

*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.

---

Vol. XLVII

May-June, 2002

Nos. 5 - 6

---



"Feed the flock of  
God which is among  
you, taking the  
oversight thereof."

— I Peter 5:2a

---

**OFFICIAL ORGAN**  
of the  
**Concordia Lutheran Conference**

This publication appears in a monthly or bi-monthly issue at a subscription price of \$5.00 per year.

**The Concordia Lutheran EDITOR:**

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

**Tracts and Booklets EDITOR:**

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

**LAY MEMBER:**

Dr. John M. Steinke  
12200 W. IH 10 #1913  
San Antonio, TX 78230

Address all subscriptions, renewals, and remittances to: Scriptural Publications, 17151 South Central Avenue, Oak Forest, IL 60452-4913. A special notice of expiration will be inserted in the issue which terminates your subscription.

**Officers of the Concordia  
Lutheran Conference**

**PRESIDENT:**

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

**VICE PRESIDENT:**

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

**SECRETARY:**

Rev. David T. Mensing  
17151 South Central Avenue  
Oak Forest, IL 60452

**TREASURER:**

Mr. Victor K. Bloedel  
10200 - 62nd Avenue South  
Seattle, WA 98178

**STATEMENT OF PURPOSE:**

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

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

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

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

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

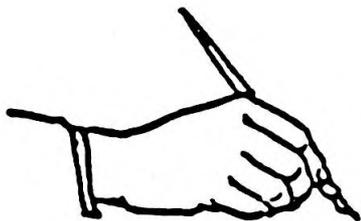
To show that we do not have among us a mixture of divergent teachings but that we are "perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment."

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

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

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

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



# The President's Column

Our Lutheran forefathers emphasized that the Pastoral Office has been instituted by God, who requires that a qualified man, called by the local congregation, is to occupy that office. This is precisely what the Word of God teaches in such passages as Acts 20:28; I Timothy 3:1-7; Titus 1:5-9. Our Lutheran Confessions of 1530 refer to the Office of the Ministry as "the highest office in the Church" (Triglotta, page 327).

This Scriptural position was held by all orthodox Lutheran teachers (Dr. C.F.W. Walther, Dr. Adolf Hoenecke, Dr. Franz Pieper, etc.) down through the years. The Brief Statement of 1932 declared, "By the public ministry we mean the office by which the Word of God is preached and the sacraments are administered *by order and in the name* of a Christian congregation. Concerning this office we teach that it is a *divine ordinance*; that is, the Christians of a certain locality must apply the means of grace not only privately and within the circle of their families nor merely in their common intercourse with fellow-Christians, John 5:39; Eph. 6:4; Col. 3:16, but they are also required, by the divine order, to make provision that the Word of God be publicly preached in their midst, and the Sacraments administered according to the institution of Christ, by persons qualified for such work, whose qualifications and official functions are exactly defined in Scripture, Titus 1:5; Acts 14:23; 20:28; II Tim. 2:2" (Paragraph 31; see also par. 27, Local Churches.).

By God's grace, our Concordia Lutheran Conference has not deviated from this Scriptural position. We teach that "the *pastoral office* of the local congregation is the only divinely ordained office in the Church. When the Holy Spirit has made the minister an overseer of all the flock, He has made him overseer also of the work of any of the officers whom the congregation may elect, of the various societies in the congregation, and of their officers, of the Sunday School, Day-school, Bible Class, and their teachers, as well as assistant pastors. All other offices in the Church, besides that of pastor, are auxiliary, or offices of help, to the Office of the Ministry. (Acts 20:28; Heb.13:17; I Thess. 5:12-13; Acts

6:16.). Especially in view of this high responsibility, pastors are cautioned in Scripture not to lord it over God's heritage (I Pet. 5:3; 4:10; Acts 6:1-6). There is no difference between pastor and laymen in rank, but in office (Matt. 23:8-10; I Tim. 3:1)." (*This Scriptural Position We Still Hold*, pages 6,7). This was adopted and ratified by the member congregations of the Concordia Lutheran Conference in 1968.

This Scriptural teaching has literally been torn to shreds and thrown to the four winds by ever so many within the pale of Christendom! Here are merely a few examples:

Harold Camping, who operates the Family Radio network, says that "true Christians should not go to church. They should drop their church memberships, leave their congregations, and just listen to the radio ... What the Bible says about pastors, elders, congregations - that is for a previous dispensation. Now, Christians don't need any shepherds or church order to rule over them" ... (*World*, April 20, 2002).

Nancy Petty and Jack McKinney, Pullen Memorial Baptist Church, Raleigh, N.C. - Historic decision: McKinney asked his congregation to make Petty, a lesbian, his co-pastor. They agreed by a tiny margin. (*Newsweek*, May 6, 2002).

Martin Zender, a speaker and author of the recent book, How to Quit Church Without Quitting God, says churches do not offer what's needed. "People are looking for comfort and answers ... Churches offer musical productions and food, but they are not answering the questions" (*Washington Times*, April 11, 2002). What kind of answers and comfort can be expected from pastors who no longer believe that every word in Scripture is God's Word? The very fundamental doctrines of Holy Writ are being denied right and left by many pastors who would still like to be known as Christians!

God has the answers for all of life's problems. The all-important question: How can a man enter into heaven? is answered in clear language by God in His Word. "*For God so loved the world, that He gave His only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life*" (John 3:16). That is the Gospel in a nutshell. And this grand and glorious theme is repeated again and again. "*He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life*" (John 3:36). And Paul

and Silas proclaimed on their missionary journeys, "*Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved*" (Acts 16:31). O what a glorious light this has been for us, for we were by nature in the darkness of sin, groping about like blind men. We were not able to meet God's demands of holiness, perfection and righteousness. For "*all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God*" (Rom. 3:23). We deserved to be cast into everlasting destruction, for "*the wages of sin is death*" (Rom. 6:23). But the Word of God reveals unto us the warming sunshine of the heavenly Father's love in Christ, "*whose blood cleanseth us from all sin*" (I John 1:7). And it is through this sweet message of the Gospel that the individual sinner is brought to faith by God the Holy Spirit. "*Faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God*" (Rom. 10:17).

