# 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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"Now I beseech you, brethren, mark them which cause divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned; and avoid them."

— Rom. 16:17

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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.

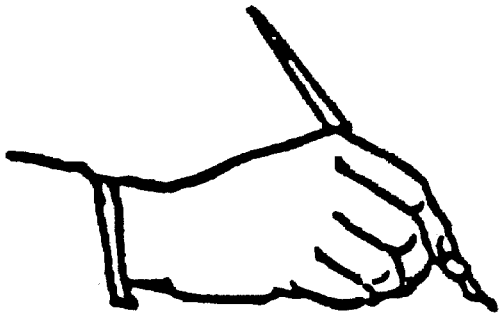
To show that we do not have among us a mixture of divergent teachings but that we are "perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment."

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*

Who is the Antichrist? This question has brought forth hundreds of pamphlets and tracts from various individuals and groups, each maintaining that they have the correct answer to this question. Some hold that Nero was **the** Antichrist, others think Napoleon, Hitler, Stalin, etc. But all of these men are dead. That they were **an** antichrist we know, but none of them was **the** Antichrist. Then there are those who think that the Antichrist is not a person but rather a teaching such as Nazism, Fascism, or Communism. But here again, these "isms" have just about fallen by the wayside. Besides, from Scripture we see that **the** Antichrist has his seat, not in the worldly governments, but *"in the temple of God,"* the Christian Church. To find out who the Antichrist is we must go to the Word of God and there study the marks of the Antichrist as given to us by God the Holy Spirit, and then turn to history to see who fulfills this prophecy of the Antichrist.

The seat of this doctrine is II Thessalonians 2:3-8. ***"Let no man deceive you by any means: for that day shall not come, except there come a falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition; who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped; so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God. Remember ye not, that, when I was yet with you, I told you these things? And now ye know what withholdeth that he might be revealed in his time. For the mystery of iniquity doth already work: only he who now letteth will let, until he be taken out of the way. And then shall that Wicked be revealed, whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of His mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of His coming."***

When we examine the Scriptural use of the word "antichrist," we find that it is used in a wider and in a narrow sense. The Apostle John, for example, uses it in its wider sense when he writes, *"Even now are there many antichrists"* (2:18). All false teachers are "antichrists" because they teach contrary to the teachings of Christ. But **the** Antichrist (narrow sense) is really the culmination of all false teachers!

Note from the text in Thessalonians how the Apostle describes the whole movement led by the Antichrist as *"a falling away."* And this falling away was not merely a falling away from a teaching which might appear to be of lesser importance, but from the very foundation itself — salvation solely and alone by the grace of God through faith in Christ without any merit or worthiness on our part. This doctrine, that man is saved without his works through faith in Christ, is the only teaching by which a man can be saved. *"Knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law, but by the faith of Jesus Christ ... for by the works of the law shall no flesh be justified"* (Gal. 2:16). Again, *"By grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: not of works, lest any man should boast"* (Eph. 2:8,9). This crystal-clear chief doctrine of the Holy Scriptures is cursed by the Roman Papacy. Listen to their own words: "If anyone saith that justifying faith is nothing else but confidence in the divine mercy which remits sins for Christ's sake or that this confidence alone is that whereby we are justified, let him be anathema" (Council of Trent, Session VI, Canon 12). And now the ELCA has declared that it has reached an agreement with the Roman Church on the doctrine of justification!!!

Not only does the Roman Antichrist condemn the chief doctrine of Holy Writ, but it also condemns many others. For example, God tells us that every Christian can be certain of his salvation. The Apostle writes, *"I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that He is able to keep that which I have committed unto Him against that day"* (II Tim. 1:12; cp. Rom. 8:31-39). This assurance of salvation is cursed by the Antichrist. "No one can know with the certainty of faith, which cannot be subject to error, that he has obtained the grace of God" ... "If anyone says that a man who is born again and justified is bound by faith to believe that he is certainly in the number of the predestined, let him be anathema" (Council of Trent). We are taught in Scripture that there are only heaven and hell — the Antichrist teaches the existence of purgatory and curses all who deny its existence. "If anyone says that after the reception of the grace of justification the guilt is so remitted and the debt of eternal punishment so blotted out to every repentant sinner that no debt of temporal punishment remains to be discharged either in this world or in purgatory before the gates of heaven can be opened, let him be anathema" (Council of Trent).

The Antichrist opposes and exalts himself above God! He has his seat in the temple of God, in the pale of the Christian Church. He insists on being the supreme authority in the church. "We, moreover, proclaim, declare, and pronounce that it is altogether necessary to salvation for every human being to be subject to the Roman Pontiff" (Bull Unam Sanctam of Boniface VIII). The Roman Catechism calls him, "the archbishop of the entire world, father and patriarch of the earth." Claudius Seisselius, the papal spokesman, said of the Pope in 1520, "In whatever guilty transactions the Pope may be implicated, he is an angel of God, yea, more, he is the successor of the Apostles and the vicar of Christ; aye, I should rather say, he is Christ." In 1870 it was declared that the infallibility of the Pope "is the teaching of Catholic truth, from which no one can deviate without loss of faith and of salvation" (Decrees of the Vatican Council, 1870, Session IV, Chapter III). And how he has exercised that self-appointed right down through the years! In 1854 he proclaimed the new doctrine of the Immaculate Conception of the Virgin Mary, that is, that Mary was born without sin. This in spite of the fact that the Bible teaches, *"for ALL have sinned"* ... (Rom. 3:23). Then in 1950 he proclaimed the teaching that the Virgin Mary was bodily taken up into heaven.

Note also from II Thessalonians 2 that the kingdom of the Antichrist is built and backed by all manner of lying powers and signs and wonders (vv. 9,10). And all these so-called miracles which invariably take place at shrines, graves, images of saints, etc., are really "lying wonders" which come from the father of all lies, the devil himself. The text also specifically states that the Antichrist will be with us until the Last Day.

