statement of the Doctrinal Position of the Missouri Synod, 1932**, which states in paragraphs 28 and 29: "28. Since God ordained that His Word only, without the admixture of human doctrine, be taught and believed in the Christian Church, I Peter 4:11; John 8:31-32; I Timothy 6:3-4, all Christians are required by God to discriminate between orthodox and heterodox church-bodies, Matthew 7:15, to have church-fellowship only with orthodox church-bodies, and, in case they have strayed into heterodox church-bodies, to leave them, Romans 16:17. We repudiate unionism, that is, church-fellowship with the adherents of false doctrine, as disobedience to God's command, as causing divisions in the Church, Romans 16:17; II John 9-10, and involving the constant danger of losing the Word of God entirely, II Timothy 2:17-21. 29. The orthodox character of a church is established not by its mere name nor by its **outward** acceptance of, and subscription to, an orthodox creed, but by the doctrine which is **actually taught** in its pulpits, in its theological seminaries, and in its publications."

We thank the Lord and Head of the Church, Christ Jesus our Redeemer, that the founders of our Conference were not afraid **to act** on the basis of what they professed to believe while the great majority of conservatives in those days took the position, contrary to Scripture, to *"stay in a unionistic fellowship and to fight from within a heterodox body"* rather than to do what the Lord tells us in Romans 16:17,18, *"**Mark** them which cause divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned; and **avoid** them. For they that are such serve not our Lord Jesus Christ, but their own belly; and by good words and fair speeches deceive the hearts of the simple."* It didn't take long for the yeast of false doctrine and practice to leaven even the staunchest conservatives

who decided "to stay in and fight" in the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod, and those small bodies which were formed later had already, to a greater or lesser extent, become products of such leaven and to this day have little or no doctrinal discipline among themselves as is encouraged by the Brief Statement, paragraph 29, "On the other hand, a church does not forfeit its orthodox character through the casual intrusion of errors, provided these are combated and eventually removed by means of doctrinal discipline, Acts 20:30; I Timothy 1:3."

It is a Conference of the Pure Word of God

Our **Concordia Lutheran Conference**, by God's grace alone, continues to this day as the Conference of the pure Word of God as it was taught and upheld in all its truth and purity during the first 75 years of the Missouri Synod's existence. Our heritage goes back to the early days of **The Evangelical Synod of Missouri, Ohio and Other States**, having changed its name later to **The Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod**. We regard the orthodox fathers of the Missouri Synod (C.F.W. Walther, F. Pieper, Engelder, Dau, Bente, et al.) as our brethren, with whom, if they were still alive today, we would be in doctrinal agreement and in confessional and church fellowship. Our size is very small (the least among the great and powerful Lutheran synods in America — in fact, our entire Conference is probably not as large as one Missouri Synod mission congregation although we are represented by congregations in seven states whose pastors are all fully supported as God has ordained in I Corinthians 9:14) but we **are void** of unionistic practice, of academic pride (learning for learning's sake), pretended orthodoxy and importance, of the toleration of modernistic theology, of loose moral judgment, of synoditis (my synod right or wrong), of vain and troublesome hypocrisy, and papalistic hierarchical behavior and tyranny. Oh, how unbearably frustrating it must be to try to be a conservative Lutheran in fellowship with the heterodox Lutheranism of our day, to pretend to be one in faith with those with whom you are not really one in faith, and to characterize your unionistic behavior as *"love"* which, in reality, is not love at all but only an excuse for **not** doing what the Lord tells you in His Word. St. Paul writes: [Love] *"rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the Truth"* I Corinthians 13:6.

Some Lutheran pastors, and others, seem to think that the fact that the Concordia Lutheran Conference is so small is a sign that the Lord is withholding His blessings from us. This could not be *further* from the truth. The Lord God is not interested in numbers, money, great buildings, or academic achievement. His love and blessing is shown in those who are *"poor and of a contrite spirit"* and who *"tremble at His Word."* The growth which we look for in our Conference is not *"quota growth"* but true spiritual growth in the hearts and lives of our members — a growth which is based on a diligent and persistent study, use, and application of the Word of God in all its truth and purity for both young and old and which shows itself in the confession and lives of those who are one in faith with us. *"Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity!"* (Psalm 133:1)