The Word of God is the sure and unfailing Lamp and Light unto our feet and path, clearly shining the way which leads to the Father's house of many mansions. True, there are many storms along the way; there are many obstacles and thorns with which the Christian must contend. Yet, the Word of God provides us with the needed comfort in every situation. "*Fear not: for I have redeemed thee, I have called thee by thy name; thou art Mine. When thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee; through the rivers, they shall not overflow thee: when thou walkest through the fire, thou shalt not be burned; neither shall the flame kindle upon thee. I am the Lord thy God, the Holy One of Israel, thy Savior*" (Is. 43:1-3). When we Christians become tired and weary in our pilgrimage, there stands the Light of God's Word which assures us, "*They that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run, and not be weary; and they shall walk, and not faint*" (Is. 40:31). When the question arises, "Why have I been placed here on this earth?", God's Word tells us Christians, to "*show forth the praises of Him who hath called you out of darkness into His marvelous light*" (I Pet. 2:9). And that Word of God shows us believers in Christ how to show forth that praise in our calling and station in this life as father, mother, son, daughter, employee or employer. These are the truths which, by God's grace, are proclaimed by our faithful pastors. What a privilege it is to sit at the feet of one who feeds our hungry souls with the Bread of Life and quenches our thirsty souls with the Water of Life!

—M. L. N.

THE  
**51<sup>ST</sup> ANNUAL CONVENTION**  
OF THE  
**CONCORDIA LUTHERAN CONFERENCE**

will be held, the Lord willing, at

**St. John's Lutheran Church**

Sixth and Tangent Streets

Lebanon, OR 97355

Phone: (541) 258-8212

The Rev. M. L. Natterer, Host Pastor

**June 28, 29, 30, 2002**

CONVENTION MOTTO

**"Man's Sin Merits Death—God's Grace Gives Life" Rom. 6:23**

HISTORICAL ESSAY

*"The Split in the Orthodox Lutheran Conference—1955, and  
the Organization of the Concordia Lutheran Conference"*

The Rev. David T. Mensing, Essayist

DOCTRINAL ESSAY

*"The Doctrine of Sin and Its Significant  
Relation to Salvation by Grace in Christ"*

The Rev. E. R. Stallings, Essayist

Pastoral Conference to be held on June 25<sup>th</sup> & 26<sup>th</sup>

Board of Directors Meeting to be held on June 27<sup>th</sup>

---

## OFFICIAL NOTICE

As president of the Concordia Lutheran Conference, it is my great privilege to announce several recent declarations of fellowship with our Conference:

In November, 2001, Mighty Fortress Orthodox Evangelical Lutheran Church, Anaheim, California, the Rev. Edward J. Worley, Pastor, declared fellowship with us after its careful examination of our doctrine and practice and Pastor Worley's attendance at our pastoral conferences for in-depth discussions with us. (We regret the delayed announcement of this blessed development and beg the pardon of these dear brethren for our untimeliness.)

Then this past month, April, 2002, the three constituent churches of the fellowship of Lutheran Congregations, after having thoroughly examined in the light of Holy Writ our Conference's position in doctrine and practice, also declared fellowship with us on the basis of 3 Corinthians 1:10. The fellowship of Lutheran Congregations continues to exist and to function as an autonomous church body, but by God's grace we are now privileged to work and worship together with its constituent members as dear brethren in "the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace" (Ephesians 4:3).

To the glory of God and the praise of His grace in Christ Jesus, may He grant that we "continu[e] steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers" (Acts 2:42), rejoicing in "how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity." (Ps. 133:1)

Rev. M. L. Ratterer, President

---

For the information of our readers, the following are churches in fellowship with the *Concordia Lutheran Conference*:

**MIGHTY FORTRESS ORTHODOX**

**EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH**

1557 West Katella Avenue

Anaheim, CA 92805

Worship Service ..... 9:00 a.m.

Sunday School & Bible Class ..... 10:30 a.m.

**REV. EDWARD J. WORLEY, Pastor**

804 South Verona Street

Anaheim, CA 92804

(714) 995-6301

---

**FAITH LUTHERAN CHURCH (F. L. C.)**

Highway N

Stover, MO 65078

For the time of worship services, please  
contact Stephen Richter at (314) 376-3221.

**REV. ROBERT J. LIETZ, Vacancy Pastor**

233 North Cuyler Avenue

Oak Park, IL 60302

(708) 386-4145

---

**ST. MARK'S EV. LUTHERAN CHURCH  
AND SCHOOL (F. L. C.)**

22012 Torrence Avenue

Sauk Village, IL 60411

*Telephone: (708) 758-6222*

Worship Service ..... 5:45 p.m.

Sunday School & Bible Class ..... 7:00 p.m.

**REV. ROBERT J. LIETZ, Vacancy Pastor**

233 North Cuyler Avenue

Oak Park, IL 60302

(708) 386-4145

---

**TRINITY EV. LUTHERAN CHURCH (F. L. C.)**

300 North Ridgeland Avenue

Oak Park, IL 60302

*Telephone: (708) 386-6773*

Sunday School & Bible Class ..... 9:00 a.m.

Worship Service ..... 10:15 a.m.

**REV. ROBERT J. LIETZ, Pastor**

233 North Cuyler Avenue

Oak Park, IL 60302

(708) 386-4145

# The Qualifications of the Ministry

## I Timothy 3:1-7

As we consider this important subject of the qualifications which *God Himself* has established for the Office of the Public Ministry, it is very much in order to set before us, as a timely reminder, the words of Psalm 119, verses 104-105: *“Through Thy precepts I get understanding; therefore, I hate every false way. Thy Word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path.”* What are the qualifications for the only divinely-ordained office in the Church, the office of pastor in the local congregation? Like a lamp and light, the first seven verses of I Timothy 3 clearly answer that question for us.

Verse 1 — *“This is a true saying, If a man desire the office of a bishop, he desireth a good work.”* The office of a bishop is the office of a pastor. Those in this office are also called *“elders”* (Titus 1:5ff.; I Peter 5:1-3) and *“overseers”* (Acts 20:28). The occupants of this office, when faithfully doing their work, *“watch for your souls, as they that must give account, that they may do it with joy, and not with grief, for that is unprofitable for you”* (Hebrews 13:17). If anyone aspires to this office, let him remember that this work is called *“good”* because it involves God’s good, primary will to *“have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth”* (I Timothy 2:4), showing that He is *“not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance”* (II Peter 3:9). For in this office of the public ministry, *“it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching [the Gospel - v. 17] to save them that believe”* (I Corinthians 1:21). But *“how shall they believe in Him of Whom they have not heard? And how shall they hear without a preacher? And how shall they preach, except they be sent? As it is written, How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the Gospel of peace, and bring good tidings of good things”* (Romans 10:14-15).