The Antichrist was revealed at the time of the Reformation although the marks of the Antichrist began to appear already in the days of Christ and the Apostles as the Apostle Paul reminds the Thessalonians, ***"Remember ye not, that, when I was yet with you, I told you these things? And now ye know what withholdeth that he might be revealed in his time. For the mystery of iniquity doth already work: only he who now letteth will let, until he be taken out of the way."*** Obviously, however, it was at the time of the Reformation that the Roman Papacy was clearly revealed as the Antichrist.

Thanks be to God that the power of the Roman Antichrist has been broken. No man was able to break his power — it took the sword of the

Spirit, the Word of God (Eph. 6:17). Martin Luther, the Augustinian monk, was the man whom the Lord had chosen to break the unlimited dominion of the Antichrist. And Luther did this not in his own strength and by his own power, for he was a sinful human being. It was the Word of God which did it all as Luther himself exclaimed, "I simply taught, preached, wrote God's Word; otherwise I did nothing ... the Word did it all!"

While the powerful arm of the Roman Antichrist was broken, it had not been destroyed. It still seeks to exert its authority in influencing the world. Hence we must constantly be on our guard since Scripture teaches that it will be with us until Judgment Day when it shall be destroyed with the brightness of the Lord's coming. Today, by God's grace, our Conference still confesses with all those who are truly Lutheran, "that the Pope is the very Antichrist, who has exalted himself above, and opposed himself against Christ, because he will not permit Christians to be saved without his power" ... (The Smalcald Articles of 1537, Part II, Art. IV). Like Luther let us now continue to cling to the precious Word of our God which is our trusty Shield and Weapon and which always is victorious over its enemies, also over the Roman Antichrist!

— M.L.N.

## A word from the publisher...

Scriptural Publications thanks the readers of the *CONCORDIA LUTHERAN* for their patience in awaiting their recent copies. We are now printing each copy on our own laser equipment, and we trust that you have found the new print quality an improvement. After having reorganized our operation and location, however, *not everything* in our changeover had its upside; and we naturally experienced some "glitches", particularly with our mailing permit and database mail merging. We therefore apologize for any delay, assure you of our on-going effort to get the kinks out of our operation, and beg your continued patience. And thanks!

Rev. David T. Mensing, Chairman
Scriptural Publications

# HISTORICAL ESSAY

delivered to the

**Forty-Eighth Annual Convention of the *Concordia Lutheran Conference***

by

The Rev. David T. Mensing, Pastor • Peace Ev. Lutheran Church,
Oak Forest, Illinois

## The Missouri Synod's Slide into Heterodoxy, 1932-1947

## PART TWO

Suddenly and completely "out of the blue" —particularly for those who were either indifferent to or oblivious of the creeping heterodoxy that was eating like a cancer from within the body— organized dissatisfaction with the official orthodox position of the Missouri Synod was widely publicized, dissatisfaction particularly with its Scriptural requisites for Godpleasing union with other Lutherans and its refusal to enter into fellowship with the A. L. C. Forty-four pastors and professors, many of them renowned theologians in the synod, representing themselves as voices of reason and legitimate concern, met in Chicago, Illinois, on September 6-7, 1945, to mount an offensive against what they termed "some of the most vexing problems confronting our Synod." To illustrate these alleged "problems" they preferred vaguely worded general accusations against unnamed members (and presumably also officers) of the synod without supporting evidence and without proof, and they drafted and signed *A Statement* which they represented as their sincere effort to combat those "problems".

A copy of this *Statement* was sent by Dr. E. J. Friedrich, one of the leaders of this renegade group, to Synodical President John W. Behnken on September 19, who, the very same day, in a long distance phone call, asked Dr. Friedrich to postpone the publication of the *Statement* until the praesidium [the President and the four Vice Presidents of Synod] had an opportunity to discuss its contents with the signers. This request was denied. On October 2, Dr. Behnken and the rest of the praesidium urgently telegraphed their protest against the publication of the *Statement*, but a representative committee of the signers declined to honor the protest. Thereupon the document with its cover letter was distributed

throughout the Missouri Synod, putting into print and thrusting into the public eye the pernicious views of those who *today* would no doubt still be regarded by "modern" Lutherans as "genuinely concerned *moderates*" and "pleading *voices of reason*" in the interest of Christian unity. This precipitous circularization of *A Statement* threw down a red-hot gauntlet at the feet of President Behnken, which, as it soon became evident, he was both unable and unwilling to pick up and deal with in accordance with Scripture as the chief executive officer of the Missouri Synod, charged with guarding the confessional position of that church body against error and public offense. Moreover, the subsequent lengthy defense of *A Statement* contained in a booklet entitled *"Speaking the Truth in Love"* grossly perverted that Bible text (Ephesians 4:15) and used it for the propagation of error. It is therefore in direct testimony *against* that perversion that we have taken Ephesians 4:15 as the motto of this present convention of our beloved Conference and now uncover in retrospect the lies, slander, and false doctrine that were permitted to stand, *"that the generation to come might know"* (Psalm 78:6) the truth about *A Statement* and the official cover-up which effectively sealed the doom of the Missouri Synod as a heterodox church body.

**What About the Charges?** —In the cover letter that accompanied it, the signers of *A Statement* published general accusations against unnamed members of Synod, without the evidence and proof required by Holy Scripture, charges which, understood in the context of *A Statement* and the agenda of its signers, targeted those pastors and synodical officers who remained steadfast and unmoveable (I Corinthians 15:58) on the doctrinal position of the Missouri Synod (*Brief Statement of 1932*) and resisted any and all efforts to compromise that doctrinal position for an "easy union" with the American Lutheran Church. The *"good words and fair speeches"* (Romans 16:18) in which the charges were cloaked were perniciously deceptive. They had been cunningly crafted in their language so as to beg the question and entice the reader to accept them as legitimate outrage at false doctrine and practice, when, in actuality, they couched condemnation of true orthodoxy in fair-sounding terminology. Would not **we ourselves**, not knowing of the wicked machinations of these 20th Century *"men of Belial"* (I Kings 21:10-13), have been outraged to learn that there were those in our church body who showed:

! "a pernicious spirit, utterly at variance with the fundamental concepts of the Gospel"??
! "a wrong approach to the Holy Scriptures"??
! "a misconception of the essence of the Gospel"??
! "barren, negative attitudes and unevangelical techniques"??
! "unsympathetic, legalistic practices"??
! "self-complacent and separatistic narrowness"??
! "utter disregard for the law of Christian love"??
! "ecclesiastical persecutions"??