A Conference where Doctrinal Discipline is Maintained

The **Concordia Lutheran Conference** is a Conference where, by God's grace and in accordance with His Word, doctrinal discipline is maintained in teaching and practice. Our **oneness** in the confession of our faith in all that is plainly taught in Scripture and in its application to a Christian's life in this sin-cursed world is preserved among us **in brotherly love and patience** without any hierarchical invasion into the God-given autonomy of any local congregation and the God-given responsibilities of its respective pastor whose office, in itself, is a divine institution and the highest office in the church under God and His Word. We earnestly strive *"to keep the unity of the spirit in the bond of peace"* Ephesians 4:3, by *"all speak*[ing] *the same thing"*, by not tolerating any *"divisions among* [us]*"*, and by *"*[being] *perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment"* I Corinthians 1:10. If false doctrine or practice arises in our midst, it must be faced squarely without any conniving, hypocrisy, or mental reservation, following the loving directions of the Lord Jesus in Matthew 18:15,16, and I Timothy 5:19, and, if it cannot be removed, a severance in fellowship **must be** the end result, that the unity which the Lord of the Church has brought about and wants to continue among brethren will be preserved. Even disagreements between pastors must be resolved without long and dangerous delays that the Lord, in all things, may be glorified. Our pastors, yes, each one individually, holds firmly to the words of John the Baptist as their motto

in their sermons, in their teaching, and in their administration, *"He must increase, but I must decrease!"* (John 3:30)

It is a Conference where Law and Gospel is still Properly Divided

The **Concordia Lutheran Conference** is a Conference where the proper distinction between Law and Gospel is observed, complied with and conformed to both in doctrine and practice. By God's grace there is no smell of antinomianism here! Whether the sermon is for the festival season or non-festival season of the church year, whether it is for a wedding or for a funeral or for an anniversary or for a convention, sin and grace is plainly and unmistakably set forth. Original sin is described in our sermons as it is taught in Scripture — recognizing the unpopular fact that there is *"no good in any one of us"* as he is born into this world since the Fall of Adam and that daily *"every one of us sins against God"* in his thoughts, desires, words and deeds, and deserves everlasting condemnation in Hell. Oh, there are those who may mock at such Law preaching and call it preaching *fire and brimstone* by which the people are scared into heaven. Our pastors preach **not** little essays laced with anecdotes designed to cause a titter of laughter or smiles in their congregations; not sensational topics or sermon themes which show that the pastor is witty and has a lot of puns or cute sayings up his sleeve. No! They preach like *"a dying man to dying men"*, realizing that it may be the very last time that they have the opportunity to lead their people to a real Savior, not to a mock Savior; to a love which is undeserved because of sin but free for all because of grace through the crucified and risen Son of God, not to a love which is frivolous and contradicts God's justice. They bring the Law of God in all its fury that the Gospel may be brought in all its sweetness. They show the stark reality of sin and its terrible consequences that universal forgiveness in Christ through whom the ungodly are justified, Romans 4:5, may shine forth in all its pristine beauty **to fill** hearts with peace and joy everlasting and **to show** itself in lives which, from the heart, earnestly desire to please the Lord by word and deed.

And this distinction between Law and Gospel is taught and applied in every Sunday School Lesson where little sinners learn what they deserve by their sins and are led to the arms of their Good Shepherd to find true comfort and lasting peace in Him who kept God's Holy Law perfectly in

their place and suffered, as their Substitute, the punishment which they deserve. In every Instruction Class Lesson for Confirmation and in every Bible Class Lesson this proper distinction between Law and Gospel prevails through the thorough study, memorization, and application of hundreds of Bible passages. This cannot help but make our Conference great when we look **only** to God's precious life-giving and life-sustaining Word, rightly divided, as the only God-given norm which provides our lives with meaning and purpose and through which He promises to add to His Church such as should be saved.

A Conference which has been Hated and Maligned Without a Cause

Our Conference has been called many names. The undersigned was loudly maligned as a "home-wrecker" and "communist" when he was ousted from his congregation years ago, without even a week's wage to live on, because he protested against the toleration of error in the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod. Thanks be to God, there was still a remnant in the congregation which was eager to hear and glad to continue to learn and to apply the Full Truth of God's Word to their hearts and to their lives. There will always be a remnant of believers as long as this earth continues, but that remnant will grow smaller and smaller as the Word of Truth grows ever dimmer throughout the world and in so-called Christian denominations and congregations. This will indeed be evident, for the Lord Jesus says of the last times, *"When the Son of Man cometh, shall He find faith on the earth?"* (Luke 18:8)