Verse 2 — *“A bishop then must be blameless.”* that is, a pastor is unfit for this office if he persistently fails to carry out the God-given qualifications for this office. For example, if he continually overindulges in his use of wine and other alcoholic beverages (v. 3), blame can be laid *“at his door”*. Furthermore, if he is persistently greedy and continually covets money (v. 3), fault can be found with him. Keep in mind that the Holy Spirit of God does not declare that a pastor must be sinless. That would be an impossible qualification to meet, for *“all have sinned and*

*come short of the glory of God*" (Romans 3:23), but the pastor, both in his personal life and in the conduct of his office as pastor, dare not give offense by ungodly conduct, *"that the ministry be not blamed"* (II Corinthians 6:3). In this 2nd verse of I Timothy 3, we find these other qualifications:

*"The husband of one wife"* — While *"it is not good that the man should be alone"* (Genesis 2:18), and finding a wife who will be a faithful Christian *"help meet"* (Genesis 2:18) to her husband and pastor is *"a good thing"* (Proverbs 18:22), these words do not require that a pastor be married. A pastor, however, may not be a polygamist, that is, married to more than one woman at a time, since it is obvious from Scripture that God's original intention regarding Holy Marriage was monogamy (Genesis 2:24-25). Therefore, also in this regard, a pastor is to be an example to his flock (I Pet. 5:3). This short phrase — *"the husband of one wife"* — also makes it absolutely certain that *only men* are to be pastors. A woman cannot be the "husband of one wife." It is wicked rebellion against this clear revelation of God to even *say* that women should occupy the pastoral office. "A survey taken by the LC-MS showed that some 1,000 LC-MS clergymen support women pastors" (*Christian News*, May 13, 2002, page 1). And then, when women are actually *functioning* in the pastoral office, as in the ELCA, that is even more of an abomination (Jeremiah 23:31) to God and to His words here in I Timothy 3.

*"Vigilant"* — This qualification focuses on a pastor being watchful or alert. *"But watch thou in all things"* (II Timothy 4:5; emphasis added; the Greek word for "watch" is the same word used for "vigilant"). The pastor needs to be vigilant and on the watch for wrong teachings (I Timothy 1:4; Galatians 5:9) and false teachers (Matthew 7:15; I Timothy 6:3), as well as anything else which could hurt and harm *"the flock"* (Acts 20:28). The Lord God said to the Prophet Ezekiel, as He says to all pastors: *"Son of man, I have made thee a watchman unto the house of Israel; therefore hear the Word at MY mouth, and give them warning from ME. When I say unto the wicked, Thou shalt surely die; and thou givest him not warning, nor speakest to warn the wicked from his wicked way, to save his life; the same wicked man shall die in his iniquity; but his blood will I require at thine hand. Yet if thou warn the wicked, and he turn not from his wickedness, nor from his wicked way, he shall die in his iniquity; but thou hast delivered thy soul"* (vv. 17-18). How many pastors today are the opposite of

“vigilant” when they fail to instruct and warn their flocks concerning spiritual danger to their souls and to their eternal welfare? The members of such flocks are tragically “left in the dark.” Far too often are fulfilled the words of Isaiah 56: *“His watchmen are blind; they are all ignorant; they are all dumb dogs; they cannot bark; sleeping, lying down, loving to slumber”* (v. 10).

“Sober” — Of sound mind, balanced in his judgment, which is anchored to God’s Word. *“Judge righteous judgment”* (John 7:24b); not flighty and unstable, not *“carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive”* (Ephesians 4:14).

“Of good behavior” — Well-ordered, orderly, dignified, *“that they may adorn the doctrine of God our Savior in all things”* (Titus 2:10). While this latter instruction applies to all Christians, including pastors, the overseer of the flock should be especially conscious of serving as an example to his people (I Peter 5:3). It is an offense to God’s people when a pastor claims that his personal conduct is no one’s business but his own, and that how he behaves himself outside of his office is his own concern.

“Given to hospitality” — Being kind to strangers, offering them the hospitality of our home, doing good to *“all men, especially unto them who are of the household of faith”* (Galatians 6:10), remembering the instruction of God’s Word in regard to bodily necessities (James 2:14-17; I John 3:16-18; Proverbs 19:17; Matthew 25:35-40), and the fact that Christian hospitality is an evident fruit of faith. Although all Christians are to be hospitable (Romans 12:13; Hebrews 13:2; I Peter 4:9), yet the pastor is to be an *example* to the flock (I Peter 5:3), also in this area of the Christian life.

“Apt to teach” — Qualified to teach. *“Are all teachers?”* (I Corinthians 12:29). All do not have the aptitude to teach God’s Word, to *“be able by sound doctrine both to exhort and to convince the gainsayers”* (Titus 1:9). Considering the purpose of the ministry, namely the salvation of souls (I Corinthians 1:21), this is one of the most vital and important qualifications for this office. The Lord Jesus’ charge to Peter. *“Feed My lambs; . . . Feed My sheep”* (John 21:15-17). is really the same charge given to all pastors in their office as overseers of the flock: *“Feed the church of God, which He hath purchased with His own blood”* (Acts 20:28). What the lambs and sheep of Christ are to be fed

is spelled out in I Timothy 4, *“Take heed unto thyself, and unto the doctrine; continue in them: for in doing this thou shalt both save thyself, and them that hear thee”* (v. 16), and II Timothy 4: *“Preach the Word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine”* (v. 2). Finally, this aptness to teach is also vital in dealing with those who oppose Scripture, as the apostle verifies in Titus 1: *“Holding fast the faithful Word as he hath been taught, that he may be able by sound doctrine both to exhort and to convince the gainsayers”* (v. 9).

Verse 3 — *“Not given to wine”* — not prone to intemperance; *“no striker”* — not a violent person; not having a quick temper; *“not greedy of filthy lucre”* — not thinking of what he can selfishly get for himself, no matter what means or methods he uses to get such. Those in the pastoral office who are otherwise in their conduct are described by the prophet in this way: *“Yea, they are all greedy dogs which can never have enough, and they are shepherds that cannot understand: they all look to their own way, everyone for his gain”* (Is. 56:11). *“But patient”* — mild, gentle, fair, reasonable; *“The servant of the Lord must not strive, but be gentle unto all men, apt to teach, patient, in meekness instructing those that oppose themselves; if God peradventure will give them repentance to the acknowledging of the truth”* (II Timothy 2:24-25); *“not a brawler”* — not looking for a fight at the “drop-of-a-hat”; *“not covetous”* — not a lover of money, not stingy, but generous and content with those things which God has graciously given to him (Hebrews 13:5).

Verses 4 - 5 — *“One that ruleth well his own house, having his children in subjection with all gravity; (for if a man know not how to rule his own house, how shall he take care of the church of God?)”* — These verses are profoundly clear and speak for themselves.