Yet, there was no evidence, no proper witness, no proof; so that even if the allegations *had been true*, they would have constituted **false witness** according to the Eighth Commandment (see Luther, *Large Catechism*, §109-112), **slander** (Psalm 50:19ff.), and blatant **defamation** (Proverbs 11:9). What these amounted to were the counter-accusation of and *ad hominem* attack upon the defenders of the truth that Ahab threw in the face of God's servant, Elijah: *"Art thou he that troubleth Israel?"* (I Kings 18:17).

**What About the Content??** —While not everything in *A Statement* is contrary to Scripture, several sections are ***questionable*** because of the inferences that can be drawn from them on the basis of the signers' quite public and undisguised agenda:

> **Section One**: "We affirm our loyalty to the great evangelical heritage of historic Lutheranism."

The term "Lutheran heritage" is deliberately vague here. The signers obviously do not affirm loyalty to the *Sola Scriptura* heritage, or they would affirm loyalty to the inerrant, verbally-inspired Scriptures. Their "Lutheran heritage" can better be characterized as a "Melanchthonian" heritage.

> **Section Two**: "We deplore a tendency in our Synod to substitute human judgments, synodical resolutions, or other sources of authority for the supreme authority of Scripture."

This sounds nice at first hearing, but when we consider that the "human judgments, synodical resolutions, or other sources of authority" objected

to by the signers are those resolutions whereby an easy union with the A. L. C. had been blocked (including, of course, the *Brief Statement of 1932*), the color of the horse suddenly looks different!

> **Section Three**: "We deplore all man-made barriers and all ecclesiastical traditions which would hinder the free course of the Gospel in the world."

We would deplore the same —*if* that were what this section actually deplores. In point of fact, the signers deplore here proper Scriptural "practice" in the Synod including prohibitions against unionistic services, joint prayer with the heterodox, and participation with false church bodies in evangelism programs. They found the regulations of Synod against such things restrictive of the Gospel.

> **Section Four**: "We deplore a loveless attitude which is manifesting itself within Synod ... in suspicions of brethren, in the impugning of motives, and in the condemnation of all who have expressed differing opinions...."

This, too, is fair-sounding until we understand that the signers equated "lovelessness" with admonition and doctrinal discipline in the Synod, the denunciation of sinful religious unionism, and the condemnation of those who *"cause divisions and offenses"* by espousing false doctrine and/or permitting false doctrine to stand alongside the truth without discrimination.

> **Section Six**: "We believe that there should be a re-emphasis of the privileges and responsibilities of the local congregation also in the matter of determining questions of fellowship."

Dr. Friedrich's official denial notwithstanding, this wording clearly opens the door to ***selective fellowship*** apart from joint recognition of brethren on the part of the synodical organization. In proper joint recognition of fellowship on the part of a church body, there is no hierarchical rule established for the synod or conference over the congregation, but only a <u>safeguard</u> against <u>subjectively</u> <u>selective</u> fellowship which ultimately results in religious unionism. Such a safeguard should be <u>valued</u>, not deplored.

Besides the above, **four sections** are definitely ***objectionable***, namely, sections **five**, **eight**, **nine** and **eleven**. Let us look at each briefly:

> **Section Five**: "We affirm our conviction that sound exegetical procedure is the basis for sound Lutheran theology. We therefore deplore the fact that Romans 16:17-18 has been applied to all Christians who differ from us in certain points of doctrine. It is our conviction based on sound exegetical and hermeneutical principles, that this text does not apply to the present situation in the Lutheran Church of America."

1) NOT exegetical procedure (the method of expounding Scripture) but CLEAR SCRIPTURE ITSELF (the prooftexts or ***sedes*** which stand on their own without interpretation) is the only basis for sound Lutheran theology! 2) Romans 16:17-18 does not allow for the variances and exceptions forced upon it by modern exegetes. It is a *sedes doctrinae* or prooftext which forbids religious unionism, that is, church work and worship between those not united in doctrine. Even in 1945, the face of "Lutheranism in America" was a multi-faceted, spiritually schizophrenic mess! Today, it's so bad that the "face" of outward Lutheranism is hopelessly disfigured and repulsive! The application of Romans 16:17-18 is NOT an "exegetical question"!

> **Section Eight**: "We affirm our conviction that any two or more Christians may pray together to the Triune God in the name of Jesus Christ if the purpose for which they meet and pray is right according to the Word of God. This obviously includes meetings of groups called for the purpose of discussing doctrinal differences."

1) This section could not have been "affirmed" if Romans 16:17-18 had not already been dismissed by the statementarians as not being applicable to fellowship between the orthodox and the heterodox (Section 5). Nevertheless other passages as well show that fellowship with the heterodox is contrary to the will of God and that joint prayer with those who err in doctrine and/or practice and refuse to heed correction is prohibited: Amos 3:3; Acts 2:42; I Corinthians 1:10; Ephesians 4:3ff., etc.

2) Since when do "Lutherans" espouse the Jesuitical principle that "the end justifies the means"? If the purpose for which they meet is God-pleasing, why would they deliberately fly in the face of God's Word by practicing fellowship before fellowship is established?

> **Section Nine**: "We deplore the tendency to apply this non-Biblical term [*"unionism"*] to any and every contact between Christians of different denominations."

While the term is "non-Biblical," that is, it is not found written anywhere in the Bible, both the ***term*** and the ***concept*** are completely Scriptural. This characterization of the statementarians only seeks to detract from the importance of understanding the pernicious nature of sinful religious unionism. Moreover, by "any and every" the signers do not refer to *equal yokes* between the orthodox and heterodox; they want to exclude from the term "unionism" such things as joint prayer, joint mission work, joint youth activities, joint chaplaincy ministries in the military, joint hospital chaplaincies, etc., as well as indiscriminate exercise of fellowship between individuals.