Without any verification whatever, but perhaps only on the basis of prejudice or perhaps jealousy, our Conference has been called a *"bunch of hotheads"*, *"bigoted"*, *"loveless"*, *"legalistic"*, *"dead orthodox"*, *"unpragmatic and impractical"*. All we know, however, is that all our churches have been established and continue to be built on the pure teachings of God's Word **alone** without the slightest inclusion of man-made gimmicks or enticements to increase and hold their membership, such as, having women voters and women pastors; holding lotteries, fairs, bake sales and bazaars; having all kinds of clubs and organizations; ecumenism; so-called busy work (giving the members something to do); social parties and worldly entertainment; educational seminars with regard to social problems and community involvement; even dances stimulated by the popular rock-n-roll sensual noises. All these and other

ingenious schemes or methods are vigorously in use in the so-called Christian church world of today – all designed to hold congregations together without thorough teaching and instruction in the Word of God. The vast, vast majority of Lutheran congregations of today have never been through the Lutheran Confessions in the Book of Concord of 1580 and its historical introduction by Bente in the Concordia Triglotta. In fact, we have been given to understand that the Concordia Triglotta is too expensive to be used as a textbook in the Missouri Synod's Concordia Seminary, Fort Wayne, Indiana. If we are wrong in this assertion, we would certainly welcome being corrected in this matter by someone who has first-hand knowledge.

To our pastors and congregations verbal persecution and derision is a **"badge of honor"**, not to be sought after as one who has *"a chip on his shoulder"* but to be worn proudly **in honor of the Lord Christ**, whose, by God's grace alone, we are and whom alone we serve, and **in honor of His precious Word** without which there would be no Church (true believers) and no salvation. The Lord Jesus is not talking about something which is out of step with the times, when He says: *"In the world ye shall have tribulation!"* (John 16:32); *"Woe unto you, when all men shall speak well of you! for so did their fathers to the false prophets"* (Luke 6:26). Furthermore, the Lord Jesus says, *"Blessed are ye, when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you **falsely**, for My sake"* (Matthew 5:11,12).

Yes, our Conference is so Great because God has made it so through His Word! Other synods, conferences, church bodies, denominations, and congregations which are infested with false teachings may be big, but rotten to the core because man has been permitted to make them so. Nevertheless: *"The Word they still shall let remain Nor any thanks have for it; He's by our side upon the plain With His good gifts and Spirit. And take they our life, Goods, fame, child, and wife, Let these all be gone, They yet have nothing won; The Kingdom ours remaineth."* (The Lutheran Hymnal, 262:4)

— P.R.B.

THE 48TH ANNUAL CONVENTION

OF THE

CONCORDIA LUTHERAN CONFERENCE

will be held, the Lord willing, at

Peace Ev. Lutheran Church

Central Avenue at 171st Place
Oak Forest, IL 60452-4913
Phone: (708) 532-4288

Rev. David T. Mensing, Host Pastor

June 25, 26, 27, 1999

CONVENTION MOTTO

"Speaking the Truth in Love." Eph. 4:15

HISTORICAL ESSAY

"A Statement: Its Role in the Heterodoxy of the Missouri Synod"

The Rev. David T. Mensing, Essayist

DOCTRINAL ESSAY

"The Need, Purpose and Function of Christian Admonition in the Christian Congregation"

The Rev. E. R. Stallings, Essayist
Pastor of Holy Scripture Ev. Lutheran Church, San Antonio, Texas

Pastoral Conference to be held on June 22nd & 23rd
Board of Directors Meeting to be held on June 24th

WITNESSING IN THE POWER OF THE SPIRIT

"Ye shall be witnesses unto Me." — Acts 1:8

When, in fulfillment of Old Testament prophecy (Joel 2:28) and very particularly of Jesus' specific promises to His disciples (John 14:26; 16:7; etc.), the Holy Ghost was *"poured out"* in extraordinary measure on *"the day of Pentecost"* (Acts 2:1), the Lord's apostles were *"endued with power from on high"* (Luke 24:49) to speak boldly in His Name with fearless zeal, with God-given perfect recall of divine truth, and with confidence of His abiding blessings. Beginning on that particular *"day of Pentecost,"* fifty days after the mighty resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead and just ten days after His ascension into heaven, the little band of disciples and their relatively few adherents grew with such astounding rapidity that it was as if a fire had been ignited in a tinder-dry forest and was being fanned by an unabating wind! *"And the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls"* (Acts 2:41), followed by another five thousand after the healing of the lame man in the Temple (Acts 4:4)! No wonder *Pentecost* has been referred to as "the birthday of the Christian Church"!