Verse 6 — *“Not a novice, lest being lifted up with pride he fall into the condemnation of the devil.”* A novice is a recent or new convert to the Christian faith. Placing such a man into the office of pastor could plunge him into the terrible sins of conceit and pride, which, if persisted in, could destroy his young and new faith in the Savior. What a tragedy that would be to have this novice, as a pastor, fall under the condemnation and judgment of God, that same condemnation and judgment of God over against the devil.

Verse 7 — *“Moreover he must have a good report of them which are without, lest he fall into reproach and the snare of the devil.”* Those who are “without” are those outside of God’s kingdom, those who are not Christians. Even they should, if they are honest and truthful, give a good testimony concerning the character and life of the man who is in the office of pastor.

Who is worthy, of himself, for this God-instituted office? No one! How is any man fit, qualified, and even to be considered for a call into this great office? He has to be minded willingly to serve the Lord Jesus Christ (Philippians 2:13), that willingness produced by the Holy Ghost through the Gospel of Christ (I Timothy 1:12-16). It is the Holy Ghost, through the means of grace, Who moves men to cry out with Isaiah, *“Here am I, send me”* (6:8), leads these same men to suffer being *“fools for Christ’s sake”* (I Corinthians 4:10), and causes them to follow the counsel of II Timothy 2: *“Study to show thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the Word of truth. But shun profane and vain babblings, for they will increase unto more ungodliness”* (vv. 15-16). The Concordia Lutheran Conference’s Seminary Training Program provides men with the priceless opportunity carefully and thoroughly to study the *“faithful Word”* (Titus 1:9), that they *“may be able by sound doctrine”* (Titus 1:9) to be equipped for this office of being an overseer or a pastor. In your intercessions before God’s throne of grace (Hebrews 4:16), remember the words of Jesus: *“Pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that He will send forth laborers into His harvest”* (Matthew 9:38). Finally, listen carefully to one who occupied the office of the public ministry: *“Therefore seeing we have this ministry, as we have received mercy, we faint not; but have renounced the hidden things of dishonesty, not walking in craftiness, nor handling the Word of God deceitfully; but by manifestation of the truth commending ourselves to every man’s conscience in the sight of God”* (II Corinthians 4:1-2). For those already in this office of pastor, as well as for those who are aspiring to this office, how wonderfully true and encouraging are the words of Jesus, *“Without Me ye can do nothing”* (John 15:5), and: *“Lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world”* (Matthew 28:20).

—R. J. L.

## The God-Required Obedience to the Pastor

What obedience does God require from the members of the congregation toward the pastor of the flock? The exact nature and limit of such obedience is clearly prescribed by God Himself in His Inerrant and Infallible Word, the only source and norm for Christian faith and practice.

What is the nature of God-pleasing obedience toward the pastor of the congregation? In Hebrews 13:7 and 17 we are given Divine commandments regarding such obedience. Hebrews 13:7 commands: *“Remember them which have the rule over you, who have spoken unto you the word of God: whose faith follow, considering the end of their conversation.”* In this passage God tells Christians to recollect and call to mind those who hold the pastoral office over them, who have spoken God’s Word to them. In Holy Writ we are often called upon by God to remember various people and events for our spiritual benefit. We are to remember warning examples (Lot’s wife, Luke 17:32), godly examples (apostolic labor, I Thess. 2:9), godly sufferings (apostolic bonds, Col. 4:18), and the specific words God has spoken to us (John 15:20, 16:4, Acts 20:31,35). To the congregation at Sardis the Lord says: *“Remember therefore how thou hast received and heard, and hold fast, and repent.”* (Rev. 3:3). In every case we find that remembering what God wants us to remember will be to our great spiritual benefit. In Hebrews 13:7 we are called upon to remember those who hold the Office of the Holy Ministry in our midst, the pastors, those who have spoken unto us the Word of God. Here we see that the very definition of pastoral work is speaking God’s Word (I Pet. 4:11a). For God’s Word is what creates and preserves faith (Rom. 10:17). It follows that, in remembering the faithful pastors, Scripture also exhorts to follow their faith, i.e., the product of God’s Word in their lives as evidenced by their words and deeds in their faithful stewardship under their Divine Call. In particular we are to consider the end of their conversation, that is, attentively contemplate the result of their manner of living. Such conversation or mode of life (how one lives) is described in Holy Writ as good (Jas. 3:13, I Peter 3:16), holy (I Peter 1:15, II Peter 3:11), honest (in the sense of morally honorable – I Peter 2:12), and chaste (I Peter 3:2), as God would have it, and contrasted with the unbeliever’s life which is vain (I Peter 1:18), and corrupt (filthy – II Peter 2:7) (cp. also Eph. 4:22). God would have members of the congregation follow the godly example of their ministers, the example of God-wrought Christian faith, with an eye on the godly blessing such a life brings as an end result. God’s

Word tells us how we ought to behave in the house of God (cf. I Tim. 3:15) and the pastors, as examples, should be those we strive to resemble (whose faith “*follow*,” i.e. imitate). Indeed Scripture tells us: “*Beloved, follow not that which is evil, but that which is good. He that doeth good is of God: but he that doeth evil hath not seen God*” (III John 11). Hebrews 13:7 thus tells us to follow the good example of pastors who faithfully fulfill their office in preaching only God’s Word and living godly lives according to it, knowing how God blesses us in His grace through His Gospel, preserving us in saving faith unto everlasting life.

Hebrews 13:17 further defines and prescribes such obedience: “*Obey them that have the rule over you and submit yourselves: for they watch for your souls, as they that must give account, that they may do it with joy, and not with grief: for that is unprofitable for you.*” It is a Divine imperative for Christians to obey their pastors as they proclaim God’s Holy Word and exercise the rule through God’s Word alone. This obedience is synonymous with obeying the truth, for God’s Word is truth (cp. Gal. 3:1, 5:7 to John 8:31-32). As “The Brief Statement” explains: “32. Although the office of the ministry is a divine ordinance, it possesses no other power than the power of the Word of God, I Pet. 4:11; that is to say, it is the duty of Christians to yield unconditional obedience to the office of the ministry whenever, and as long as the minister proclaims to them the Word of God, Heb. 13:17; Luke 10:16. If, however, the minister, in his teachings and injunctions, were to go beyond the Word of God, it would be the duty of Christians not to obey, but to disobey him, so as to remain faithful to Christ, Matt. 23:8. Accordingly, we reject the false doctrine ascribing to the office of the ministry the right to demand obedience and submission in matters which Christ has not commanded.”