> **Section Eleven**: "We affirm our conviction that ... fellowship is possible without complete agreement in details of doctrine and practice which have never been considered divisive in the Lutheran Church."

It is simply NOT TRUE that there are "details of doctrine and practice which have never been considered divisive in the Lutheran Church." A doctrine is no more and no less than a clear teaching of Scripture. Differences other than doctrinal differences are not divisive, as our Lutheran fathers have consistently held, namely, "human traditions, that is, rites and ceremonies instituted by men" (Augsburg Confession, VII); BUT concerning doctrine, "The Word of God shall establish articles of faith, and no one else, not even an angel" (Smalcald Articles, *Triglotta*, p. 467, 15). In all such matters, God's Word demands complete unity in doctrine and practice (I Corinthians 1:10). Note that the unscriptural character of *A Statement* laid down in Section Five reaches its ultimate and logical conclusion and purpose in Section Eleven.

**What About the Cover-Up?** —While it is true that President Behnken and the four Vice Presidents initially requested the signers NOT to send

out *A Statement* until they had opportunity to discuss it with them, no action was taken when public offense was given in its immediate dissemination. Instead, the following chain of events took place which at the same time represented the President's meager efforts at "damage control" and demonstrated his unwillingness to see it through to a Godpleasing resolution:

1) On December 10, 1945, President Behnken and the First Vice President of Synod met with the representative Continuation Committee of the signers and, in Behnken's words, "voiced our disagreement with some of the points in *A Statement* as well as with the accompanying letter and insisted that these be corrected or withdrawn." But nothing was done.

2) A subsequent meeting was arranged for February 14-15, 1946 in St. Louis, for the praesidium, the district presidents, and the signers. By the time this meeting was held, several hundred protests had been received by Behnken's office from conferences and individuals all over the synod. At this meeting, the signers "explained" the statement and its accompanying letter; but two separate requests from the praesidium that they "withdraw" or at least "suspend" *A Statement* were declined. In direct contradiction of this fact, the *Lutheran Witness* reported on February 26: "The signers did not retract, nor were they asked to retract." (p. 72). It was immediately obvious in what camp the *Lutheran Witness* had chosen to align itself. One positive step came out of the meeting: A committee of ten men chosen by the President was established to study *A Statement* in the light of God's Word and to meet with a corresponding committee of the signers.

3) By April, 1946, the President's Committee of Ten was established; but it soon became evident that it had no real status as far as reaching a final settlement was concerned. When the committee stated that it was essential for the President himself to define its status and the scope of its work and asked him for a meeting toward the end of that month, Behnken suggested that approval of such an arrangement be sought from the *signers'* committee! The President's Committee deemed such a procedure entirely out of order. In the meeting that was eventually held on April 27, it was agreed that the committee would be regarded only as "advisory to the President of Synod."

4) The two committees of "Ten and Ten" met together three times (August 13-16, September 23-25, and November 12-15, 1946). In the first meeting, the President's Committee presented to its counterpart committee a detailed list of objections to *A Statement* and to its accompanying letter; and, since the signers had been soliciting *additional* signatures throughout the summer and had been distributing the booklet *"Speaking the Truth in Love"* in defense of the *Statement*, President Behnken stipulated that no further solicitation be made and that distribution of the booklet should cease. Nevertheless, just two days after the conclusion of the second meeting, the chairman of the signer's group (who had been present at the first meeting as well) issued a letter dated September 28, urging his fellow signers to do just the opposite and adding: "It seems as though it should be an easy matter to secure additional signers." When at the meeting of November 12-15 the signers' committee was called to account for these breaches which were agitating against a proper Godpleasing settlement, the signers' committee gave no assurances of cooperation or compliance.

5) Following the November meeting and in view of mounting apprehension in Synod about the end result of its efforts, the President's Committee decided that it had to make an immediate summary report to the President on negotiations to date and to request that the report be shared with Synod's clergy for their assurance.

6) When, however, the final draft of the committee's report was presented to President Behnken, he suggested a scenario of "writing *finis* to *A Statement*" —putting the whole matter to rest— by getting the signers simply to agree to the following: a) The Continuation Committee of the signers would cease to function; b) there would be no further propagandizing for *A Statement*; c) the "Statementarians" as a group would dissolve; d) the issues involved would be studied further at "conferences;" e) there would be no further solicitation of adherents; f) *"Speaking the Truth in Love"* would no longer be circulated; and g) the President would offer to local pastoral conferences "materials" for discussion of the issues raised by *A Statement.* The President's Committee thereupon unanimously informed Dr. Behnken that his proposal was ***unsatisfactory*** because it did not provide for retraction of the defamations in the accompanying letter and did not mark as false nor require the retraction of any of the sections in *A Statement.* After the praesidium had privately con-

sidered these objections, the President stated regarding future procedure: "It is evident that *finis* cannot be offered to the church." Although this statement was defective because of what was not said, namely, what exactly Behnken intended to do to bring a proper Godpleasing *finis* to this controversy, the President's committee hoped, as late as the end of December, that he would heed its objections and not proceed with his compromising proposal. It still trusted that he would present its report to the Synod, as it had requested him to do, and then that he would act accordingly —Scripturally, forthrightly, honestly, and uncompromisingly in the best tradition of his predecessors in the office of Synodical President.