To be sure, the outpouring of the Holy Spirit in those early days, months, and even years was **extraordinary**; *"and many wonders and signs were done by the apostles"* (Acts 2:43), confirming the Word which they preached. Special charismatic gifts were manifested in *many* of the early Christians, though they were not promised to and were not bestowed upon **all**. The Apostle Paul himself confirms this in I Corinthians 12, where he states that the gifts varied (and still vary) from individual to individual as the Holy Spirit Himself determines, *"dividing to every man **severally** as **He** will"* (v. 11). Yet, as we observe in Holy Scripture, particularly in the Book of Acts, even the phenomenal *initial* growth of the Christian Church was not due to such charismatic manifestations of the Spirit, but to His operation in the hearts of men through His *preached* Word and

through the so-called "*visible* Word" in Holy Baptism. It was the "***best gifts***" of the Spirit (I Corinthians 12:31), the gifts bestowed upon every believer through the Word, that impacted "church growth" — "the spirit of wisdom and knowledge, of grace and prayer, of power and strength, of sanctification, and the fear of God." Moreover, these gifts were abundantly evident in the activities of the early Christians, as *"they continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers"* (Acts 2:42). For not only the apostles, but the early Christians in droves, spread the Savior's precious **Word** far and wide, heedless of the dire temporal consequences that they would have to face for doing so; and the Lord blessed the sowing of His precious incorruptible Seed (I Peter 1:23) with abundant fruit in harvests of souls unparalleled in the annals of history!

The only other period in the history of the church that even approached the Apostolic Era in terms of growth and, at the same time, in concern for true doctrine and Scriptural practice was the Reformation Era. This period, in which the Holy Spirit's activity through the Word is clearly evident in the writings of Luther and of the *gnesio-* (true) Lutherans, saw testimony against error and for the truth with determination, courage and zeal which stand to this day as a monument to *"power from on high."* As witnesses unto their Savior, the heroes of the Reformation unmasked the Roman Antichrist in fulfillment of II Thessalonians 2:6 and 8 and restored to outward Christendom the truth of God's word in its purity, re-establishing the two great principles of the Christian faith. Those two pillars on which our whole faith rests are the *formal principle* (God's Word alone is the source and standard of Christian doctrine and practice) and the *material principle* (A poor sinner is justified alone by God's grace for Christ's sake through faith). Were it not for those sixteenth-century *"witnesses unto [Him],"* Christ, the only Head of His Church, would have continued to be usurped by His self-proclaimed vicar, the Roman Pope, without challenge; and the sheep and lambs of Jesus' flocks would still be fodder for vicious papal wolves.

Now what about **us today** and **our** role as *"witnesses unto [Him]"* in these latter, treacherous times? Since the Lord's *Great Commission* has obviously not been abrogated, and since it is still our Christian duty and privilege to be fruitful vines in the Branch of our Savior and to *"let [our] light shine before men"* as evidence of our faith, our continuing obliga-

tion to be witnesses unto Him is clearly established by the Scriptures. The question then becomes: Just **how** are we to **carry out** Jesus' mandate? Does the Word of God give us ***positive*** direction as to how we should do this? And, conversely, does Holy Scripture warn us against anything specific whereby we could give ***negative*** *witness* to the world?

We can find no better "outline" on which to base our discussion of these questions than Luther's explanation of the First Petition of the *Lord's Prayer*, in which he tells us that God's Name is hallowed among us, that is, His Word and will are ***positively*** *witnessed* by us, first of all, *"when the Word of God is taught in its truth and purity,"* and, secondly, *"[when] we, as the children of God, also lead a holy life according to it."*

The first of these modes of positive witness is **purity of doctrine** and **faithful practice** in conformity with the Savior's Word. These two belong together under the *first* heading because they are inextricably linked. Thus the early Christians, as *"witnesses unto [Him]."* " ... *continued steadfastly in the Apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers"* Purity of doctrine does not exist *in reality* when the sound teachings are not applied with equal soundness, neither can practice [the consistent application of doctrine] be faithful to the Scriptures when the doctrine is heterodox. Consequently, all the **doctrinal positions** we hold on the basis of God's Word ***must be applied*** with equal diligence, not just the "fundamental" ones and the "popular" ones, but the "non-fundamental" ones and the "unpopular" ones as well. Granted, it's relatively easy to do the former — to teach and faithfully apply the doctrines of the Trinity, the Vicarious Atonement, Justification, the Resurrection of Christ, and so many others; but it's much tougher to do the latter, particularly with regard to our position against certain false and pernicious practices like unionism (or "ecumenism"), lodge and Scout membership, gambling (in view of the popular casinos and lotteries now "legal" in most states), open communion (fully expected nowadays by "church-hoppers"), and sinful forms of recreation (such as pornographic magazines, salacious movies and videos, and most of the social dancing common in our day). Nobody said it would be easy! Consider the consequences that Jesus Himself said would come upon those who witness faithfully in His Name (John 16, etc.). Nevertheless, when anyone varies from true orthodoxy in either doctrine or practice (even

because of personal weaknesses and/or "problems" with being consistent), he actually witnesses **against** his Savior by his false teaching or by his false (or inconsistent) application.