Thus we are called upon in Hebrews 13:17 to submit ourselves, i.e., literally to “yield” or “give way,” “to be submissive to” the pastor because he is the called minister (the incumbent of the Office of the Holy Ministry), our pastor, as he proclaims to us God’s Word and only in so far as he proclaims God’s Word. He shall be called to give account of his stewardship as watcher over our souls (cp. Mt. 12:36, Lk. 16:2, esp. I Pet. 4:5, for use of “*give account*”). The pastor is called by God to be awake, watchful and vigilant in the care of the soul of each member of the congregation. Godly obedience to the Word of God the pastor proclaims makes the Holy Ministry a joy and not an occasion for grief

(literally “groaning”). As a shepherd who cheerfully leads, feeds and protects each sheep, the pastor finds great spiritual satisfaction in service to God. Moreover, disobedience, a refusal to yield to God’s Word faithfully proclaimed, is detrimental to the one disobeying: *“that is unprofitable for you.”* It is to an individual’s great spiritual harm and loss when one refuses to heed God’s Word as it is proclaimed to him or her. The Word of God gives every good thing to us as the Giver of all good gifts does everything in His power to grant us what we need: *“all things that pertain unto life and godliness through the knowledge of Him that hath called us to glory and virtue”* (II Pet. 1:3a) including *“precious faith ... through the righteousness of God and our Savior Jesus Christ”* (II Peter 1:16). To refuse to submit to God’s Holy Word as it is faithfully administered to us by God’s spokesman, the pastor, is to risk your very soul! It is spiritual disaster. John Gerhard, under the caption “Things Hostile to the Ministry of the Word,” mentions the faults of hearers giving prominence to “the contempt of the ministry.” Such contempt is contempt of God’s ordinance and God’s Word and God Himself. As God’s Only-Begotten Son declares in reference to His ministers, (Luke 10:16): *“He that heareth you heareth me; and he that despiseth you despiseth me; and he that despiseth me despiseth him that sent me.”*

As pastors will be called to account for their stewardship of souls, so every one that hears God’s Word from their lips must also answer to God for their refusal to give heed thereto. Unbelief brings eternal damnation. But to all those in whom God’s Spirit has wrought faith through the Means of Grace, great blessing remains as God works in them both to will and do of His good pleasure (Phil. 2:13). The blessing and spiritual benefit of obedience to the pastor is given in every promise God’s Word delivers to believers. Such obedience is a fruit of God-wrought faith, it is true godliness which Scripture says *“is profitable unto all things, having promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come”* (I Tim. 4:8b). Through His Word God administers every blessing Christ has earned for us in His Holy Life and Blood-Ransom Death. He has ordained the Office of the Holy Ministry and provided us with individual pastors to administer His Holy Word by which faith is created and preserved, faith which receives all these gracious promises and the gifts and blessings contained therein. Consider, for example, Romans 15:4, *“For whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the scriptures might have hope.”* God gives us the ability to endure (patience) and the consolation needed to give sure and certain hope (Rom. 8:28).

Other blessings include:

- certainty of heaven (I John 5:13– “*that ye may know that ye have eternal life*”),
- a sure defense against Satan (Eph. 6:17)
- peace (John 16:33) –the antidote for fear amidst tribulation (Lk. 12:32)
- an unchanging, sure foundation (Lk. 21:33)

In short:

–an unfailing set of promises (I Kings 8:56) for every need! (Ps. 68:19, Mt. 6:33) (cp. I Cor. 10:13)

God, Who cannot lie, promises: “*Blessed are they that hear the Word of God and keep it!*” (Lk. 11:28).

May God graciously move every member to keep the admonitions of Heb. 13:7 and 17, and receive all the blessings God has promised us in Christ Jesus to His glory and the temporal and eternal benefit of His dear children! Amen

—E. J. W.

## **The Pastor as Shepherd and Example**

*“The elders which are among you I exhort, who am also an elder, and a witness of the sufferings of Christ, and also a partaker of the glory that shall be revealed: Feed the flock of God which is among you, taking the oversight thereof, not by constraint, but willingly; not for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind; Neither as being lords over God’s heritage, but being ensamples to the flock. And when the chief Shepherd shall appear, ye shall receive a crown of glory that fadeth not away.”*

(I Peter 5:1-4)

You will note in the quote above from the first First Epistle of Peter that he addresses the elders or pastors of the churches of Asia Minor as an equal, for he considered himself also to be an elder or pastor, though he was an Apostle, dispatched personally by Christ to preach the Gospel. Present-day pastors would do well ever to follow Peter’s example and to speak to members of their congregations as fellow sinners and not as people on a lower level of some kind.

Nevertheless, though Peter spoke as a fellow elder or pastor, that does not mean that he did not speak with apostolic authority. He did, for he calls himself "*a witness of the sufferings of Christ*" and one who also will be "*a partaker of the glory that shall be revealed.*" Peter had witnessed firsthand the sufferings of Christ on the cross for the sins of mankind. The redeeming work of Christ was the theme of Peter's sermons. Not only had Peter been a witness of Christ's sufferings, but he had been a partaker of them in that he, too, had been lashed with a whip and imprisoned. But Peter had been willing to endure this suffering because he knew he would partake of the "*glory that would be revealed,*" that is, he firmly believed that his sins had been forgiven and that he would go to heaven.

Speaking as a fellow-elder to the elders of the churches of Asia Minor, Peter advised them to "*feed the flock of God which is among you.*" With these words the picture of the shepherd and his sheep is presented. The various duties of the elders or pastors are compared with the many tasks of a shepherd. What are they? In the area of this writer shepherding is rare, so that all the duties of a shepherd are not all that familiar. However, anyone who cares for a herd of animals does similar work to that of a shepherd. We are told that shepherds not only have to feed their sheep, or see that they are fed by leading them to green pastures, words which are to be found in the well-known "Shepherd's Psalm", the 23<sup>rd</sup>, but shepherds also have to tend the sheep, binding up their wounds and pouring oil on them, and watch them so that no harm comes to them. This is full-time work for the shepherds, which requires almost constant watchfulness day and night.

Peter advises elders or pastors to be fully involved in this work. Obviously, "*feeding the flock of God*" refers to preaching and teaching the Word of God in whatever way that might be done: preaching from the pulpit, teaching a children's or an adult instruction class, or a Bible class, admonishing the wayward, counseling the grieving, or telling an individual, wherever he or she might be, about the Savior from sin. These are the ways in which the "*flock of God*" is fed. Thus when our text speaks of "God's flock", it refers to the local congregation to which the pastor has been called. This is confirmed by the words, "*which is among you.*"

And there are other ways in which the “flock of God” is fed. The shepherd of animals “tends” his sheep, that is, he binds up their wounds and pours oil on them. Pastors must also do this for their spiritual sheep. For example, the problems of weak faith or simply growing old often require delicate attention. At such times the oil of the Word of God must be poured into the wounds caused by sin to heal them.