**What About the Conclusion?** —The subsequent action of Dr. Behnken, in direct violation of his assurances to his own advisory committee, has been variously characterized as a betrayal, a sell-out, a back-door escape, a pact with the devil, and the product of the stereotyped "smoke-filled room" of big-time politicians. On January 11, 1947, the President and the First Vice President arranged a brief meeting with the chairman and secretary of the President's Committee simply to inform them *after the fact* that the praesidium had met five days before, January 6, in Ft. Wayne, Indiana, with the committee of the signers and with the St. Louis seminary professors allied with them —but without any of *the President's own* committee present— and had reached *An Agreement* to settle the controversy. In effect, however, it only **disposed** of the controversy **without settling it**. That *Agreement* was a ***travesty*** —an artful compromise worthy of Melanchthon and a textbook example of the heterodoxy which had taken hold of the Missouri Synod at the highest level of its leadership! The *Agreement* stated in part:

> "An earnest evaluation of the discussions involved in *'A Statement'* has demonstrated that we are agreed on many of its assertions, even though agreement has not been reached on some of the specific questions raised. ... Nothing has developed, however, which is divisive of church fellowship. ...
>
> "It has therefore been agreed in a meeting of the Praesidium and of the representatives of the Signers that in the interest of peace and harmony in our midst and for the furtherance of the Kingdom of God at large *'A State-*

> *ment'* and *'The Accompanying Letter'* be withdrawn as a basis of discussion so that the issues involved may be studied objectively on the basis of theses prepared under the auspices of the President of Synod.
>
> "The withdrawal of *'A Statement'* as a basis of discussion shall not be interpreted as a retraction... ."

In spite of Dr. Behnken's promise that the issues involved would be studied further in the light of God's Word and that further "theses" would be written to clarify matters, subsequent meetings and studies were nothing but a sham! Behnken steadfastly refused to formulate antithetical statements which would specifically reject the wording of *A Statement* or would state unequivocally that *A Statement* expressed false doctrine. His attempt at developing "guidelines" for the clergy's eventual further study became transparently lopsided when the Springfield seminary's faculty found the St. Louis seminary's faculty "opinion" on Romans 16:17-18 *unacceptable,* and yet the St. Louis opinion was published by Concordia Publishing House as official for use in dogmatics courses in the St. Louis seminary.

Moreover, at the 1947 Convention, many overtures and memorials to the Synod regarding *A Statement* were not published. Other attempts to address the issue were killed by parliamentary maneuvering on the floor. And yet, in spite of such obstacles, the Synod went "on record" as reaffirming the *Brief Statement* and as giving its "definite support" to Memorial 607 which clearly defined the doctrines in controversy and actually rejected the errors contained in *A Statement.* Nevertheless failure on the part of the synod's officials to take proper and effective disciplinary action against erring members has been repeatedly excused on the grounds that, because of the *Agreement*, *A Statement* "no longer exists." Nonsense! Several <u>years</u> after the *Agreement*, signers were still defending *A Statement* and their subscription to it. *"Speaking the Truth in Love"* was still being distributed. And the "proof of the pudding" lay (and still lies) in the ***practice*** **of the Lutheran Church–Missouri Synod**, in the ***official publications and documents*** **of the synod**, in the ***residual effects*** of the *Agreement* seen in **subsequent controversies** (including that which precipitated our separation from that body when it adopted the *Common Confession* three years later), and in the ***lack of***

***doctrinal discipline*** **still** **today** in a church body whose slide into heterodoxy began ironically shortly after its adoption of the *Brief Statement* in 1932 and was all but set in concrete just twenty-five years later! After now almost fifty years of retrospective consideration of all that has gone over the dam since we left the Missouri Synod in 1951, we thank God for His gracious deliverance of His people from *"Egypt"* and for His continuing mercy in sparing us from the lure of its *"fleshpots"*. We have seen what malnutrition has resulted in those who sold their birthright of orthodoxy for a mess of *"Egyptian pottage"* and in those who, having once left *"Egypt"* in obedience to God's Word, returned to their spiritual detriment! And we wonder what child of God, having once tasted the sweet Manna of His unadulterated Word and having been raised on a diet of pure doctrine and faithful practice, would knowingly return to a spiritual garbage can to forage upon the maggots of heterodoxy?? "From this preserve us, Heavenly Father!"

— D.T.M.

For further information, the following materials are available from the *Concordia Lutheran Conference Archives:*

!The text of ***A Statement*** with the names of the original signers..... $ 0.75
!The accompanying cover letter sent out over *A Statement*..... $ 0.50
! *"A Former U.L.C.A. Pastor Looks at the* ***Agreement****"* by Wallace H. McLaughlin (undated)..... $ 1.00
! *"The Statement Controversy Up to Date"* (1949) by W. H. McLaughlin and H. D. Mensing..... $ 1.00
! ***"Do You Know?"*** —an informational booklet of documentation on the *A Statement* controversy, originally published in 1950 by the Chicago Study Club..... $ 1.50

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17151 South Central Avenue
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# Luther's Small Catechism

Down through the centuries who can tell of the tremendous influence the Small Catechism of Luther has had upon untold hundreds of thousands, even millions, of people since the year 1529 when this precious little book was first published. Dr. Martin Luther wrote his Small Catechism for the benefit of the common people whose meager knowledge of the pure teachings of the Bible was literally beyond comprehension. Knowing the God-given responsibility of every Christian father to bring his children up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord, Luther begins each of the Six Chief Parts of Christian Doctrine with the words, "AS THE HEAD OF THE FAMILY SHOULD TEACH THEM IN A SIMPLE WAY TO HIS HOUSEHOLD." And this is exactly what many heads of families did in those early days of Lutheranism so that many parish priests fled from their congregations in dismay upon the realization that their parishioners knew the Word of God better than they who were supposed to be the official teachers in the church.

