

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." Psalm 119:105

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“Be not conformed
to this world:
but be ye
transformed
by the renewing
of your mind .”

—Romans 12:2



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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 false church body, but that the congregations which form it confess, teach, and practice the Word of God in its full truth and purity and use the Sacraments according to Christ's institution. All who do this are the true visible Church on earth.

To seek out all who truly share our Scriptural position in doctrine and practice, and to urge the mutual public acknowledgment of such God-given unity. Thus we shall be able thereafter to practice a God-pleasing fellowship with them.

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

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

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

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

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

The President's Column

“This is a true saying, If a man desire the office of a bishop he desireth a good work.” [I Timothy 3:1]

Friday, June 27, 2003 was a **RED LETTER DAY**. It was a red letter day in that Paul E. Bloedel, the first student in our peripatetic Concordia Theological Seminary, graduated. It was the culmination of five years of intensive training both in theological studies and in practical experience. By God's grace, our graduate is now Pastor Paul E. Bloedel as he has received and accepted a call to be the pastor of St. Mark's Lutheran Church in Sauk Village (Chicago). He will be ordained and installed on Sunday, August 17, at 5:45 P.M.

Friday, June 27, 2003 was a **RED LETTER DAY** for our Conference since the graduation of our first student from our seminary in its peripatetic form [as of 1989] endorses and confirms the value of the peripatetic system. By the grace of God, our student received five years of training: a full academic year in five different congregations under five different pastors. To our knowledge, there is no other seminary which provides such a thorough theological training. When the under-signed graduated from the Missouri Synod's Concordia Theological Seminary [then Springfield] in 1970, he had received but three years of classroom instruction and one year of vicarage. Compare this with our five years of simultaneous classroom instruction and vicarage. Also, we do not sacrifice the languages, but train the student in Greek, Hebrew, German, and Latin. These are not electives, but required courses.

Friday, June 27, 2003 was a **RED LETTER DAY** for orthodox Lutheranism because it can be said with gratitude, and with meekness and fear, that there exists a truly orthodox Lutheran seminary. When this writer and his congregation withdrew from the heterodox Missouri Synod in 1974, the chief questions asked were these: “Where will you go?” “Where will you be able to train future pastors?” All such questions implied that if you do as Scripture says in Romans 16:17-18, you will find that such a move will not be practical. Supposedly you would have no synod to join and no seminary to train future pastors. Not so! Our Conference and its peripatetic seminary program prove the doubters and belly servers wrong! You do have a place to go! *Therefore we earnestly beseech all young men who wish to be a Lutheran pastor*

that they need not just “settle” for a training mired in the heterodoxy of the larger synods in order to achieve one’s goal. If you wish to be an orthodox Lutheran pastor, get your training in an orthodoxy seminary! Check our web site and read our doctrinal “Sketch.” Then consider this: right now the LC-MS is considering the dis-continuation of the use of Franz Pieper’s *Christian Dogmatics* as the chief seminary text for the study of dogmatics. If this does not wake up the undecided, nothing will! Just like the new hymnals, any “replacement” of Pieper will be something woefully watered-down to make it easier to accommodate unionism, the ordination of women, synodical hierarchy trampling on congregational autonomy, “corny” un-Scriptural church growth programs, and other current trends in outer Lutheranism. Why would any young man want to waste his time and money and, even worse, sacrifice his conscience and convictions on Esau’s “red pot-tage”?

When St. Paul wrote, “This is a true saying, If a man desire the office of a bishop, he desireth a good work,” he meant the office of bishop [pastor] as God ordained it - - - solidly based on sound doctrine. As Paul said in his Second Epistle, “**I charge thee therefore before God,** who shall judge the quick and the dead at his appearing and his kingdom; **preach the Word;** be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine. For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears; and they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables. But watch thou in all things, do the work of an evangelist, make full proof of thy ministry.” (II Tim. 4:1-5)

Indeed, **June 27, 2003** will be an on-going **RED LETTER DAY** for any man who desires the office of a bishop as God ordained it. May the Lord move young men in our Conference and also those searching young men from other synods to follow in the footsteps of our first graduate and thereby have their own blessed red letter day. It will redound to the saving and preserving of souls, and to the glory of Christ by whose blood the Church was purchased (Acts 20:28). May God grant it for Jesus’ sake. Amen.

—E. R. S.

The Great Danger Worldliness Presents in Our Congregations And in the Lives of Individual Christians

Introduction: The Holy Bible Is Our Foundation

We believe, teach and confess that the Holy Bible is our only source and norm for faith and life, sufficient to tell us what we should believe and how we should live. The Bible is clear and able to make us wise unto salvation and train us in holy living. This essay will apply pertinent proof passages to the problem and danger of worldliness. May God grant all who hear open ears and hearts by His gracious Spirit for Jesus' Sake, our Only Redeemer. Amen.

I. An Explanation: What Is Worldliness?

As one studies the terminology one realizes that the term worldliness has been defined in two ways. The secular dictionary includes both a "positive" and a "negative" meaning. As a positive aspect of character or a quality to be sought after and admired (obviously in the world's own view) worldliness is "the character of being intellectually sophisticated rather than naive and includes a predominant passion for obtaining the good things of life" (Webster's 1913). Here knowledge of the practices, usages and ways of men is considered to be an accomplishment denoting acquired shrewdness and the casting aside of illusions. As such it is praised by the world (cp. "street-smart," "citizen of the world," "cosmopolitan," having *savoir-faire* (F)). Ian Fleming's fictional spy "James Bond" is considered such a bon vivant, connoisseur, gourmet, et. al., as to be "a man of the world" and someone the world would like to emulate, a true "sophisticate."

At once we see how basic meanings of terms reveal value judgments—the world commends itself for being worldly! But those that use self-chosen standards to commend themselves are not wise! (c.f. 2 Cor.10:12).

As "worldliness" is used in the present essay it falls into the negative category: "covetousness; addictedness to gain and temporal enjoyments; worldly-mindedness" (Webster's 1913) "devotion to worldly affairs to the neglect of religious or spiritual needs." (Oxford 1955). Here we have a meaning akin to materialism, irreligion, secularism, carnality, etc. Charles Dickens put it this way "'The world' is a conventional phrase, which being interpreted, signifies all the rascality in it." One recent author, Iain Murray says: "Worldliness is departing from God. It is a man-centered way of thinking; it proposes objectives which demand no radical breach with man's fallen nature; it judges the importance of things by the present and material results; it weighs success by numbers; it covets human esteem and wants no unpopularity; it knows no truth for which it is worth suffering; it declines to be a 'fool for Christ's sake.' Worldliness is the mind-set of the unregenerate. It adopts idols and is at war with God. Because 'the flesh' still dwells in the Christian he is far from immune from being influenced by this dynamic." (Excerpt: Evangelicalism Divided).

The term worldliness does not occur in Holy Writ but both the world in a negative sense and this present age as being evil are clearly delineated. The first term *Kosmos* is "the present condition of human affairs, in alienation and opposition to God," "the whole circle of earthly goods, endowments, riches, advantages, pleasures, etc., which although hollow, frail and fleeting, stir desire, seduce from God and are obstacles to the cause of Christ" (Thayer). A variation is *kosmikos* or worldly, i.e., having the character of this present corrupt age: Titus 2:12 "worldly (lusts)." Then there is *aion* which literally means "an age, a period of time, marked by spiritual or moral characteristics." Used in a similar way as *kosmos* it denotes this transitory and corrupt present age in contrast to God and His children. As such *aion* has cares (Mt.13:22), sons (Lk.16:8, 20:34), rulers (I Cor.2:6, 8), wisdom (I Cor.1:20, 2:6, 3:18), fashion or form (Rom.12:2), character (Gal.1:4-"evil"), and god (2 Cor.4:4-Satan). Here we also find the clear connection between the world and Satan (cf. esp. Eph.6:10, 12) (cp. John 8:44). As Cyprian (c. 200-258) once said: "It is not persecution alone that we ought to fear, nor those forces that in open warfare range abroad to overthrow and defeat the servants of God. It is easy enough to be on one's guard when the danger is obvious; one can stir up one's courage for the fight when the Enemy shows himself in his true colours. There is more need to fear and beware of the Enemy when he creeps up secretly, when he beguiles us by a show of peace and steals forward by those hidden approaches which have earned him the name of the 'Serpent'...Light had

come to the Gentiles and the lamp of salvation was shining for the deliverance of mankind...Thereupon the Enemy, seeing his idols abandoned and his temples and haunts deserted by the ever growing numbers of the faithful, devised a fresh deceit, using the Christian name itself to mislead the unwary. He invented heresies and schisms so as to undermine the faith, to corrupt the truth, to sunder our unity. Those whom he failed to keep in the blindness of their old ways he beguiles, and leads them up a new road of illusion."