The second mode of positive witness is the Christian's personal **life of sanctification**. For *"[when] we, as the children of God, also lead a **holy life** according to [His Word],"* we show that our profession is more than empty, cheap talk and an exercise in self-deception (James 1:22-27). Again, the early Christians were *"witnesses unto [Jesus]"* by their **way of life**, which said almost as much about their faith as did their profession. For, when Saul [later the Apostle Paul], sought Christians on open warrants to *"bring them bound to Jerusalem,"* he didn't have to listen to their words; he merely looked for *"any of this **way**, whether they were men or women"* (Acts 9:2). Scripture is predictably consistent in its characterization of true Christians as *"**doers** of the Word and not hearers only"* (James 1), as *"**fruitful** branches"* in the Vine of their Savior, as *"children of **light**"* letting their *"**light**"* (not their "dark side") *shine before men, that they may see their **good** works,"* as those who are *"spiritually-minded"* instead of *"carnally-minded"* in their attitude, as those who are *"led by the Spirit."* For Jesus tells us that by our love one for another (among the other works that give evidence of our faith) *"shall all men know that [we] are [His] disciples"* (John 13:35).

This is not to say that Christians are perfectly sanctified, *"for we daily sin much and indeed deserve nothing but punishment"* (Luther). Nevertheless, our inability perfectly to fulfill the will of God in sanctification does not detract from or lessen His expectations of us; and we dare not lean on our fleshly weakness and the perversity of our Old Adam to excuse our indolence! God's Name is indeed profaned among us and by us when we *"live otherwise than God's Word teaches,"* not only when we involuntarily fail to follow God's Word in our lives, but especially when we deliberately ignore God's commandments and willfully live contrary to our profession. For willful sinning is incompatible with saving faith (Hebrews 10:26ff.), destroys saving faith (Hosea 13:9), and gives clear witness that a person rejects the atoning sacrifice of his Savior and despises His Holy Spirit (Hebrews 10:29). And even a casual departure from *"the paths of righteousness"* (Psalm 23), from *"this way"* (Acts 9:2), is a ***negative*** witness, an ***offense*** which may well lead

others into sin, to be weakened in their faith, yea, even to lose their faith altogether — a "capital offense" in the eyes of God (Matthew 18:6-7)! People who profess love for God's Word but walk contrary to it in their lives ***dishonor*** Him and cause His Name to be *"blasphemed among the Gentiles"* (Romans 2:23-24).

Let us therefore examine ourselves, particularly during this holy Pentecost season, to see whether we are being *"witnesses unto [the Lord Jesus]"* — not only by the **pure doctrine** and **faithful practice** which we hold forth to the world round about us, BUT by our **cheerful obedience to God's Word** in our lives of sanctification. As we then *"lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us [to] run with patience the race that is set before us"* (Hebrews 12:1), let us make sure that, with the help and by the grace of God, our **lives** are obviously and unquestionably consistent with our **profession**, lest we *"profane the Name of God among us"* and become *"witnesses **against** [our precious Savior]!" "Let it not be once named among [us], as becometh saints,"* that we use foul and filthy language; hypocritically cover a wicked life by a show of piety; think little of preaching and the Word of God; dishonor our parents, employers, teachers and civil authorities; mistreat or even hate anyone; despise the sanctity of marriage and live in the lusts of the flesh, taking pleasure in sinful amusements and recreation; take (or "win") what rightfully belongs to our neighbor; lie to or about him and engage in gossip, slander, and other sins of the tongue; or covet what he has. Rather, let us pray *"that God would guard and keep us so that the devil, the world, and our flesh may not deceive us nor seduce us into misbelief, despair, and other great shame and vice,"* and beseech Him, *"from this preserve us, Heavenly Father."* Let us live as Christians not selfishly, seeking only our own spiritual security and Godly reputation as His children; but let us live *"unto Him"* gratefully, to the praise of His grace and mercy to us poor unworthy sinners, and *"be witnesses unto [Him]"* who died for us and rose again, to *"redeem us from all iniquity and purify unto Himself a peculiar* [special] *people, zealous of good works"* (Titus 2:14).

— D.T.M.

THE IMPORTANCE OF THE FAMILY UNIT

Except the Lord build the house,
they labour in vain that build it.