Luther's work on the Small Catechism began as the direct result of a visitation of the churches in Saxony which had taken place in 1527 through 1529 at the command of the Elector and upon the special urging of Luther himself. This visitation, conducted by Luther and several of his colleagues, was undertaken to determine the theological and general religious state of affairs among the preachers and people. Luther, in his preface to the Small Catechism, describes what spiritual misery he observed while visiting the churches of Saxony: *"Alas, what manifold misery I beheld! The common people, especially in the villages, know nothing at all of Christian doctrine; and many pastors are quite unfit and incompetent to teach. ... they know neither the Lord's Prayer, nor the Creed, nor the Ten Commandments and live like the poor brutes and irrational swine."* He admonishes the pastors, *"O ye bishops! how will ye ever render account to Christ for having so shamefully neglected the people and having never for a moment exercised your office. ... Therefore I entreat you all, for God's sake, my dear brethren who are pastors and preachers, to devote yourselves heartily to your office and have pity upon the people who are committed to your charge. Help us*

*to inculcate the Catechism upon them, especially upon the young. Let those who are not able to do better take these tables and forms and set them word for word before the people."* He then urges them to stick to one form or text year after year so that the people do not become confused but are able to say it *"word for word and commit it to memory."*

This *"Gem"* or *"Jewel"* of the Reformation, as Luther's Small Catechism has been called, is hardly being used today in the vast majority of churches which call themselves Lutheran. No longer is this *"Laymen's Bible"* being thoroughly memorized — even in those churches which pride themselves in having parochial schools. Many so-called Lutherans of today are just as ignorant of the very basics of the Christian faith as they were in Luther's day when he visited the churches of Saxony. And the pastors, many of whom encourage unionism and practice open Communion in their administration of the Lord's Supper, uphold, defend and nourish their people's ignorance! Is there no true *"fear and love"* of God in their hearts and no true love for the souls entrusted to their care?!

If a person (child or adult) memorizes Luther's Small Catechism — not only with his head but with his heart — he will be able to give a Scriptural answer to many questions with regard to the teachings of the Bible **in the very words which he has committed to memory** with which he himself will be benefited spiritually as well as those to whom he should be constrained, as a Christian, to confess his faith. It is not difficult for a Christian, during his course of instruction in the six chief parts of Christian doctrine, to commit to memory every section of Luther's Small Catechism from the First Commandment with its explanation to the very last Christian Question with its answer. In doing so, and by his CONSTANT REVIEW OF THE CATECHISM, he will be able to answer many questions as to what a Christian believes on the basis of the Bible, such as:

**1.** Who is the true God? *"I believe in God the Father, ... His only Son, our Lord, ... and in the Holy Ghost."*
**2.** What does it mean not to have any other god beside or instead of the true God? It means, *"We should fear, love and trust in God **above all things**."*
**3.** What does God **forbid** and **require** in every Commandment of His holy Law? *"We should fear and love God **that we may not... but... that we may...**"*

**4.** How should God's Commandments serve **as a curb** for our sinful flesh? *"God threatens to punish all that transgress these Commandments, therefore we should fear His wrath and not act contrary to them."*

**5.** How should God's promises of grace and every blessing cause us to use God's Commandments **as a rule** for our lives as Christians? *"Therefore we should also love and trust in Him and willingly do according to His Commandments."*

**6.** What is God the Father called because He made all things? *"Maker of heaven and earth."*

**7.** What has God made besides you? **"... all creatures."**

**8.** What did God give you when He created you as a human being? *"He has given me my body and soul, eyes, ears, and all my members, my reason and all my senses."*

**9.** What does He still do for you? "[He] *still preserves them* [body and soul, eyes ears, etc.]"

**10.** How does He still preserve you? "[He has given me] *also clothing and shoes, meat and drink, house and home... He defends me... and guards and protects me from all evil."*

**11.** Why has God done all of this for you? "[He has done this] *purely out of fatherly, divine goodness and mercy, without any merit or worthiness in me."*

**12.** What is your duty toward God for all that He has done for you? *"It is my duty to thank and praise, to serve and obey Him."*

**13.** Who is Jesus Christ? "[He is] *true God... and true man."*

**14.** Why do you believe that Jesus Christ is true God? "[He is] *begotten of the Father from eternity."*

**15.** Why do you believe that Jesus Christ is true man? "[He is] *born of the virgin Mary."*

**16.** Who is Jesus Christ to YOU? "[He] *is **my** Lord."*

**17.** What has Jesus Christ done for YOU? "[He] *has **redeemed** me."*

**18.** How were you that you needed to be redeemed? *"a lost and condemned creature"*

**19.** With what were you **not** redeemed? *"not with gold or silver"*

**20.** With what were you redeemed? *"with His* [Christ's] *holy, precious blood and with His innocent suffering and death"*

**21.** Why were you redeemed by Jesus Christ? *"That I may be His own, and live under Him in His Kingdom, and serve Him in everlasting*

*righteousness, innocence, and blessedness."*

**22.** How certain are you of your redemption by Christ? *"as sure as He is risen from the dead, lives and reigns to all eternity."*

**23.** Are you able to make your own decision for Christ? *"I believe that I cannot by my own reason or strength believe in Jesus Christ, my Lord, or come to Him."*

**24.** By what **means** did the Holy Ghost make you a Christian? *"The Holy Ghost has called me **by the Gospel**, enlightened me with His gifts, sanctified and kept me in the true faith."*

**25.** What are all those people called whom the Holy Ghost makes Christians? *"even as He calls, gathers, enlightens, and sanctifies **the whole Christian Church on earth**, and keeps it with Jesus Christ in the one true faith"*

**26.** What is the greatest blessing which the Holy Ghost gives to the Church? *"in which Christian Church He daily and richly **forgives all sins** to me and all believers"*

**27.** What will the Holy Ghost do on the Last Day? *"and will at the Last Day **raise up** me and all the dead"*

**28.** What will the Holy Ghost give to you and to all believers on the Last Day? "[He will] *give unto me and all believers in Christ **eternal life**."*

**29.** What do you confess because all these things are plainly taught in the Bible? *"This is most certainly true."*

**30.** Why does the Lord Jesus teach us to call God "Our Father?" *"God would by these words tenderly invite us to believe that He is our **true** Father, and that we are His **true** children."*

**31.** How then may we come to the Lord God in prayer? *"we may with all boldness and confidence ask Him as dear children ask their dear father."*

**32.** How is God's name **made holy** among us? *"When the Word of God is taught in its truth and purity, and we, as the children of God, also lead a holy life according to it."*

**33.** How is God's name **profaned** (made unholy) among us? *"He that **teaches and lives otherwise** than God's Word teaches profanes the Name of God among us."*

**34.** What should we ask God with regard to false teachers and those who lead godless lives? *"From this preserve us, Heavenly Father."*