As the father of lies and spiritual, soul-murder he does all he can with doctrines of devils to assault the Church at large and turn it into his kingdom. Every apostate is in his power. He continues his deceit begun with Eve (2 Cor.11:3) and we are not to be ignorant of his devices and strategic assaults (2 Cor.2:11, cp.11:14).

The Scriptural use of the term "world" in the context of our topic is an essence far removed from God, and ever opposed to God. Spiritually considered, it's so-called "standards" and "values" are rejected by genuine believers (cp. godly sorrow vs. worldly sorrow—2 Cor.7:10). The world, as a corrupt entity, is ruled by the Devil (Jn.12:31), is in utter, hostile opposition to God (I Jn.2:17) and shall pass away (I Jn.2:17). It "lieth in wickedness" (I Jn.5:19) and hates all those not of the world (John 17:14). As such, Christians overcome the world by faith alone (I Jn.5:4) through the victory of our Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ (Jn.16:33). We must beware of the temptations of the world and resist them by Gospel-engendered faith (cp. Gal.6:14; Rom.12:2). The basic problem is simply this: every true believer has the world fully represented in his own sinful flesh: the carnal mind of the Old Adam is the hostile "world" in each of us (Rom.8:7). The world considers Christians "foolish" in character, "weak" in ability, "base" in value, "despised" in reputation and "nothings" in significance and relevance (I Cor.1:27-28). The Lord Jesus, our great High Priest, prayed for us in this regard in His intercession of John 17: "I have given them thy word; and the world hath hated them, because they are not of the world, even as I am not of the world. I pray not that thou shouldest take them out of the world, but that thou shouldest keep them from the evil." (Jn.17:14-15).

We, as Christians, are in, but not of, the world. The Apostle Paul speaks of this in I Cor.5:9-10, "I wrote unto you in an epistle not to company with fornicators: yet not altogether with the fornicators of this world, or with the covetous, or extortioners, or with idolaters; for then must ye needs go out of the world."

Dr. Stoeckhardt points out: "This is, of course, not meant as though Christians must avoid each and every contact with the world, must break off each and every association with the children of the world. There is an association with the world that is permitted. In an earlier letter St. Paul had briefly written to the Corinthian Christians that they must have nothing to do with fornicators. He had meant this in the way he now explains in I Cor.5:11, that, when a person who is called brother is revealed to be a fornicator or a covetous person or an idolater or a blasphemer or a drunkard or extortioner, Christians must no longer have anything to do with such a person, he must break off brotherly association and contact with such a person. The Corinthians, however, had understood the apostle to say that they were generally to have nothing to do with fornicators, the covetous, extortioners, idolaters in this world, with the godless, unbelieving men of this world. This is not what Paul had meant. For were that Christian duty, Christians would have to vacate the world. A certain contact with the godless, unbelieving world is unavoidable if Christians are to live in this world. And in such altogether necessary things, in earthly, worldly things, which belong to existence and life on earth, to converse with the children of the world, to do business with them, to have contact with them...God's Word has approved or freely granted." The prohibition covers sharing in their evil: Eph.5:11 *"have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them."*

Pertinent Proof Passages: Romans 12:2, I John 2:15-17

The theme passage for the Concordia Lutheran Conference 52nd Annual Convention is Romans 12:2: *"And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God."* Kenneth Wuest offers this expanded translation: "And stop assuming an outward expression that does not come from within you and is not representative of what you are in your inner being but is patterned after this age; but change your outward expression to one that comes from within and is representative of your inner being, by the renewing of your mind, resulting in your putting to the test what is the will of God, the good and well-pleasing and complete will, and having found that it meets specifications, place your approval upon it."

As he notes: "Christians must not change their outward expression from that of a true expression of their inmost natures, to an assumed expression not true of their new regenerated inmost being, that assumed expression patterned after the world. He exhorts them instead to be transformed, and here we have the same Greek word which is used in the

Matthew passage (cf. Matt.17:2) and translated 'transfigured.' Saints are to change their outward expression from that which was true of them before salvation, when they gave expression to what was in their indwelling sinful nature, to an expression of their inmost regenerated being. Thus Paul exhorts the saints not to assume as an outward expression the fashions, habits, speech expressions, and artificiality of this evil age, thus hiding that expression of themselves which should come from what they are intrinsically as children of God. How saints sometimes like to have just a dash of the world about them so as not to appear too unworldly. How a coat of worldliness can cover up the Christ within. But instead, saints are to be transformed, that is, give expression of what they really are."

The word "world" here is *aion*. Trench states this refers to "an age, that is, a period of time characterized by a certain type of life or economy of government or other social regulating agency. In the passages just mentioned it refers to 'all that floating mass of thoughts, opinions, maxims, speculations, hopes, impulses, aims, aspirations, at any time current in the world, which it may be impossible to seize and accurately define, but which constitute a most real and effective power, being the moral or immoral atmosphere which at every moment of our lives we inhale, again inevitably to exhale, the subtle informing spirit of the world of men who are living alienated and apart from God" (Trench, *Synonyms of the New Testament*). It is the "age," the "spirit of genius of the age." This is the present age in which we are living.

Dr. Luther says conformists to the world are "those who rely only on their own feelings and experience rather than the will of God, the self-willed, those wise in their own conceits, who trust in their own counsels and strength." (LW, Am. Ed., Vol. 25, p.428). We are not to run to the same excess of riot as we did prior to our conversion (I Peter 4:4) but put off the old man with deceitful lusts (Eph.4:22f). Only the Gospel can empower us to do so ("the mercies of God" in Christ Jesus, Rom.12:1, cp. 11:26-27 "when I shall take away their sins" (by) "the Deliverer") (cp. Rom.6:4, 8:5-6, 14).

In I John 2:15-17 we read: "Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world. And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof: but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever." This triple proof passage gives us three

specific internal, heart-based worldly attitudes that comprise "all that is in the world" and define what God means when He forbids us "to love the world" or "the things that are in the world." Note well: you cannot love the Father and love the world. It is an either/or situation (cp. "Ye cannot serve God and mammon" Mt.6:24).

First we have "the lust of the flesh." The depraved nature, the Old Adam, the carnal mind places its spirit upon all that God forbids so that a constant craving, longing and desire impels world lovers to seek to gratify and satisfy this passion. The problem with this attempt is obvious: since the flesh never changes the desire is never met so the Old Adam is on a continuous quest for a sensual fulfillment without ever reaching the goal. The lust is a monster never satiated, whose appetite only increases the more it is fed! Trench remarks on the Greek word translated lust (*epithumia*): this word includes "the whole world of active lusts and desires, all to which the flesh, as the seat of desire and of natural appetites impels." (*Synonyms*, p.324). Examples of the use of this term are as follows: Mark 4:19 "*the lusts of other things entering in, choke the word,*" I Cor.10:6 "*we should not lust after evil things*" (like Israel of old in idolatry, etc.); John 8:44 "*the lusts of your father (Satan) ye will do*"; James 4:2 "*Ye lust, and have not*"; et. al. Although these lusts are called worldly (Titus 2:12) and the cause of the corruption that is in the world (II Peter 1:4). Scripture tells us the source is also every man's own sinful flesh (James 1:14-15). The range of lusts is extensive "*all manner of concupiscence*" (Rom.7:7), "*led away with divers lusts*" 2 Tim.3:6. Some objects of lust include people "lust after her" (Mt.5:28); "the lusts of their own hearts"—"the vile affections" of homosexuals and lesbians (Rom.1:24), cf. v26f; "*silver*" (Acts 20:33), cp. I Tim.6:9; and false teachers "*after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves*" (II Tim.4:3). The flesh considers lust so natural that, as the Apostle Paul states, only the law reveals its sinful character (Rom.7:7-8). Lust is deceitful (Eph.4:22) as it flows out of the ultimate deceitful source: the depraved heart, of which Jeremiah the prophet declares: "*The heart is deceitful above all things and desperately wicked: who can know it?*" (Jer.17:9, cp. Gen.6:5). Although this word is used for legitimate desire (example: of the hungry Lazarus—Lk.16:21, and the Prodigal—Lk.15:16, of Jesus' desire to eat the Passover—Lk.22:15, of the angels desire for Gospel revelation—I Peter 1:12, of the desire for the pastoral office—I Tim.3:1) it is usually used of that which is "*against the Spirit*" (Gal.5:17), "*evil*" (Col.3:5), "*ungodly*" (Jude 18), "*foolish and hurtful*" (I Tim.6:9) and of all those not converted (I Pet.4:2, Col.5:16), who are all under Satan's power (John 8:44, Eph.2:3). Lust marked the

days or generation just prior to the Flood (Jude 16, 18) and shall mark the last generation (cp. Luke 17:26-27; 2 Tim.4:3, cp. v.1).