— Psalm 127:1

May 9th was set aside by Congress to be observed as Mother's Day, and June 20th as Father's Day. On these particular days special recognition is to be given to the fathers and mothers throughout our land to acknowledge the sacrifices made in behalf of their children's welfare.

While the office of father and mother is to be honored according to the Fourth Commandment, "Thou shalt honor thy father and thy mother," not all fathers and mothers are worthy of that honor because of their wickedness. There are many fathers and mothers in the world who are so devoid of virtue and who live in such open gross sins, refusing in some cases even to provide the basic necessities for their children, that one can hardly regard them as worthy of any recognition and praise!

Today we hear people complain bitterly and loudly, and with justifiable reason, about the corruption existing throughout the length and breadth of our country. We hear the teachers in our public schools complain about the difficulty in maintaining discipline in their classrooms because of the uncontrollable behavior of the children. And during the past months we have experienced the violent outbursts of such uncontrollable behavior, for example, in the shootings at the schools first in Springfield, Oregon and more recently in Littleton, Colorado. We also hear many employers complain about their employees who push only for higher wages but without concern for work performance. On the other hand, complaints are raised against the employers who sacrifice the safety of their employees simply to increase their profits. Then there are those who bewail those unscrupulous politicians who cheat and lie simply to feather their own nest and could care less about those who elected them to their office.

Now then, who is responsible! Whenever tragedy strikes, there seems to be an immediate call for psychiatrists, psychologists and counselors to assess the situation and come up with something or someone to blame. We Christians know who is to blame. It is the devil whom Scripture calls the destroyer, (Rev. 9:11), the originator of all sin, and our first parents who disobeyed the plain command of God in the Garden and brought sin into the world. "By one man sin entered into the world," (this sin has been passed down to every single individual in the world) "and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned" (Rom. 5:12). The words of the hymnwriter are indeed Scriptural, "All mankind fell in Adam's fall, one common sin infects us all; From sire to son the bane descends, And over all the curse impends" (Hymn 369). And from this inherited sin springs forth all manner of actual sin in thought, desire, word and deed.

There is only one solution. There is only one way in which the individual can be brought out of the kingdom of darkness into the marvelous light of Christ's glorious kingdom. That way is the Gospel, through which the Holy Spirit works upon the heart. "Faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God" (Rom. 10:17). Would to God that parents would recognize this truth and apply it to their children and bring their children to the Lord Jesus through the cleansing waters of Holy Baptism, the "washing of regeneration" (Titus 3:5). While some parents will indeed have their children baptized, they then neglect the second part of the Savior's command in Matthew 28 ... "**teaching** them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you" (v. 20). The Lord commands, "Train up a child in the way he should go" ... (Prov. 22:6).

The duties of the husband, wife, and children, are clearly set forth in Holy Writ. The husband as the responsible head of the house is required by God to provide the necessities of life for his family. "But if any provide not for his own, and specially for those of his own house, he hath denied the faith, and is worse than an infidel" (I Tim. 5:8). The wives, on the other hand, are "to be sober, to love their husbands, to love their children, to be discreet, chaste, **keepers at home**, good, obedient to their own husbands, that the Word of God be not blasphemed" (Titus 2:4,5). The children are to obey their parents in all things, for this is well pleasing unto the Lord (Col. 3:20). Unfortunately, however, the devil has been very successful in creating dysfunctional families. He does this, for example, by taking the wife out of her rightful sphere, where she is to

"guide the house" (I Tim. 5:14), and directing her to pursue a worldly career and thus neglect her wifely and motherly duties. The children come home from school and find an empty house. No mother is there for the children to discuss their personal problems and to receive the proper guidance. The result? "An idle mind is the devil's workshop."

After all, the teaching and training of the children rest primarily upon the parents. But how is that understood by the vast majority? Simply this: a child is to be given everything pertaining to this life which means not only the necessities (food, clothing, etc.) but also a good education in some particular field so that the child will then be well-situated for this life. And that is as far as such teaching and training goes! But the Lord Jesus commands, ... "teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you." And where do we find that? In the Holy Scriptures which have been given by the inspiration of God (II Tim. 3:16).

Here is where so many parents fail most miserably. Instead of teaching their children to "seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God" (Col. 3:1), they teach them by word and precept to center their attention upon the things of this world. What foolishness! How terrible the consequences! "For what is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? or what can a man give in exchange for his soul?" (Matt. 16:26).