Above all, the shepherd of animals must guard and watch the sheep so that violent storms and vicious animals of prey do not lead them to destruction. And pastors will also watch the congregational flock so that the many man-made errors of doctrine that continually invade the church via radio, television, computers, movies, books, and pulpits do not mislead the members and send them down the path of destruction to hell. Arming themselves with the Word of God through faithful Bible study, the pastors of the churches will be equipped to defend against dangerous foes.

These are the major ways in which the “*flock of God*” is fed. And in what manner are the shepherds or pastors to do their work? Peter answers, “*Feed the flock of God which is among you, taking the oversight thereof, not by constraint, but willingly; not for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind; Neither as being lords over God’s heritage, but being examples to the flock.*” Even a good, faithful shepherd of animal sheep will be such only as he loves the work and performs it not merely for the pay. All the more, a faithful shepherd of God’s lambs and sheep is to assume the oversight willingly, out of the motivation of love for the Savior and the sheep which Christ purchased with His own blood. Otherwise, he works for “*filthy lucre.*” Except in the large synods with huge congregations, it is generally the case that pastors do not make large salaries. Hardly therefore would a man become a pastor with the intent of obtaining material gain. Yet even in such modest circumstances, the pastor is not to do his work as a mere job, but as for what it is, a calling of the Lord. If the pastor performs his work as an hireling (John 10:12), he will, upon seeing the wolf come, flee for his own safety. Or, as in the large synods, when the going gets a bit rough, some pastors will seek a call to another congregation where he hopes to have it easier. However, with the size and with the circumstances prevailing in our Concordia Lutheran Conference, this “tonic”, for the most part, is not available.

Lastly, elders or pastors are not to be *"lords over God's heritage"*, but they are to be examples of what Christian living is all about. Occasionally it happens that, when a person is given a position of leadership, his head begins to swell and he starts to give orders more frequently than he should. This can cause serious problems in a church. Pastors must give orders at times, and usually they will be based on a Scriptural principle, but they should not become dictators. Rather, they should be examples in leading the proper Christian life. A now-deceased district president of a Lutheran synod once told me that the hardest part of his office was dealing with the problems of mostly younger pastors and their wives who were still too much "of the world". In fact, since this district president's area of responsibility stretched from Houston to Sacramento and included about seventy-five congregations, the weight of the problems of these mostly young ministers and their wives likely was one of the causes of his early death. A pastor and his wife, above all believers in a Christian congregation, will be *"in the world but not of the world."* The pastor will practice what he preaches! And when all the above-named conditions have been met, then the *"flock of God"* will be fed properly. *"And when the chief Shepherd (who is Christ) shall appear (on the last day), then all (who have remained faithful) shall receive a crown of glory that fadeth not away."*

—D. G. R.

## Marriage and the Ministry

There is nothing more blessed in the life of a Minister of the Gospel than the gift of a godly wife as he carries out the duties of his Divine Call. He soon discovers what King Solomon wrote many years ago, **"a prudent wife is from the Lord"** (Proverbs 19:14), **"her price is far above rubies"** and **"she will do him good and not evil all the days of her life"** (Proverbs 31:10,12). A virtuous wife is God's reward as are the children that result from this blessed union. **"Lo, children are an heritage of the Lord: and the fruit of the womb is His reward"** (Psalm 127:3). The Pastor's wife does not share in his Divine Call as a "co-pastor", for this is specifically forbidden by God's Word (I Timothy 2:12). Rather, her loving service in the pastor's home frees him from the many physical cares and concerns of a family, enabling him to give his full attention to the Word of God and prayer (Acts 6:4).

God created marriage in the Garden of Eden and declared His creation to be **“very good”** (Gen. 1:31). God understands our needs perfectly, for He created man and knows his every thought, desire, and motivation. He knew that being alone was not good for Adam. **“And the Lord God said ‘It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him an help meet for him’”** (Gen. 2:18). He needed a wife to help him as he labored for God in his vocation. A wife serves as a loving companion to her husband and helps protect him from many temptations. After man’s fall into sin, marriage has served as a protection from sexual sins. The Devil’s temptations combined with our sinful flesh lead us toward sexual immorality which is opposed to the work of the Holy Spirit by the Gospel. A powerful and practical antidote for the weakness of our flesh is our spouse. Paul urges married couples to enjoy regular sexual relations lest **“Satan tempt you for your incontinency (lack of self-control)”** (I Corinthians 7:5b). The gift of marriage is God’s provision to preserve men and women from the sexual sins that would otherwise beset them apart from His grace (Hebrews 12:1; I Corinthians 7:2).

Marriage is a great blessing from God to mankind. However, various religious groups and teachers in the past promoted the doctrine of celibacy as a higher spiritual state for the Christian. Before long celibacy became a part of Roman Catholic Canon Law. The Pope added to God’s Word and required the Priesthood to be celibate. The Papal law of celibacy was enforced upon the Roman Catholic priests in spite of the fact that Scripture specifically states that pastors may be married. Paul wrote in I Corinthians 9:5: **“Have we not power to lead about a sister, a wife, as well as other apostles, and as the brethren of the Lord, and Cephas?”** (St. Peter). The pastor has every right to a wife, and most of the apostles, including Peter, were married. Being **“the husband of one wife”** is listed by the Apostle Paul as one of the qualifications for the public ministry (I Timothy 3:2). Jesus spoke of a gift of celibacy given by God but added that very few men possess it. If a man voluntarily chooses to remain unmarried for the sake of the Kingdom of Heaven, this is an acceptable thing to God (Matthew 19:11,12), but to mandate celibacy as a law without the clear teaching of Scripture is religious tyranny.