**35.** How do we become members of God's Kingdom, the Church? *"When our heavenly Father gives us His Holy Spirit, so that by His*

*grace we believe His holy Word and lead a godly life, here in time and hereafter in eternity."*

**36.** When is God's will done among us with regard to the evil counsel and will of Satan, the world and our sinful flesh? *"when God* ***breaks and hinders*** *every evil counsel and will"*

**37.** What is the counsel and will of Satan, the world, and our flesh? *"which would not let us hallow God's name nor let His kingdom come, such as the will of the devil, the world and our flesh"*

**38.** What is God's good and gracious will with regard to us Christians? *"but strengthens and preserves us steadfast in His Word and faith unto our end. This is His gracious and good will."*

**39.** Why does the Lord teach us to pray for daily bread when he gives it also to wicked unbelievers? *"that He would lead us to know it* [namely, that our daily bread comes from Him] *and to receive our daily bread with thanksgiving"*

**40.** What all is included in "daily bread?" *"Everything that belongs to the support and wants of the body, ... a pious spouse, pious children... pious and faithful rulers, good government, good weather, peace, health, discipline, honor, good friends, faithful neighbors, and the like."*

**41.** How much should we think that we deserve from God when we pray to Him? *"We are worthy of none of the things for which we pray, neither have we deserved them; but that He would grant them all to us by grace; for we daily sin much and indeed deserve nothing but punishment."*

**42.** When we realize how graciously God has dealt with us, how should we deal with others who sin against us? *"So will we also heartily forgive, and readily do good to, those who sin against us."*

**43.** What do we pray that the devil, the world, and our flesh may not do to us? *"may not deceive us nor seduce us into misbelief, despair, and other great shame and vice"*

**44.** What therefore do we ask God to do for us when we are assailed by Satan, the world, and our sinful flesh? *"that He would guard and keep us... and though we be assailed by them, that still we may finally overcome and obtain the victory"*

**45.** From what evil do we ask God to deliver us in this life? *"from every evil of body and soul, property and honor"*

**46.** What do we ask of God when our last hour comes? *"and finally,*

*when our last hour has come, grant us a blessed end, and graciously take us from this vale of tears to Himself in heaven"*

**47.** Of what should I be certain when I say the word "Amen?" *"I should be certain that these petitions are acceptable to our Father in heaven, and are heard by Him."*

**48.** What good is Baptism? *"It works forgiveness of sins, delivers from death and the devil, and gives eternal salvation to all who believe."*

**49.** How does the water in Baptism differ from other water? *"it is the water comprehended in God's command and connected with God's Word."*

**50.** What is in and with the water which causes the water in Baptism to be a "gracious water of life?" *"the Word of God"*

**51.** What is the significance of baptizing with water? *"It signifies that the Old Adam in us should... be drowned and die... and a new man daily come forth and arise."*

**52.** What is the special power of the Keys? *"to forgive the sins of penitent sinners, but to retain the sins of the impenitent"*

**53.** To whom has Christ given this power of the Keys? *"to His Church on earth"*

**54.** How valid is the use of the binding and loosing Key when used by a Christian congregation? *"This is as valid and certain, in heaven also, as if Christ, our dear Lord, dealt with us Himself."*

**55.** What two parts belong to Confession? *"one is that we confess our sins; the other, that we receive absolution, or forgiveness, from the pastor as from God Himself"*

**56.** What sins should we confess to God? *"Before God we should plead guilty of all sins, even of those which we do not know."*

**57.** Which sins may we confess to our pastor? *"those sins only which we know and feel in our hearts"*

**58.** How should we examine ourselves so that we may properly confess our sins? *"here consider your station according to the Ten Commandments, whether you are a father, mother, son, daughter..."*

**59.** What is the Sacrament of the Altar? *"It is the true body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ under the bread and wine."*

**60.** Who instituted the Sacrament of the Altar? *"Christ Himself"*

**61.** What are we Christians to do with the body and blood of Christ in the Lord's Supper? *"for us Christians to eat and to drink."*

**62.** What are the words of the Bible in which the Lord's Supper is insti-

tuted? *"Our Lord Jesus Christ, the same night in which He was betrayed..."*

**63.** What blessings are given us in the Lord's Supper? *"in the Sacrament forgiveness of sins, life, and salvation are given us"*

**64.** Through what are these blessings given to us? *"through these words* ['Given and shed for you for the remission of sins']*"*

**65.** Which words, besides the eating and drinking, are the chief thing in the Sacrament? *"the words here written, 'given and shed for you for the remission of sins'"*

**66.** Who is truly worthy to come to the Lord's Table? *"He is truly worthy and well prepared who has faith in these words, 'Given and shed for you for the remission of sins.'"*

**67.** Who is unworthy and unprepared to come to Holy Communion? *"he that does not believe these words or doubts"*

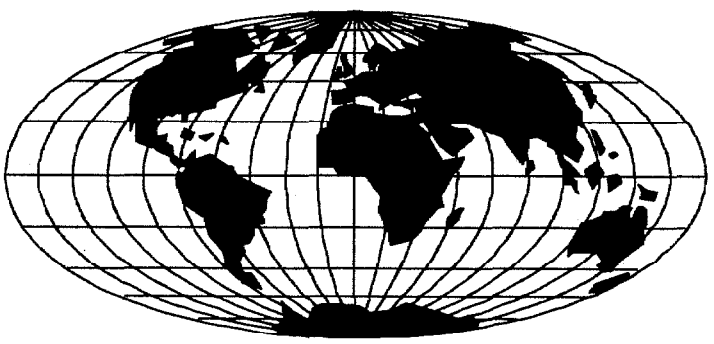
Just from the **Six Chief Parts of Christian Doctrine** alone as they are set forth in Dr. Martin Luther's Small Catechism, these and other numerous questions can be correctly and Scripturally answered. Together with the **Prayer Section**, the **Table of Duties**, and the **Christian Questions with their Answers**, Luther's Small Catechism provides much basic Scriptural knowledge in plain and simple language which any Christian may readily commit to memory and use for his own spiritual and eternal benefit as well as for the benefit of others with whom he may come into contact. May we then never despise this little **Handbook of Christian Doctrine**, or think that we are above its use in our lives, or speak against committing it to memory. By God's grace, it can be a source of help for us in our prayers and devotions, it can be a constant and ready review of the basics of our Christian religion in our hearts, it can guide us in our lives as true children of God in Christ Jesus our Savior, and it can help us in the confession of our faith with our fellow Lutheran Christians and for the benefit of those who do not know the way of salvation. May God grant its effective use among us and our children in the congregations of our Conference for generations to come.