The second phrase in I John 2:15-17 is "*the lust of the eyes*" which connects the same word (lust-*epithumia*) with the physical gift of vision or an ophthalmic source: "and includes the lust that reaches out beyond what a person can actually get hold of in his sinning, the lustful eyes rove afar for sinful pleasures." (Lenski). Immediately we think of David and the naked, bathing beauty Bathsheba, connecting Matt.5:28 and II Peter 2:14 "*having eyes full of adultery*" (see also Potipher's wife, Gen.39). But any visual cue can arouse lust. Note how seeing was connected with the very first sin (Gen.3:6-"*saw*" "*pleasant to the eyes*" and "*desired*"). Because the eyes are connected to the carnal mind and depraved heart they are used in the service of sin (Romans 6:12-21). The objects of lust to the eyes thus are not restricted to the sexual but include anything in the world (cp. Satan's visual, panoramic temptation "*sheweth him all the kingdoms of the world, and the glory of them*" (Matthew 4:8); "in a moment of time" (Luke 4:5). Money in the form of precious metals and rich clothing are just two examples of things the lusts of the eyes are connected to (cf. Achan-Josh.7:20-22; Gehazi-2 Kings 5:20-24).

Finally, we have the third phrase: "*the pride of life*": "that haughty, puffed-up arrogance, that braggart show and vain glory, which causes men to make a show of the things of this life. It makes men wish to be great in the sight of others, excel in luxuries, look down on the less fortunate. Others are eaten up with envy as they behold the prosperous. Men forget that everything comes from God." (C.T.M., 1937, p.123). Louis Wessel in *Proof Texts of the Catechism*, p.42, describes the pride of life in these words: "It is the lust of shining and making a boastful display of one's possessions, 'the effort to outshine our neighbors in our mode of life.'"

Dr. Fritz writes: "Of such vain-glorious display in one's style of living the rich man is an example; he 'was clothed in purple and fine linen and fared sumptuously every day', Luke 16:19. Likewise the daughters of Zion of whom Isaiah says that they are 'haughty and walk with stretched-forth necks and wanton eyes, walking and mincing as they go and making a tinkling with their feet.' He furthermore describes their dress and 'make-up' in the following words: "In that day the Lord will take away the bravery of their tinkling ornaments about their feet, and their cauls, and their round tires like the moon, the chains, and the

bracelets, and the mufflers, the bonnets, and the ornaments of the legs, and the headbands, and the tablets, and the earrings, the rings, and nose jewels, the changeable suits of apparel, and the mantles, and the wimples, and the crisping pins, the glasses, and the fine linen, and the hoods, and the veils,' Isaiah 3:18-23. Sounds very modern! The Bible warns against the danger of riches. Even Christians may have and enjoy them. 'Abraham was very rich in cattle, in silver, and in gold,' Gen.13:2. Yet Abraham 'was strong in faith' and is presented as an example to believers. God Himself gave to Solomon 'riches and honour,' I Kings 3:13. But riches and honour became a snare unto him. His very luxurious way of living, his 'pride of life,' which imposed a burden on his overtaxed people, contributed to his downfall. And it has proved to be the downfall of many; not only the wealthy at that. Pomp and show and putting on airs appeals to the sinful flesh. Much money is spent in that direction, frequently even by such as can ill afford it." (*The Preacher's Manual*, p.316).

It is this that makes boasters (Rom.1:30, 2 Tim.3:2): "But now ye rejoice in your boastings (i.e., of future plans, independent of God's will and control): all such rejoicing is evil" (James 1:16). The examples of this attitude are myriad in Holy Writ (Gen.11:4f the children of men and the tower; the people of Sodom, cp. Gen.19 to Is.3:9; Goliath—I Sam.17:10, 44, et. al.). Show-offs and braggarts, those who live to impress, whose life is one of "conspicuous ostentation," who seek to outdo each other constantly—these are the most glaring culprits ruled by the pride of life. Power, prestige and popularity are the unholy triad in the pride of life. That "Hollow arrogance which presumes that it can decide and direct the course of life without God, determine what it will do, gain, achieve, enjoy" (Lenski).

As one author explains: the pride of life is "self-satisfaction in who we are, what we have, and what we have done. It reveals itself in reading magazines about people who live hedonistic lives and spend too much money on themselves and wanting to be like them. But more importantly, worldliness is simply pride and selfishness in disguises. It's being resentful when someone snubs us or patronizes us or shows off. It means smarting under every slight, challenging every word spoken against us, cringing when another is preferred before us. Worldliness is harboring grudges, nursing grievances, and wallowing in self-pity. These are the ways in which we are most like the world." (Dave Roper, *The Strength of a Man*, quoted in *Family Survival in the American Jungle*, Steve Farrar, 1991, Multnomah Press, p.68.)

To sum up we offer this expanded translation (K. Wuest) of I John 2:15-17: "Stop considering the world precious with the result that you love it, and the things in the world. If anyone as a habit of life is considering the world precious and is therefore loving it, there does not exist the Father's love [i.e., the love possessed by the Father] in him. Because everything which is in the world, the passionate desire of the flesh [the totally depraved nature], and the passionate desire of the eyes, and the insolent and empty assurance which trusts in the things that serve the creature life, is not from the Father as a source but is from the world as a source. And the world is being caused to pass away, and its passionate desire. But the one who keeps on habitually doing the will of God abides forever."

All those who live for all that is in the world, loving the craving for sensual gratification, the greedy longings of the mind, the assurance in one's own resources or in the stability of earthly things (KJV Amplified Bible) will be damned in their unbelief. As James clearly declares: "*Ye adulterers and adulteresses, know ye not that the friendship of the world is enmity with God? Whosoever therefore will be a friend of the world is the enemy of God*" (Jas.4:4).

The key term here is love—love of God excludes love of the world, to be a friend of God makes you the world's enemy. As one author puts it: "Buying, possessing, accumulating, this is not worldliness. But doing this in the love of it, with no love of God paramount—doing it so that thoughts of God and eternity are an intrusion—doing it so that one's spirit is secularized in doing it—this is worldliness"—(Nerrick Johnson). The connection is clear and decisive: "What I love, to that my soul clings. What I love is what I live, what I delight in, and this becomes part of my unconscious life, of my meditation, my dreaming. What I love becomes more and more part of my very self. He who loves the world becomes worldly, a man filled with the world." —(Dryander).

How this manifests itself is shown in the lists of the works of the flesh (Gal.5:19-21) and the vivid descriptions of the life of the unconverted (Eph.2:2-3; 4:17-19; 5:3-5; I Cor.7:9-10; I Pet.4:2-4; et. al.). Of special note is the description of the last days in II Timothy 3:1-8: "This know also, that in the last days perilous times shall come. For men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, Without natural affection, truce-breakers, false accusers, incontinent, fierce, despisers of those that are good, Traitors, heady, high-minded, lovers of pleasures more than

lovers of God; Having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof: from such turn away. For of this sort are they which creep into houses, and lead captive silly women laden with sins, led away with divers lusts, Ever learning, and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth. Now as Jannes and Jambres withstood Moses, so do these also resist the truth: men of corrupt minds, reprobate concerning the faith."

Dr. J.H.C. Fritz applies worldliness to his day (1940's) this way: "While this tendency and temptation toward worldliness is a danger which Christians at all times must face because of their sinful flesh, the evil world in which they live, and the attempts of Satan to ensnare them, yet at certain times this danger is more pronounced and greater than at other times. It is even so today. Money is more plentiful than it was forty or fifty years ago, even many of our Christians have become wealthy; they have entered the business world and have been financially successful; their circle of acquaintances takes in a much larger number of the people of the world and of a doubtful religious character; their social circle is not as limited as it was; they also more frequently inter-marry; worldly amusements have much increased and have been made conveniently accessible to the masses; salacious literature is openly displayed; the relation between the sexes is much less restricted; the moral standard has been much lowered, not only among the people of this world but also among many calling themselves Christians; what formerly horrified is now condoned or even defended; marriage is considered less sacred; youth seeks to throw off the shackles of parental and other authority; law-breaking has become less of an offense; many of the higher schools are teaching things subversive of the Christian religion; the magazines (even the better ones) carry articles that break down Christian morality; many churches have yielded to modernistic teachings; even conservative churches are not much inclined to resort to disciplinary proceedings against their members; and to this we must add the present unsettled conditions in the world and the war situation, all of which does not make for better morality and the improvement of mankind. All this much increases the danger of worldliness (and its effect on the Church)" (*Concordia Pulpit*, pp.310-311). We shall add some comments about present conditions in our day in the last section of this essay.