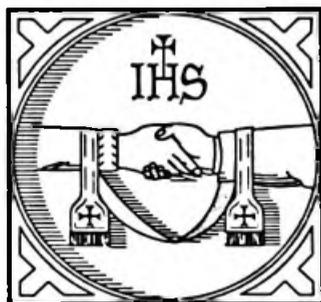
We have all heard the reports on the news recently of homosexual priests in the Roman Catholic Church preying on young men in the churches. The public spokesmen for the Church have repeatedly stated that these sins and crimes have nothing to do with the doctrine of Celibacy. How wrong they are! Priests, like all men, except for those with the God-given gift of continence which is relatively rare, need marriage. God's Word, a higher authority than the decrees of Rome, declares, "**Nevertheless, to avoid fornication, let every man have his own wife**" (I Corinthians 7:2). The same text adds, "**for it is better to marry than to burn**" (7:9). To deny these truths and lay enforced celibacy upon priests is to drive them to promiscuity, either with the opposite sex, or with the same sex. Since priests live in the same living quarters, homosexuality is the more convenient and readily available choice! Of course, this is just another example of "**teaching for doctrines the commandments of men**" (Matthew 15:9). Jesus condemned such religion as vain worship. The devil is the source of all lies and false doctrine as Jesus said to the Jewish religious leaders: "**Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own; for he is a liar, and the father of it**" (John 8:44).

Since the devil is the father of all false doctrine, what does Scripture say specifically about the doctrines of marriage and celibacy? The Holy Spirit speaking through the Apostle Paul condemned anyone that would forbid marriage and in effect promote celibacy in the world. "**Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils; speaking lies in hypocrisy; having their conscience seared with a hot iron.**" As one reads that introduction by the Apostle he wonders, "*what heretical demonic doctrines could Paul be describing? He must be referring to doctrines of utmost importance to the church.*" Paul went on to describe the doctrines of devils that cause men to depart from the faith as "**forbidding to marry, and commanding to abstain from meats, which God hath created to be received with thanksgiving of them which believe and know the truth. ... For it is sanctified by the word of God and prayer.**" (I Tim. 4:1-3,5).

Paul reveals the work of Satan who empowers false doctrine by employing *seducing spirits* to deceive the hearts of men and draw them away from the true faith. When professing Christians embrace false doctrine, Satan influences their understanding of the Gospel and tears down their confidence in Jesus Christ alone for salvation. He will deceive them into trusting in their own works to be saved. When a man denies the Gospel of free grace in Christ by trusting in his own works to be saved and rejects the gift of marriage for the unnatural state of celibacy, any perversion is possible. All false doctrine has the potential to lead a man to depart from the Christian faith into a life ruled by his sinful flesh and perverted lusts. For this reason we must cling to the pure Word of God and the faith of Jesus Christ lest any of us travel down a similar path.

The Christian minister rejoices in the wife God has given him (Proverbs 5:18) for He knows from the Word of God that his relationship to her has Divine approval. Marriage is **“sanctified by the Word of God and prayer”** (I Timothy 4:5). In other words, God created marriage for man. He revealed this in His Word, and the Christian can now enter into marriage with the added assurance that the smile of God rests upon this relationship by the gift of righteousness that is his by faith in Jesus Christ. In God’s sight, **“Marriage is honorable in all”** (Hebrews 13:4a); therefore what the Lord has declared holy and honorable we gladly affirm, knowing that **“Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above and cometh down from the Father of lights”** (James 1:17). The pastor’s wife is truly God’s gift as he serves in the Holy Ministry, and we give thanks to God for their love, faithfulness, and service.

—R. A. M.



# The Myth of the Papacy

*"Thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build My Church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. And I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven." — Matthew 16:18-19*

The Roman Church makes the daring claim that in these words the Lord Jesus Christ Himself made *Peter* "the prince of the apostles," called *him* the "rock" upon which the Church would be built, and established *his* primacy as the "chair"-manship [*Cathedra Petri*] upon which the rest of the apostles would depend for their authority. Moreover, Rome extends the effect of its self-serving, creative exegesis [Bible interpretation] by insisting that *Peter*, whom it claims to have been the first bishop of Rome, continues to exercise sovereign power as the sole official representative and substitute of Christ on earth [*Vicarius Christi*] in *his successors*, namely, in the popes who followed him. But nothing could be further from the truth!

As an objective search of the Scriptures clearly shows, **Jesus Himself**, "*the Christ, the Son of the living God*" according to Peter's own rock-like confession (Matthew 16:16), is the one and only Head of His Church (Colossians 1:18; Ephesians 5:23); and neither the Savior in the Gospels nor Peter in his Epistles says anything to the contrary. In fact, Peter counts himself merely as "*also an elder*" with the rest who are called of God to the pastoral office to "*feed the flock of God*" in their respective localities (I Peter 5:1-2). As for Peter's apostolic colleague, St. Paul states in Ephesians 2:19ff. that the believers, the constituent members of Christ's Church, "*are built upon the foundation of the apostles [plural!] and prophets,*" upon the authority of the Holy Scriptures, penned by their writers by inspiration of God (II Timothy 3:16), "*Jesus Christ Himself being the chief corner stone;*" and Paul nowhere credits Peter with "*lordship*" or supremacy in the Church, nor with authority over Paul's own apostleship (Galatians 2:7-8), nor as the one who made the elders of the church at Ephesus "*overseers*" or bishops over their local flock (Acts 20:28), nor yet as having *any* supervisory rank or infallible personal judgment whatsoever in Christ's Church (Galatians 2:11ff.).

On the contrary, the so-called “primacy of Peter,” the supreme authority of the Bishop of Rome, and the system known as “the Papacy” is a cleverly devised hoax perpetrated upon outward Christendom to wrest the “*power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honor, and glory, and blessing*” (Revelation 5:12) from Christ and His Word (Mark 8:38) and to vest it in a political machine created by men, in a virtual dictatorship of the clergy, in a “Babylonian Captivity” of God’s people, headed up by that spiritual Nebuchadnezzar whom the Scriptures clearly identify as the very Antichrist (II Thessalonians 2), as we confess in the *Smalcald Articles* (Part II, Art. IV)!

The very concept of the “primacy” or supreme authority of *any* mere man over Christ’s Church on earth flies in the face of the Lord Jesus Himself, who debunked that heinous myth as being rooted in sinful pride and arrogance. In fact, when James and John desired for themselves the kind of “*lordship*” and “*authority*” over the other disciples that the Gentiles exercise over one another, He rebuked them, saying: “*So shall it not be among you*” (Mark 10:43). Moreover, on the very night of Jesus’ betrayal, the same fleshly “*strife*” arose among the disciples, “*which of them should be accounted the greatest;*” and the Savior’s answer was predictably the same (Luke 22:24-26a). If He had intended Peter to have the primacy among the disciples, He surely could have added: “*But after I am ascended into heaven, Peter will be your master in My place, and ye shall do him reverence and render him obedience as unto Me.*” But He did NOT say that! Instead He stated in crystal-clear terms, shortly before His great passion: “*One is your master, even Christ; and all ye are brethren*” (Matthew 23:8).