There simply is no doubt about it, the best years for inculcating the fundamental truths of God's Word are the formative years of childhood and adolescence. The Apostle Paul wrote to his co-laborer, Timothy, "From a child thou hast known the Holy Scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus" (II Tim. 3:15). If this time is allowed to pass, the results can really be disastrous as we observe in the news reports which inform us of the violent crimes being committed by our youth. But far worse is the fate which awaits such unrepentant individuals. For "it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment", and "it is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God" (Heb. 9:27; 10:31).

With the proper teaching of God's Word must also be the example. "And, ye fathers, provoke not your children to wrath: but bring them up

in the nurture and admonition of the Lord" (Eph. 6:4). We often forget that children are very quick to observe when we tell them one thing and then become guilty of practicing the very opposite. No wonder the Lord warns, "Whoso shall offend one of these little ones which believe in Me, it were better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck, and that he were drowned in the depth of the sea" (Matt. 18:6). What kind of an example is it when parents are so inconsistent! When, for example, parents tell their children not to curse, but they curse; when they insist that the children attend church regularly, but they are irregular in their attendance; when they forbid their teenagers to frequent those places which will only get them into trouble, but they themselves frequent such places; when they teach their children the blessedness of marriage, but they constantly fight and quarrel. We dare not forget that an example is worth more than a thousand words! "As the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also" (James 2:26).

We parents are responsible for the oversight of our children and will have to give account to the Lord who has given us our children. This means knowing where they are and what they are doing! Discipline has become almost a foreign word. Children are often given the freedom to spend hours away from home where they fall in with bad company and forget the words of the Psalmist, "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). We parents must remember that our children have their sinful flesh just as we do, and that we must confess with the Apostle, "I know that in me, that is, in my flesh, dwelleth no good thing" (Rom. 7:18).

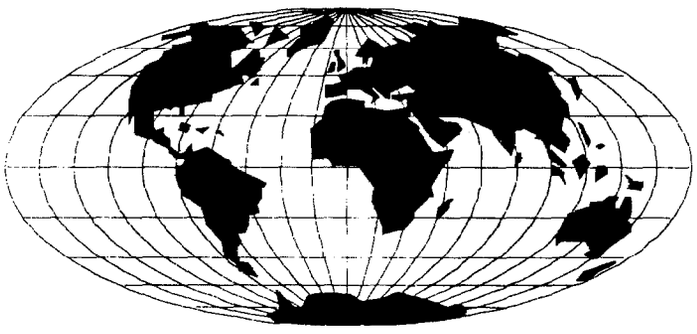
We must instill within our children's hearts and minds the sacred truths of God's Holy Word. This will equip them to fight against the temptations of the devil, the world, and their own sinful flesh with the Sword of the Spirit, the Word of God, (Eph. 6:17) so that they, together with their parents, may "lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us, looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God" (Heb. 12:1,2).

— M.L.N.

Around the World

with editorial comment

by M. L. Natterer



Broadcaster Ted Turner, who has said that Christianity is a religion "for losers," expanded on his anti-religious views during a recent speech to the National Press Club ... Among other things, Turner implied that people who believe in God — and Heaven and Hell — are just dumb ... Turner went even further, saying that he looks forward to going to Hell. "We'll have a chance to make things better because Hell is supposed to be a mess and Heaven is supposed to be perfect," he said, adding, "who wants to go to a place that's perfect?" Turner said it would be "boring." All those comments were made in response to a question about Turner's view about religious broadcasting. He said he used to carry religious shows but doesn't anymore ... Turner said Christ should not have bothered dying on the cross. "I don't want anybody to die for me" ... Recently, Turner spoke to newspaper executives in Atlanta. He told them that the Ten Commandments are out of date, kaput, expired. He said they need updating. ... Turner wants to replace the Ten Commandments with his own version, which he calls the "Ten Voluntary Initiatives." (Excerpts from *Christian World Reporter*, Jan. 1995, and *Human Events*, December 2, 1989.)

Ted Turner has come a long way since he started in his father's billboard business. He created the satellite broadcast empire which includes CNN, TBS and TNT. At age 59 he is now vice-chairman of Time Warner Inc. His vast holdings make him one of the wealthiest men in the world. He has donated a billion dollars to UN-related web