II. A Survey of Bible Examples: The Effect of Worldliness in Individual Lives.

The scope of this essay does not allow an intensive study of these tragic examples: Lot's wife (Lk.17:32-33, Gen.19:26); Judas Iscariot (Jn.12:6; Acts 1:16-20); Demas (2 Tim.4:10: "having loved this present world"=lit. "The now age"-*ton nun aiona*); nor of the many who loved

the uppermost seats (Lk.11:43), the praise of men (Jn.12:43), the wages of unrighteousness (2 Pet.2:15) and the darkness of this world (Jn.3:19) at the cost of their immortal souls. Both the fall of David and Peter are examples of a temporary triumph of worldliness due to presumption and conceit, lust and fear.

We will look at a chronic problem of worldliness among the Lord's 12 Apostles: greediness for honor. The disciples had been arguing among themselves who deserved to be considered the greatest—the Lord intervenes with a direct question they were too ashamed to answer out loud (cf. Mk.9:33f). The Lord deals with the problem with a spiritual axiom: "If any man desire to be first, the same shall be last of all, and the servant of all." (Mk.9:35). He also used a child as an object lesson (cp. Mk.9:36 to Lk.9:46-48). This was a heart problem which brought forth "a reasoning among them," that is, a disputation, contention, argument. (Greek=*dialogismos*). As John Ylvisaker explains: "Such is human nature when it has its way. But they did not believe that Jesus would approve of this dissension. So they found it advisable to remain silent like naughty children. Jesus then takes a little child and places it in their midst, showing them in a speech which He connects with this act that He needs no answer. He knows it all in advance...Jesus would inform the disciples that in the Kingdom of God there is no such distinction as we find in civic and worldly affairs. Their altercation was the result of pride, love of glory, and ignorance of the spiritual nature of the Kingdom of God. Here repentance is necessary. They must return to the gentle submissiveness of the child, the truly childlike mind. The point of comparison is not innocence, but ingenuousness, the absence of arrogance, simplicity, humility. These are distinguishing traits of the child, even though the perverse spirit is early manifest. The smaller we grow in our own estimation, the greater do we become in the sight of God. True greatness before God consists in that humility of spirit which excludes every vestige of selfishness and pride." (*The Gospels*, p.421). As Dr. Luther says: "The man whom He would bring to honor, to salvation, to lordship, high and great, He completely puts to shame; He condemns him, turns him into a servant, lowly and small. Here the passage applies: The first the last, and the last the first (Matt.19:30). Let him who would be great, be small (Luke 22:26); let him who would be before, follow after." (p.1264, Vol. III, *What Luther Says*, Plass, #4029). The sinful hearts of the 12 were fixated on the comparative "great" (Greek=*megas*) because they each sought to be a superlative "greater" than all the rest, thus "greatest" of all. They want God to play "a respecter of persons," believing themselves to be "somewhat" in

comparison to each other (cf. Gal.2:6f; 6:3; 2 Cor.10:12; 5:12; Rom.3:9a). Peter later expressed a similar idea of superiority over the rest (Mt.26:33f). But this attitude was not unique to Peter (Mt.26:35, cp. Lk.22:24). A similar problem is mentioned in III John 9-10, one *Diotrephes* "who loveth to have preeminence among them." Jesus warned against this attitude with these words directed against the Jews that sought to kill Him: "How can ye believe, which receive honour one of another, and seek not the honour that cometh from God only?" (John 5:44). God resists the proud. God would have us all clothed with humility (I Pet.5:5-6). Any good we do should be attributed to God's all-sufficient grace (cf. I Cor.15:9-10; 2 Cor.3:4-5). Our glory and boast must be entirely in God for Jesus' Sake (I Cor.1:29-31). Our gifts are the result of God's Will and gracious bestowal (Rom.12:6) the work of His grace and Spirit within us (Php.2:13; I Cor.12:4-7) for the mutual edification of all (I Cor.14:26; I Cor.13:4-7). As Paul declares "Let nothing be done through strife or vainglory; but in lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than themselves. Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others." (Php.2:3-4). Everything we do that is for Christ is done by the strength Christ Himself supplies (Php.4:13)—how then can we take the glory away from our Savior?

The Apostles show us how insidious the worldly lusts of our deceitful flesh are and how pervasive. They arise from within our own depraved hearts! The world does not so much invade the Church and our personal lives as it operates continuously through our sinful flesh and must be constantly opposed lest it gain dominion: Rom.6:12f: "*Let not sin reign in your mortal body, that ye should obey it in the lusts thereof, neither yield...*". Grace through the Gospel of Christ gives us the victory: Romans 6:14: "*For sin shall not have dominion over you: for ye are not under the law, but under grace.*" (Note: This is a statement of fact, not a command). As John declares: (I Jn.5:4-5): "*For whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world: and this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith. Who is he that overcometh the world, but he that believeth that Jesus is the Son of God?*"

Only the Gospel can empower us to this day to day victory over our flesh, to obedience and sanctification, following the exhortation of the Apostle: (Rom.13:11-14): "*And that, knowing the time, that now it is high time to awake out of sleep: for now is our salvation nearer than when we believed. The night is far spent, the day is at hand: let us therefore cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armour of*

light. Let us walk honestly, as in the day; not in rioting and drunkenness, not in chambering and wantonness, not in strife and envying. But put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make not provision for the flesh, to fulfil the lusts thereof."

As Dr. Luther warns in the Large Catechism: "Great and grievous, indeed, are these dangers and temptations which every Christian must bear, even though each one were alone by himself, so that every hour that we are in this vile life where we are attacked on all sides, chased and hunted down, we are moved to cry out and to pray that God would not suffer us to become weary and faint and to relapse into sin, shame, and unbelief" (Large Catechism, *Triglot*, 727, 105).

The general influence of the world is to lead away from God's Word into outright unbelief to make the true believer become entirely "flesh" (cf. Gen.6:3f). As an article in *The Abiding Word* points out: "The world is the sum total of human minds unstirred by the Spirit of God. Hence its companionship, its speech and amusements and business and culture and philosophy tend to move the Christian into pursuits and channels which weaken the hold on God; they tend to make God unimportant (I Cor.1:33; 2:11ff.). The objectives of natural human life are not for God, but always for man (James 4:4). Making money, competing for existence, enjoying the sensual stimuli of food and drink and sex and success and approval are activities common to the unregenerate life of the Christian also (i.e., the carnal mind-Rom.7-EJW) and hence potent devices for destroying the will to live for God (Luke 21:34; I Cor.7:33). Our own civilization is particularly subject to the temptations of this sort. It stresses material wealth as a standard of happiness and worth, and physical enjoyment as an objective for wealth. It is thus a vast conspiracy for belittling the power of God and the life for God, a shouting down of the Savior's reminder: '*What is a man profited if he shall gain the whole world and lose his own soul?*' (Matt.16:26). Furthermore, many Christians fall out of the ranks and, like Demas, forsake the company of the faithful, '*having loved this present world*' (II Tim.4:10). Many Christians retain connection with the Church, but actually are driven by the motives of fleshly lust as are the men of the world. This causes confusion and becomes a temptation to evil for those who are unwary. The Epistle of James is the great document in Scripture on the world in the Church. It attacks the spectacle of men in the visible Church with respect of persons (2:1ff.), evil speech (3:2ff.), envy and strife (3:14ff.), accumulation of property by fleshly means (4:13ff). All of that, James would say, is a confusion of the very foundation of the Christian faith and religion, a temptation to evil which is

an erring from the truth (1:20 ff., 27). "(Vol. II, p.171f.)

Dr. Luther explains the problem and the solution this way: "If a person could with firm and constant faith hold to this, and comprehend the magnitude of this gift, that he is a child and heir of God, he would regard all that there is of power and treasures in all nations in the world as filth and dung in comparison with his heavenly inheritance. He would turn with disgust from all that the world considers high and glorious; the greater the glory and pomp of the world is, the more he would hate it; in short, all that the world most admires and praises to the sky would be ugly and worthless in his sight. For what is the whole world with its power, riches, and glory compared with God, whose heir and child he is? ... But the law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, will not permit faith to become perfect." (St. L. IX: 516.)