— P.R.B.

# Around the World

*with editorial comment*

*by M. L. Natterer*



The Rev. Jerry Falwell said the Antichrist is probably alive today and is a male Jew. He also believes the second coming of Christ probably will be within 10 years. In a speech Thursday about the concern people have over the new millennium, Falwell told about 1,500 people at a conference on evangelism at Kingsport, Tenn., that the Antichrist is male and is a Jew. "Who will the antichrist be? I don't know. Nobody else knows," said Falwell, whose Sunday morning services at Thomas Road Baptist Church in Lynchburg are carried by television stations nationwide. "Is he alive and here today? Probably. Because when he appears during the Tribulation period he will be a full-grown counterfeit of Christ. Of course he'll be Jewish. Of course he'll pretend to be Christ. And if in fact the Lord is coming soon, and he'll be an adult at the presentation of himself, he must be alive somewhere today." Falwell did not intend for his statement to be anti-Jewish. He said he meant only that the Antichrist must be Jewish because Jesus Christ was a Jew. "If he's going to be the counterfeit of Christ, he has to be Jewish," Falwell said. "The only thing we know is he must be male and Jewish." (Associated Press)

**To every wide-awake Christian it must be perfectly obvious that we are certainly living in the last evil days of the world. The signs which the Lord Jesus enumerates in the Gospels and of which the Apostles speak in their Epistles have been and are being fulfilled. And the Savior reminds us that *"when ye shall see all these things, know that it is near, even at the doors"* (Matt. 24:33). But we must be careful lest we go beyond the Scriptures and arbitrarily set a time limit for**

**the Savior's return. It is, of course, a well-known fact that Jerry Falwell belongs to the group known as "millennialists" — those who believe that Christ's second coming will precede the millennium (premillennialists), and those who hold that His second coming will follow the millennium (postmillennialists). And, as is the case with the millennialists, each one tries to put a slightly different spin on his particular brand of millennialism. Hence we observe Jerry Falwell coming up with his idea that the Antichrist would be a male Jew who is already here. Perhaps he should take a closer look at II Thess. 2 where the Apostle clearly shows that the Antichrist is he *"who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped; so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God"* (v. 4). That is none other than the Roman papacy which sets itself above the Word of God and anathematizes all who believe that they are saved alone by grace through faith in Jesus (Council of Trent, Session VI, Canon 12). Carefully and honestly comparing the teaching of the Roman hierarchy with God's Word would constrain Jerry Falwell to confess with us the Scripturally based historical conclusion of the Smalcald Articles: "the Pope is the very anti-Christ, who exalted himself above and opposed himself against Christ." (Concordia Triglotta, Smalcald Articles, Part II, Art. IV, page 475).**

Jerusalem — Thousands of perfectly sane and rational people are giving up everything they own to follow a man who heals the sick, walks on water — and swears he's none other than Jesus Christ! Jacob Katzan, 22, has reportedly performed many miracles exactly like those mentioned in the Bible — among them, raising the dead and changing water into wine. And his public speaking is so powerful that hundreds of responsible people from all over the world have left comfortable homes and quit high-paying jobs to join Katzan as he wanders through the Holy Land, spreading the message that God's Kingdom is at hand. "The problems of this world can only be solved by love," Katzan told a crowd of 4,000 who gathered to hear him on the outskirts of the city. "You don't have to save millions of lives to make a difference. Love begins simply, when we show as much concern for our neighbors' problems as we do for our own." Noted American researcher and Bible expert Rev. Thomas

Loguin has studied the charismatic Katzan for three years and says he has no explanation for the young man's incredible spiritual power. "I'm not ready to go on record and say he's actually the second coming of Jesus," said Rev. Loguin. "But I've seen some amazing biblical evidence that is definitely causing me to give the question some serious consideration. For instance, no one knows exactly where Katzan was born or where he comes from. But the first recorded sighting of him was on Nov. 3, 1995, when hundreds saw him drop slowly to Earth on a huge white cloud. ... And quite frankly, I've never seen anyone who exudes such a powerful aura of love. It's overwhelming."

**How important it is for us Christians to know the signs which the Lord has given us in His Word concerning the last evil days of the world! In Matthew 24, for example, He foretells, *"Then if any man shall say unto you, Lo, here is Christ, or there; believe it not. For there shall arise false Christs, and false prophets, and shall show great signs and wonders; insomuch that, if it were possible, they shall deceive the very elect. Behold, I have told you before"* (vv. 23-25). When all of these signs shall have taken place and the Day which the Lord has set finally comes, then *"shall they see the Son of Man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory"* (v. 30). *"Behold, He cometh with clouds; and every eye shall see Him, and they also which pierced Him"* (Rev. 1:7). And when He appears on that appointed Day, *"the Son of Man shall come in His glory, and all the holy angels with Him, then shall He sit upon the throne of His glory"* (Matt. 25:31). Knowing these signs preceding that Final Day and observing their fulfilment should comfort our weary souls and cause us to sing with Paul Gerhardt,**

*My heart for joy is springing*
*And can no more be sad,*
*'Tis full of mirth and singing,*
*Sees naught but sunshine glad.*
*The Sun that cheers my spirit*
*Is Jesus Christ, my King;*
*The heaven I shall inherit*
*Makes me rejoice and sing.*

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**Note:** Services are also held each Sunday in our Midland, Michigan chapel at the **Ramada Inn,** 1815 South Saginaw Road:
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**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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