sites. Already back in 1991 Time Magazine named him Man of the Year. He is so puffed up with pride that he makes himself greater than the One who gave him life, brazenly defying His authority. Arrogantly and impudently he blasphemes God, ridicules His Word and flippantly scoffs at the teachings of the Almighty God, the Creator of heaven and earth. Such wickedness incurs God's wrath. Remember what happened to King Nebuchadnezzar? He was so high and mighty. "Is not this great Babylon, that I have built for the house of the kingdom by the might of my power, and for the honor of my majesty?" Scarcely were the words out of his mouth than the Lord's punishment descended upon him. Nebuchadnezzar learned that "those that walk in pride He is able to abase" (Daniel, chapter 4). Pride is a most detestable sin before God. Men like Ted Turner are described by God's penman in Psalm 73, when he writes, "pride compasseth them about as a chain ... they are corrupt ... they speak loftily ... they set their mouth against the heavens." But such forget that "pride goeth before destruction, and an haughty spirit before a fall" (Prov. 16:18). Whatever misery they may experience in this life, because of their sinful pride, is nothing compared to what they will experience when the Lord of lords and King of kings declares to them, "Depart from Me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels" (Matt. 25:41), "where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched" (Mark 9:43,44).

Investigators suspect more than 2,000 Christians have become victims of an alleged investment scam by a Florida ministry that was shut down by a court order in March. Jonathan Strawder and his Sovereign Ministries International of Orlando received between $11 million and $14 million in less than a year after making promises of returns of more than 600 percent and profits that would build churches in Poland and Kenya, the Associated Press reported Tuesday (October 27). Now, Strawder, 25, is being investigated on suspicion of fraud and unregistered securities sales. Prosecutors are expected to file charges against Strawder this week. He has denied any wrongdoing. One Orlando couple, Diane and Frank Smith, gave Strawder more than $47,000 after they were told that their

investment would bring a return of 360 percent a year ... They have only received $6,000. Investigators have claimed the operation was a Ponzi scheme — a scam in which early participants are paid with money invested by later ones — and got a court order to shut the ministry down. The organization returned just $1.2 million to investors and another $1.2 million was used for commissions for "ambassadors" or salespeople who convinced church groups and individuals to take part in the plan. Many of the salespeople also lost money. "We trusted Jon. He had a trustful look," said Diane Smith, 51, who was an ambassador. "He was just out of college. He was getting married and he just looked so wholesome ... "When it's all said and done, we would be lucky to give them 50 cents on the dollar," said David Cohen, one of the receivers. Strawder began Sovereign Ministries in April 1997 ... Investigators say he called the ministry "a specialist in Bible economics" whose programs would yield as much as 600 percent annually. They also said he made investors sign a form calling the deal a charitable gift rather than an investment ... (Religious News Service)

Present an attractive scheme to get rich fast and, lo and behold, the vast number of takers! Look at the thousands of people in our country, particularly the elderly, who are annually swindled out of their savings by such scams. And what about the millions of people who lose their money year after year to the various gambling devices operating in most of our states. Such covetous desires which break forth into such open idolatry are commonplace. Why? Because "they that will be rich fall into temptation and a snare, and into many foolish and hurtful lusts, which drown men in destruction and perdition. For the love of money is the root of all evil" ... (I Tim. 6:9,10). And when such opportunities are offered by those who lay claim to the name Christian, it is all the more reprehensible because the whole Christian Church is then blamed and ridiculed. The task which the Lord has given to pastors is explicitly set forth in His Word: "Preach the Word" (II Tim. 4:2). Jesus, the crucified and risen Savior, is to be the beginning and the end, not politics, not slick money-making methods, etc. For this is what man needs above all things, namely, salvation from sin, death, hell, and damnation, and the only thing in all the world that can save him is the old-fashioned, yet ever new Gospel of Jesus Christ (Rom. 1:16).

For detailed information about our Conference, we invite you to visit our official Web Site!

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

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Sunday School and
Bible Class ..... **11:15 a.m.**
REV. DAVID G. REDLIN, Pastor
4050 South Melpomene Way
Tucson, AZ 85730
Telephone: (520) 721-7618

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5605 Windsong Drive
Windcrest, TX 78239
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Sunday School and
Bible Class ..... **11:00 a.m.**
REV. E. R. STALLINGS, JR., Pastor
110 Grasmere Court
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Central Avenue at 171st Place
Oak Forest, IL 60452
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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
e-mail: peace@orbitel.com

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.**

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Worship Service ..... **11:00 a.m.**
REV. M. L. NATTERER, Pastor
483 Tangent Street
Lebanon, OR 97355
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REV. PAUL R. BLOEDEL, Pastor
9658 - 54th Avenue South
Seattle, WA 98118
Telephone: (206)723-7418
e-mail: stluke@connectexpress.com

Note: Services are also held in Victoria, British Columbia on the 1st and 3rd Sundays. Please call the Pastor for current location.
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(October 1st through May 31st)
..... **10:00 a.m.**
Sunday School and Bible Class
.....**after the service.**
REV. MARK W. DIERKING, Pastor
Box 33
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