Obviously then everything that strengthens and renews faith will help toward our day to day battle and victory over worldliness. We are given the Word of God which effectually works to renew our faith (I Thess.2:13, Rom.10:17) for the Gospel is the power of God unto salvation (Rom.1:16)

III. Self-Examination: "What is the world to me?" (TLH #430:1)

In Dr. Luther's *Christian Questions With Their Answers* he admonishes us how to become sensible of spiritual trouble in specific reference to the world: "Secondly, that he look around to see whether he is still in the world, and keep in mind that there will be no lack of sin and trouble, as the Scriptures say in John 15 and 16; I John 2 and 5." In this serious matter we are to soberly examine ourselves from the inside out. Our standard is God's Holy Law. Unlike the Pharisees and the sectarians of every stripe we do not make elaborate lists of man-made laws and commandments and practice a hypocritical externalism, thanking God we are better than others. Nor do we fall into the morass of subjectivism with the philosophy "I know worldliness when I see it (especially in everybody else!)" We must, as individuals, fully accept moral responsibility for our worldliness. As Dr. Luther notes: "Since you are evil, you are made worse through the use of good things—depraved (further) by their affluence—the entire fault lies with your lust and your depraved will and reason." Example: "A woman is beautiful. Very well, this is a gift of the Lord and Creator. But I am inflamed with desire. Does this make beauty an evil thing? Not at all! It is you who are evil because you are unable to make good use of a good thing. Thus the good things which are called useful and delightful convict us of the corruption of

our nature, because neither the will nor the intellect is right; otherwise we would make good use of good things."—(L.W., Am. Ed., Vol. II, p.347)

Can you use without abusing? That is the key! Sad to say, our flesh cannot use without abusing and this is why Christians must battle continuously against their own flesh.

God gives us warning examples "to the intent we should not lust after evil things." (I Cor.10:6f) and that we remain humbly dependent on His grace in every temptation (I Cor.10:12-14).

In applying God's Law to ourselves we may ask such serious questions as:

–Do I consider God's Word and worship the prevailing priority in my life so that all other considerations are over-ruled by the one thing needful? (Lk.10:41-42, Mt.6:33)

–Do I actively listen when God's Word is taught and apply it to myself no matter how uncomfortable it makes me feel? (I Tim.6:3f)

–Do I obey what God says even when others around me think and do otherwise, or do I go with the prevailing attitudes and actions of my "peers"? (I Peter 4:1-5)

–Do I speak up when an opportunity arises to earnestly contend for the faith and give answer to those who ask? (Jude 3, I Peter 3:15)

–Do I sacrifice precious time on selfish and material pleasures at the expense of my church, family and soul? (Eph.5:16-17).

–Do I view my identity and personal worth according to how I feel, where I live, what I drive or wear, my net material worth or the opinion of others? (Lk.12:15; Mt.6:21)

–Do I justify myself when I am confronted with reproof, offer excuses, minimize and blame-shift? (Lk.16:13-15; Lk.18:9f).

–Do I fear to discipline my children because of the effort involved, the potential negative reaction they might express, not wanting them to "feel bad" and to take it out on me? (Eph.6:1-4)

-Do I allow my children to do things that they want to do against my better judgment so that they won't feel "left out" by their peers or face rejection from their peers? (Col.3:21)

-Do I own up to wrong decisions regarding things of this world or refuse to condemn myself lest I be proven wrong or embarrassed? (Prov.3:7; Prov.8:13)

-Do I search the Bible for answers, pray about it and turn to my pastor for wise Scriptural counsel or do I boldly go in the way I think or feel is right? (Prov.2:10-14; II Tim.3:15-17)

-Do Matt.5:16, II Pet.3:14, 2 Cor.6:17-18 and I Thess.5:21 find concrete application in my life?

These are just examples of the kind of heart-searching questions one must answer to deal with that internal "worldling" called your sinful flesh according to the second use of the Law to reveal sin. Then God-wrought contrition and Gospel-engendered faith must follow unto the renewal of your mind. *"Examine yourselves whether ye be in the faith; prove your own selves"* (2 Cor.13:5). Do you prove what is that good, and acceptable and perfect, will of God by faith which worketh by love? (Rom.12:2; Gal.5:6).

IV. Areas Of Ingress For The World In The Personal Lives Of Christians:

We live in the so-called "information age" when the world is literally at our door, and through our door. The audio-visual media via television and computers can put everything the world is about before our eyes and ears. Moreover, the print media is also more available than it ever has been in the history of the world. This translates into influence on our thoughts like never before...if we allow it.

The prodigal son today can do virtually everything from his computer desk that the one in the Bible did by taking his journey. Think of the ramifications! Do you allow indiscriminate influence into your home by not supervising your children when they are online or watching television; etc? What about books, magazines, DVDs, video games, etc? Is the telephone another unsupervised area for your children? What about instant messaging, e-mail and chat rooms?

Besides all this electronic influence coming into homes what about the places in the world your children go? Do you know where they are and who they are with and what they are doing? Are you a "hands-on," responsible parent? Do you set an example for your children in how you speak and act?

The following list is a real-world example of worldliness over a ten year period in a Lutheran congregation—are any of these worldly influences present in your life? Each one led to someone leaving an orthodox congregation. Examine yourself accordingly!

***Family Loyalty/Influence**

They follow a dominant family member to keep peace in the family.

Problem: Failure to recognize orthodoxy and true discipleship (cross-bearing), priority on earthly peace rather than a clear conscience.

Appl. Scripture: Acts 2:42; Mt.10:32-38; Mk.3:33-35; Lk.9:59-62; Mt.6:33; Lk.10:41-42.

***Influence of a False Teacher**

They allow themselves to be influenced by the heterodox or actively seek them out as an excuse to leave orthodoxy.

Problem: Failure to recognize orthodoxy and the dangers of false teachers, placing a priority on finding doctrine that pleases the flesh.

Appl. Scripture: Acts 2:42; Mt.28:20; Rom.16:17; Mt.7:15ff; I John 4:1; Acts 20:29; Gal.5:7-9; I Tim.4:1; II Tim.3:2a; 4:3-4.

***Neglect of the Means of Grace:**

Failure to attend worship and despising the Means of Grace due to various factors flowing from the flesh (laziness, pride, impenitence, worldliness, etc)

Problem: Sin against the Third Commandment due to the flesh, worldliness, etc.

Appl. Scripture: Heb.10:25; Acts 2:42; John 8:47; Lk.10:16; Eccl.5:1; Lk.11:28; Heb.13:17

***Marriage to a Non-Member**—(see Family Loyalty/Influence)

Marrying a non-member and allowing the non-member spouse to influ-

ence you or using the non-member spouse as an excuse for the neglect of the Means of Grace.

Problem: Seeking to please your spouse rather than God to keep peace in family, sin against the Third Commandment.

Appl. Scripture: (see Family Loyalty/Influence and Neglect of Means of Grace)

***Offense Taken** Offense taken due to uncharitable judging and preconceived notions, etc.

Problem: Fleshly pride and selfishness. Offense used as an excuse to leave.

Appl. Scripture: Matt.18:15-17; Gal.6:1-2; Lk.6:37; Zech.8:17; I Cor.13:7; Eph.4:31f.

***Gross Outward Sins**

Cases of fornication that led to divorce or excommunication.

Problem: Sin against the Sixth Commandment and impenitence due to pride, etc.

Appl. Scripture: I Cor.6:18f; Prov.1:10; Gen.39:9; Ps.51:10; Prov.28:13; I Jn.1:8-9.

V. **Conclusion**

"We are to-

1. Make use of God's Word: Eph.6:10ff; I Pet.5:8,9; Mt.4:4, 7, 10
 2. Pray fervently for God's help: Mt.6:13; 26:41; Lk.22:40
 3. Crucify our sinful flesh: Gal.5:24; Col.3:5; I Cor.9:27
 4. Avoid subjecting ourselves to temptation: I Cor.6:18; 2 Tim.2:2
- God promises to help us: Is.40:29; I Cor.10:13; 2 Thess.3:3; Jn.15:7

One life-line binds us to God—the Gospel of Jesus Christ, which is to this day *"the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth"* (Rom.1:16). May we cultivate our use of Word and Sacrament, not as dreary and haphazard tokens of church membership, but as carriers for the current of the Spirit of God. May we apply ourselves to them in the precious habit of prayer and joyous fellowship of worship. May we bind ourselves in our earthly pilgrimage to Christ Jesus, the

Author and Finisher of our faith and the Captain of our salvation. For He has prayed for us, too, that our faith fail not; He has said: "*In the world ye shall have tribulation; but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world*" (John 16:33)." (Taken from *The Abiding Word*, Vol. II, page 199)

Soli Deo Gloria

—E.J.W.

Errata

Corrections in the last issue of the Concordia Lutheran: May-June, 2003.
Please make the following corrections to the article:

"Christ's Session at the Right Hand of the Father"

Page 75, line 4-5 delete "and divine natures"

Page 76, line 7-8 delete "nature" replace with "Person," replace "can be present wherever He chooses, especially in His Church" with "is present everywhere."

St. Mark's Evangelical Lutheran Church

Sauk Villiage, Illinois

A congregation of the
Fellowship of Lutheran Congregations
Cordially invites the brethren of the

Concordia Lutheran Conference
to the ordination—installation of

Paul E. Bloedel, C.R.M.

As Pastor of St. Mark's Lutheran Church

Sunday, August 17th at 5:45 pm

Liturgist: The Reverend Robert J. Lietz,
President of the F. L. C.

Preacher: The Reverend David T. Mensing,
Secretary & Peripatetic Professor of the C. L. C.

Reception to follow the worship service



“The Lord hath done great things for us,
whereof we are glad”

Psalm 126:3

Convention Digest

MOTTO: "Be not conformed to this world." Romans 12:2

Appropriately named for the large tracts of native oak trees for which the area is known, the city of Oak Forest, a southern suburb near Chicago, Illinois, was the site of this year's **Fifty-Second Annual Convention** of the *Concordia Lutheran Conference*. Hosting the convention on the last weekend in June was **Peace Ev. Lutheran Church**, the Rev. David T. Mensing, Pastor. Nestled among those oaks, the congregation's church building and attached Christian Education Facility provided ample room for the convention services and sessions, for the delicious meals served by the ladies, and for wholesome recreational activities during "off hours." Dear brethren from sister flocks in nearby localities —Trinity, Oak Park, and St. Mark's, Sauk Village (member churches of the *Fellowship of Lutheran Congregations*)— lent a significant hand to the local congregation to make this convention run smoothly and to share in the burden usually borne by the host congregation alone. Guests from afar began arriving already the previous weekend; and soon pastoral and lay delegates with their families, as well as visitors from as far west as Seattle and as far out east as Pennsylvania, gathered as dear brethren to do the work of the Lord's kingdom-at-large and to enjoy their God-wrought fellowship in the opening devotions, in the various services, in their joint labors, and in their Christian sociability.

Immediately preceding the convention itself was a two-day **Pastoral Conference** on June 24th and 25th, during which the chief activity was the public colloquy of our graduating seminarian, Mr. Paul E. Bloedel, who had begun his theological studies at Peace in Oak Forest in January, 1998, and had just completed his fifth and final year in our peripatetic seminary just prior to the convention. In addition to his successful completion of the curriculum prescribed by our *Concordia Theological Seminary*, our Conference expects each graduate to undergo a colloquy or oral examination similar to that required for pastors coming into our midst from outside our fellowship. Far from being the traumatic experience that some might imagine it to be, the colloquy is simply a blessed opportunity for the candidate to demonstrate to his brethren that he is, by the grace of God, fit and prepared to undertake the duties of the pastoral office when and if he is made a pastor by the Holy Ghost,

mediately, through the call of a local congregation. Mr. Bloedel acquitted himself well during the entire proceeding and, to the glory of God, competently gave answer to the questions addressed to him. Following the colloquy, the pastoral conference unanimously found him to be well grounded in the doctrines of Holy Scripture, apt to teach, in all other respects meeting the qualifications for the pastoral office, and therefore eligible to be graduated and certified a Candidate of the Reverend Ministry (*c.r.m.*)

On Thursday, June 26th, the Conference **Board of Directors** held its annual business meeting to preview the convention agenda, to hear in advance the general content of each standing committee's report, and to draft possible recommendations for special consideration of the delegates in convention assembled.

The convention itself began on Friday, June 27th, with a service of convocation at 9:30 a.m. The local pastor served as liturgist; and the Conference President, the Rev. E. R. Stallings of Windcrest, Texas, preached an edifying keynote sermon. He chose as his text Philippians 3:4-11, taking as his theme St. Paul's implied twofold question: "*What Is Gain, and What Is Loss?*" He divided his message into three parts, namely, **I.** What the Apostle Paul used to count as gain but later counted as loss in view of Christ, **II.** How anything we might consider to be gain is really a loss if it replaces the righteousness of Christ, and **III.** How gaining Christ is all gain indeed and no loss.

Following the service, the first session was called to order with a brief devotion conducted by the President. During this first brief session, *ad hoc* convention committees were appointed; the delegates were officially seated; and the assembled convention heard the *Annual Report of the President*. In it President Stallings briefly capsulized the activities of the Conference throughout the year and his duties in particular. Following that report, it was committed to a special committee for review; and the convention stood in recess for the noon meal.

The afternoon session opened with a brief devotion conducted by Pastor Robert J. Lietz of Oak Park, Illinois, President of the *Fellowship of Lutheran Congregations*. This session was then highlighted by the presentation of the *HISTORICAL ESSAY*, delivered by Pastor David T. Mensing of Oak Forest, Illinois. This essay, the fourth in a series of historical retrospectives commemorating the Fiftieth Anniversary of our Conference, chronicled with documentation the first four

years of its existence as the *Orthodox Lutheran Conference* and the circumstances leading up to a tragic split in its fellowship at the end of 1955. The first part and a portion of the second part of the essay had been delivered last year, and it was continued to its conclusion at this present convention. The first part treated the characteristics that made the Orthodox Lutheran Conference unique in its focused one-mindedness, brotherly doctrinal discipline, and consistent orthodoxy. The second part of the essay took up the question of how the precious fellowship of our Conference was jeopardized by the appearance of a strange “soft spot” in the otherwise rock-solid doctrinal, confessional, and practical position of the Orthodox Lutheran Conference. This was not properly-speaking an “inconsistency” in doctrine and practice, but a kind of *paradox* or seeming contradiction in our expectations of how and when certain injunctions of Holy Scripture should be obeyed. And that “soft spot” cut some “slack” to those in other Lutheran church bodies who wanted to be recognized as “conservatives” and even “orthodox” but who were sitting on the fence concerning their readiness to obey God’s Word in Romans 16:17 and other passages. They wanted to be regarded as being in a true *state of confession* or protest over against the heterodox bodies in which they still held membership; but they and their congregations still *supported* those bodies financially and, at the same time, *stood aside* from US.

This duplicity was the catalyst that occasioned the so-called “Kretzmann-Hallstein Controversy” in the O. L. C. in 1955, which within a year destroyed the Conference. That controversy was explored in detail in the essay, including the severance in fellowship on the part of Dr. P. E. Kretzmann and his adherents when he refused to submit humbly to the doctrinal discipline of the Conference for his demonstrably false position. The third part of the essay focused on the necessary reorganization of the Conference under its present name and constitution in order to avoid confusion and the “Declaration” by which this organization was effected in 1956. The essay included the full text of much of the correspondence of the period as primary evidence of what transpired; and this made the essay longer than a mere summary of the case would have required. The correspondence is, however, the “smoking gun” of history and essential to the establishment of the facts. —The essay was interspersed with and followed by lively and edifying discussion on the floor, particularly on the part of those for whom this period in our history was completely new. It was unanimously decided to adopt the paper with thanks to the essayist for his painstaking research and presentation.

It was also decided that, since the last officially recorded “history” of our Conference was authorized back in the late ‘70’s and included material only through 1980, Pastor Mensing be commissioned to research and bring up to date the history of our Concordia Lutheran Conference, at least through its fiftieth year. This was unanimously adopted.

The *Treasurer’s Report* concerning the past fiscal year, given by Robert G. Bloedel, was then heard and adopted, as was also his *Initial Report of the Finance Committee* with its preliminary proposed budget for fiscal year 2003-2004. The details of this budget as finally adopted on Sunday afternoon will be given later on in this summary, will be published in the *Proceedings*, and will also be reflected in the first Financial Report of the Treasurer to our congregations in July.

Then followed the *Report of the Editorial Committee* by Pastor David T. Mensing, its chairman, who briefly reviewed the content of our official organ, the *Concordia Lutheran*. As the editor of the *CL* this year, it had been his desire to keep the articles limited in length and thus easier to read, more narrowly focused as to their topics, and also timely in their appearance. Therefore the serialization of convention essays, for example, was avoided in favor of shorter and livelier articles solicited from all the Conference pastors and those in fellowship with us. Doctrinal, practical, and devotional articles, coinciding with the themes of the festival half of the church year, appeared between December and June; and articles of a more general nature appeared in the summer and fall, culminating in recognition of the Reformation in October and Luther’s Birth and the annual Thanksgiving in November. This new format had been well received by the readers, as evidenced by positive reactions received throughout the year.

Pastor Mensing then also gave the *Report of the Publishing House Board of Control*, which regulates *Scriptural Publications*, the publishing arm of our Conference. These reports together presented an overview of the success achieved under God by these committees in tandem to provide orthodox and edifying material in print for the consumption of our people—from the *C. L.*, to our Sunday School materials, to tracts and confessional documents, to the publication this *next year* of several more book-length works. In this latter connection, the Board of Control noted that it is still hoping to acquire binding and trimming equipment capable of economically producing our own “paperback” editions of orthodox books. The chairman then acknowledged with

special thanks the completely unsolicited and unexpected grant of \$ 8,000.00 from the *Fellowship of Lutheran Congregations*, whereby that church body of dear brethren desired to underwrite the cost of such equipment and thus to become partners, as it were, in our publishing effort. The letter accompanying the *F. L. C.*'s check was read to the assembled delegates, whereupon the entire convention rose to sing the Common Doxology out of gratitude to the Lord for His grace in the hearts of our dear *F. L. C.* brethren. An appropriate resolution of thanks was then duly directed to the Resolutions Committee for drafting. Then came the *Report of the Business Manager of SCRIPTURAL PUBLICATIONS*, Phillip R. Martin, who presented his annual balance sheet outlining the financial aspects of the publishing work. Following the adoption of these reports, the convention unanimously authorized the production this coming year of three book-length works: Dr. A. L. Graebner's *Doctrinal Theology*; Herzberger's *Family Altar*, a book of daily devotions for use in the home; and Doerffler's *Treasures of Hope*, the third in the series of his fine devotions for shut-ins. The convention also unanimously concurred with the Board of Control that, since the bulk mailing of complimentary copies of the *CONCORDIA LUTHERAN* has not resulted in the interest expected and represents a financial outlay that probably is no longer accomplishing what it once did, *Scriptural Publications* be authorized to discontinue the mailing in favor of some other periodic informational mailing to selected recipients.

On Friday evening, delegates and guests assembled in the sanctuary of Peace Congregation for a festive vesper service celebrating the graduation of our theological student, Mr. Paul E. Bloedel, who had successfully passed his colloquy before the Pastoral Conference earlier in the week. Pastor Mensing served as the liturgist, and Pastor Robert J. Lietz, co-instructor in the fifth year seminary program, preached the sermon. His text was II Timothy 2:2, and he took as his theme: "*The Importance of Sound Theological Training for Continued Orthodoxy in Our Midst.*" President Stallings awarded the diploma which declared Brother Bloedel to be a candidate of the reverend ministry (c.r.m.) and eligible to receive a call in our midst. The service was followed by a coffee-and-cake reception arranged by the Committee on Theological Education.

The Saturday morning sessions were opened with a devotion conducted by Pastor David G. Redlin. Thereupon Pastor Edward J. Worley of Seattle, Washington, began his *DOCTRINAL and PRACTICAL ESSAY*

based on the motto of our Convention, "*Be not conformed to this world.*" The essay was entitled "*The Great Danger that Worldliness Presents in Our Congregations and in the Lives of Individual Christians.*" The first part of the essay constituted a thorough "explanation" of "What Is Worldliness." In this section, which lasted until the mid-morning break, Pastor Worley carefully discussed the term itself as it is commonly used in everyday language, but also the Scriptural basis for it. He pointed out how the devil, the father of lies, uses the world with all its glamour, lawlessness, perverted behavior and spiritual wickedness as his ally in tempting the children of God to share in its evil. Then, in a detailed exposition of two major proof passages, Romans 12:2 (the motto of our convention) and I John 2:15-17 (the text of Pastor Mahan's sermon to come on Sunday morning), and with abundant quotations from reliable exegetes and orthodox commentators, the essayist zeroed in on the words and expressions in those texts in particular to sharpen the listeners' focus on what constitutes "*the world*" that is inimical to God and His holy will, and what is involved in being "*conformed to*" it and "*loving*" it. The first part of the essay was enthusiastically received as very informative and edifying, and was accompanied with lively discussion and wide participation on the part of the delegates and visitors. Therefore, following the mid-morning break, it was decided to postpone the Report of the Committee on Missions to the afternoon session and the Report of the Committee on Theological Education and the interest reports of the faculty and of the student to Sunday afternoon following the concluding portion of the essay so that Pastor Worley could continue with the second part of his essay until the noon hour.

Part II consisted of "a survey of Bible examples of the EFFECT of worldliness in individual lives." In this section, Pastor Worley chose as particularly *tragic* examples Lot's wife, Judas Iscariot, and Demas at the cost of their immortal souls, and the fall of both David and Peter as examples of a *temporary* triumph of worldliness due to presumption, conceit, lust and fear. He then gave special attention to the *chronic* problem of worldliness among the Savior's twelve apostles and the warnings they give to US against falling into the same pitfalls as they did, lest we be carried away by the world and fall from our own steadfastness. This part of the essay, too, was enthusiastically received and actively discussed on the floor right up to the lunch hour on Saturday. The final two portions were then reserved to be heard on Sunday afternoon.

The afternoon session began with a devotion conducted by Pastor Mahan of Jackson, Michigan, after which the convention heard his *Report of the Committee on Missions*. It briefly reviewed the mission endeavors of the

Conference, both at home and abroad. Concerning the former, the chairman noted our Conference web site, the publication of orthodox Sunday School materials, books and tracts, and our official organ, the *Concordia Lutheran*. He then also highlighted our subsidy support of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Yekaterinburg, Russia, and, stateside, our subsidy of St. Stephen's in Wilmot, South Dakota. Both congregations requested modest increases in their subsidies for the coming fiscal year. The committee in its report recommended the granting of the increases but noted, particularly in the case of St. Stephen's, that the congregation actively review its viability in the light of Scripture and report back to the committee within four months of the next convention. The delegates granted both increases, but encouraged the Committee on Missions to seek from ALL subsidized congregations current information on their economic status so that the committee is better able in the future to evaluate and recommend subsidy levels.

The convention then heard a brief report from the *Committee on Lutheran Union* through its chairman, Pastor Natterer. He noted that little progress had been made toward Lutheran union because of Satan's opposition and obstacles laid in our path at his behest. He also remarked briefly on the illness of his dear wife which hindered him personally in the pursuit of his duties. Therefore he had asked Pastor Mahan, chairman of the Missions Committee, to assist him in responding to certain contacts expressing interest in our Conference.

The *Committee to Review the President's Report* then gave its positive assessment of that report, and the *Auditing Committee* reported on its examination of the books, both of the Conference Treasurer and of the Business Manager of *Scriptural Publications*. The committee found all the financial records in good order.

Before the mid-afternoon break, the *Finance Committee* came back with its interim report, reflecting the changes in subsidy approved by the convention. The revisions included: St. Stephen's Subsidy— \$8,400.00; Yekaterinburg Subsidy— \$7,200.00; Yekaterinburg Facilities Rental Subsidy— \$ 2,400.00. The other items remained the same for a total projected budget of \$ 29,600.00.

The convention then proceeded to the *Election of Officers and Standing Committees* for 2003-2004. The following were elected:

PRESIDENT: The Rev. E. R. Stallings

VICE PRESIDENT: The Rev. Edward J. Worley

SECRETARY: The Rev. David T. Mensing

TREASURER: Mr. Robert G. Bloedel

BOARD MEMBERS-AT-LARGE:

Midwest—Mr. JC Perry

Far West— Mr. Raymond Kusumi

EDITORIAL COMMITTEE:

Pastor Worley, C. L. Editor; Pastor Mensing, Book and Tract Editor; and Mr. Paul Natterer, Lay Member.

COMMITTEE ON LUTHERAN UNION:

Pastor Worley, Chairman; Pastor Mensing; Pastor Natterer; and Mr. Phillip Martin.

COMMITTEE ON THEOLOGICAL EDUCATION:

Pastor Mahan, Chairman; Pastor Redlin; Mr. John Steinke; and Mr. Michael Malley.

COMMITTEE ON MISSIONS:

Pastor Mahan, Chairman; Pastor Mensing; Mr. Ron Lake; Mr. Aaron Dierking; and Mr. Brett Swinney.

FINANCE COMMITTEE:

Mr. Robert Bloedel, Chairman;

Mr. Phillip Martin; Mr. John Steinke, and Mr. JC Perry.

PUBLISHING HOUSE BOARD OF CONTROL:

Pastor Mensing, Chairman; Mr. Phillip Martin, Business Manager; and Mr. Raymond Kusumi, Print Shop Manager.

At the Sunday morning service, the host pastor again served as liturgist, and Pastor Ross A. Mahan of Jackson, Michigan, preached the sermon on I John 2:15-17. His theme was: *A Man Is Either a Lover of God or a Lover of the World; He cannot Be Both.* He divided the sermon into two parts: I. Love for the world separates man from God, and II. The Lord Jesus Christ has overcome the world. Delegates and visitors from the congregations of our fellowship then partook of the Lord's Supper together as guests of Peace Congregation—for the remission of

their sins, for the strengthening of their faith and of their walk in sanctification, and in testimony of their blessed unity in the Word of their Savior.

After a sumptuous dinner, sessions reconvened with a devotion conducted by Pastor Dierking of Wilmot, South Dakota, after which Pastor Worley presented the final portions of his essay on *The Great Danger that Worldliness Presents in Our Congregations and in the Lives of Individual Christians*. He first set forth in the third part a series of probing, thought-provoking questions of self-examination, entitled (after *TLH 430*) “What Is the World to Me?” Our standard, he pointed out, is God’s Holy Law in its function as a flawless and accusing mirror; and we must, as individuals, fully accept moral responsibility for our worldliness. Then God-wrought contrition and Gospel-engendered faith must follow unto the renewal of our mind. Finally, in the fourth part of his essay, he highlighted “areas of ingress for the world in the personal lives of Christians,” centering upon the mass media of the “information age” as the open door. He cited six examples of worldliness, identified “the problem,” and then applied Scripture in each situation. His concluding portion was taken from *The Abiding Word*, Vol. II, page 199, in which four contrary activities are required to enable us to overcome the world after our Savior: 1) Make use of God’s Word; 2) Pray fervently for God’s help; 3) Crucify our sinful flesh; and 4) Avoid subjecting ourselves to temptation. Following spirited and fruitful discussion of this section —discussion which was broadly-based throughout a “packed house”— this informative and edifying essay was unanimously adopted with thanks to the essayist, pending the usual review by the *praesidium* before publication in our *Proceedings*.

Concluding the business of the convention, the delegates first heard the *Report of the Committee on Theological Education* concerning its work during the past fiscal year. Pastor Mark W. Dierking, chairman of the Committee, was not present to deliver his report, having departed the convention early. Pastor Ross Mahan, the second pastoral member read the report in his absence. The report chronicled the unexpected death of Pastor Paul R. Bloedel in June of 2002 and the need to fill the resulting vacancy on the Seminary faculty. With the unanimous consent of the 51st Annual Convention, Pastors Mensing and Lietz were selected to “team-teach” the fifth year curriculum, a task which the chairman characterized as “gargantuan” and which they did well. He also noted that, on Friday evening, June 27th, we graduated our first seminary student in 23 years to fill a need to which all our people should zealous direct young men considering a career in the service of the Lord and which all of us should remember in “*effectual fervent prayer*” to the Lord of the Church. Fi-

nally, the report expressed on behalf of the entire fellowship thanks to all the professors for their faithfulness and diligence in preparing our student for the work before him.

The convention also then heard the *Interest Reports* of Pastors Lietz and Mensing concerning their activities as co-instructors in the Seminary this past year. Each focused particularly upon the courses for which he was chiefly responsible and then also upon the courses which the two men “team-taught,” namely, Pastoral Theology and Homiletics, as well as the supervision of the student’s ongoing *practicum* in the three congregations they respectively serve in the Chicago area. Given the shortened academic year and the heavy class load, both professors gave thanks to the God of all grace for enabling them to commit what they themselves had once learned to a faithful young student, for preserving them by His Word in soundness of doctrine and practice, and for blessing them with good health and strength throughout the year. They also expressed special gratitude to the members of the Conference for their prayers and constant solicitude, to their respective congregations for “sharing” them and their time with the Conference and for bearing with their tight schedules, and to their dear wives, whose love, understanding, patience, and wholehearted support made the daily burdens much easier to bear. The instructors also shared with the convention several suggestions and recommendations for the future operation of our Seminary, chief of which was to keep the fifth year of instruction a team-taught year in consideration of the 19-hour course load, in view of the broad insights to be gained by the student from two instructors, and for the sake of the variety of experience in preaching and practical church work in several congregations simultaneously—all of which are significant advantages to a student in his final year of training.

The graduate himself then gave a brief interest report, touching upon his seminary experience in general over the past five and one-half years, thanking his instructors for their labor, and expressing ultimate thanks to God for strengthening them and blessing their work. He also thanked St. Mark’s Ev. Lutheran Church in Sauk Village for its generous hospitality to him and to his new wife, Laura, whose marriage was blessed with a healthy son just a month before the convention. Finally, he encouraged the Conference brethren to pray earnestly for a future ministry and for able men whom God would move to desire to serve Him in the pastoral office.

As the sessions neared their close, the delegates heard yet brief reports concerning the Seminary Bookstore, the Conference Archives, and its

Web page. The proposed budget of the *Finance Committee* was adopted as previously amended, and the *Resolutions Committee* presented nine resolutions of thanks to all those who contributed specially to the programs of our beloved Conference, and to our spiritual edification, our physical well-being, and our brotherly sociability at this convention. And finally, the annual report of the Conference Statistician, Mr. Ray Kusumi, was presented for the information of our people.

The convention also unanimously accepted the gracious invitation of St. Luke's Lutheran Church of Seattle, Washington, to host the **53rd Annual Convention** (June 25, 26 and 27, 2004), immediately preceded as usual by the *Plenary Pastoral Conference* on June 22 and 23, and the *Board of Directors Meeting* on June 24th. Our people are encouraged *NOW ALREADY* to mark these dates on their calendars, so that they can plan ahead to attend.

The convention adjourned at 5:35 p.m., with the customary closing devotion led by President Stallings. It had been a most brotherly and constructive meeting; and the delegates and visitors returned to their respective homes renewed in their zeal to recognize and to avoid the spiritual death-traps set for them by the devil, the world, and their own sinful flesh, and edified by the Spirit through His precious Word to live henceforth not unto themselves but unto their Savior, who died for them and rose again.

-D.T.M.

‘Behold,
how good and how pleasant it is
for brethren to dwell together
in unity!’

Psalm 133:1

The Signs of the Times

Our Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ asks,
"Can ye not discern the signs of the times?"

Matthew 16:3

Abuse of things allowed: Alcohol

One-in-Three U.S. families reports a drinking problem. One-third of the families in the United States have drinking problems, says a Gallup Poll. Some 81 percent of those interviewed also called alcoholism a major national problem. The question, "Has drinking ever been a cause of trouble in your family?" got an affirmative response from 33 percent of the people, up from 22 percent last year when the word "liquor" was used instead of "drinking." The number of families affected has risen in the surveys since 1947, when about 12 percent said liquor had been a problem.

Down through the centuries the sin of drunkenness has plagued mankind. And who can begin to enumerate, much less adequately describe, the terrible consequences of this sin! In the 1500s we hear Martin Luther warning against this sin. He writes, "This vice has unfortunately spread so far in the world as to be beyond restraint unless the Word of God will help in the case of a few individuals who still want to be human beings and also desire to be Christians" (What Luther Says, Vol.1, page 432). The Word of God indeed allows the moderate use of alcohol. The very first miracle that the Lord Jesus performed was at the Wedding in Cana where He changed the water into wine (John 2: 1-11). The Savior drank wine and was accused of being "a winebibber" (Luke 7:34). And the Apostle Paul urges his co-laborer Timothy, "*Drink no longer water, but use a little wine for thy stomach's sake and thine often infirmities*"(1 Tim.5:23). At the same time, however, the Scripture very definitely forbids the excessive use and labels drunkenness as a work of the flesh "*of the which I tell you before, as I have also told you in time past, that they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God*"(Gal.5:19-21). Nabal, the husband of Abigail, was such a man (1 Sam.25). But even we Christians must constantly be on our guard lest we fall prey to this vice. Remember Noah, a preacher of righteousness, "*drank of the wine, and was drunken*" (Gen.9:21). While we are Christians, nevertheless, like Noah, we also have our sinful flesh, therefore we should heed the words of the Apostle Paul, "*Be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess; but be filled with the Spirit*"(Eph.5:18).

"And take heed to yourselves, lest at any time your hearts be over charged with surfeiting, and drunkenness, and cares of this life, and so that they come upon you unawares." (Luke 22:34)

- M.L.N.