And yet, already in the early centuries of the Christian Church, the “*brethren,*” patterning their polity after that of the heathen round about them, in striking imitation of the Children of Israel in the days of Samuel (I Samuel 8:5-9) and in violation of the injunction of their Savior, developed a **hierarchical system** of “*lordship*” over one another. Thinking themselves to be wise and claiming as their justification for it the noble purpose of maintaining better doctrinal discipline and closer supervision of Christian practice in the congregations, they sacrificed the local church’s autonomy for what they considered to be a higher good. This system, patterned closely after the civil administration of towns, cities, and provinces, manifested itself *gradually* at first, as the

God-ordained Pastoral Office (designated by the Scriptural terms “elder,” “pastor,” “bishop,” etc.) was artificially fractured by arbitrary distinctions between “elders” and “bishops,” and as the rights of the local congregation were ceded to district administrators. Thus an ecclesiastical *hierarchy* or “power structure” was created that *today*, not only in the church of Rome, but even in much of outward Lutheranism, makes corporate pyramids in the cut-throat business world look like child’s play!

What factors contributed to the eventual primacy of the Bishop of Rome at the top of the Church’s hierarchical pyramid? They were many and varied, some seeming almost insignificant at first, stemming only from rumor and oral tradition; others were formalized theories and eventual declarations based, supposedly, upon passages of Holy Writ; and, as the glue that cemented all these factors together, was the *political pressure* created by the gradual decline of the *civic* Roman Empire and the vacuum of power that cried out to be filled by, as eventually occurred, an *ecclesiastical* empire in which the Bishop of Rome was its virtual emperor.

Ever since A. D. 100, the church in Rome was apparently the largest congregation in Christendom. Her reputation of faithfulness, of hospitality, and of generosity had been well known “*throughout the whole world*” (Romans 1:8) already at the time of St. Paul; and, when Nero in A. D. 64 set upon the Christians as scapegoats, blaming *them* for his burning of Rome and for all other “evils” that befell the empire, the Christians in Rome took the brunt of his persecutions. Peter is said to have been crucified by Nero that same year; and St. Paul, whose appeal to Caesar resulted in a protracted imprisonment there, was martyred about two years later. Shortly after A. D. 100 it was generally believed that Peter had lived and worked in Rome for some years before his martyrdom. Yet it is striking to note that St. Paul, who lived there under “house arrest” for about two years between A. D. 60 and 62, never mentioned having so much as seen Peter in Rome, nor did he, during his second imprisonment, refer to Peter at all, to any bishopric of Peter in Rome, nor to any specific influence of Peter upon the church in Rome. Nevertheless, by the middle of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Century (about A. D. 170), the tradition was widely accepted that Peter had been the first bishop of Rome.

In the 3<sup>rd</sup> Century, the bishop of Carthage in northern Africa, Cyprian (A. D. 195-258), advanced the idea or theory of *Cathedra Petri* [the chair of Peter], in which he stated that, while all bishops are of equal rank as the successors of the Apostles and chosen by the Lord Himself, yet apostolic authority was *first* bestowed upon Peter, who eventually established the church of Rome. Therefore, the Roman church is “the mother and root of the catholic [universal] church.” Moreover, he said, one can scarcely claim to be a member of the church “who deserts the *Cathedra Petri* on which the church has been founded.” Nevertheless, when the bishop of Rome attempted to put Cyprian’s theory into *practice* and to claim supremacy on the basis of it, Cyprian staunchly defended his right of *independence* from Rome. The eastern bishops likewise resisted pressure to recognize the bishop of Rome as having the highest authority, looking rather to the bishop or *patriarch* of Constantinople.

By the time of the *Council of Nicea* (A. D. 325), the hierarchical system had already become more “refined,” and its pyramid had become taller. The pastors or bishops of local congregations were already (as early as the late 2<sup>nd</sup> Century) under the supervision of “diocesan bishops,” who oversaw the congregations in their specific geographical area. And soon the power of the country bishops (bishops of rural communities and small towns) disappeared altogether. The *Council of Nicea* built the pyramid one tier higher by recognizing the office of “metropolitan.” These “archbishops” had gained power chiefly because of their location in large urban areas. Moreover, the council also designated as “*superior* metropolitans” the bishops of Rome, Antioch, and Alexandria, adding still another layer. Fifty years later, the *General Council of Constantinople* named its bishop a “patriarch;” and the *General Council of Chalcedon* (A. D. 451) gave the same title to the bishop of Jerusalem. Each major metropolitan center was attempting to secure its powerbase in the church at large.

In spite of this constant “jockeying” for supremacy, the church at Rome continued to enjoy particular prestige afforded by apostolic tradition and by the theory of *Cathedra Petri*. Leo the Great (A. D. 440-461) took the “theory” one step further and made his claim to papal primacy “official.” On the basis of Matthew 16:18-19 (above), John 21:15-17 (“*feed My lambs... sheep*”), and Luke 22:31-32 (“*strengthen thy brethren*”), Leo claimed that the Apostle Peter was the vicar of Jesus Christ

on earth. And, since the Bishop of Rome was the direct successor of Peter, Peter's primacy was passed down to *him* to be the supreme teacher, authority, and overseer of the church. Nevertheless, at the *General Council of Chalcedon* (A. D. 451), the patriarch of Constantinople was voted the "chief bishop" of the entire Christian church, in spite of the objections and protests of the Roman bishop. However, the fall of the Western Empire in A. D. 476 left a vacuum of political power in Rome; and the church, under the Roman bishop, took over where the civic empire had failed. The bishop of Rome now took over the power also of the state. But the "barbaric" nations proved to be a powerful match for the church and succeeded in limiting the pope to a position of mere "moral" authority — until the time of Gregory the Great (A. D. 590-604), who was a cunning administrator, a skillful diplomat, and a practical politician. Not only did he secure his position of temporal power, extending his influence into France, Spain, England, and Africa, and enforcing his rule by the use of military power, but he is "credited" with establishing the theology, liturgy, discipline, missionary zeal, and monasticism of the Medieval church — the church which, by Luther's time, had become so corrupt in doctrine and practice that he called Rome a virtual "Babylon" and the pope's stranglehold on outward Christendom a "Babylonian Captivity of the Church."

Thus the Papacy was spawned by the lust for "lordship" and "authority" of some over others in Christ's Church; conceived by a perversion of Holy Scripture that falsely portrayed Peter as preeminent among the apostles and the "rock" on whom Christ would build His Church; nurtured by a cunning theory that "Peter's chair" was the source of authority in the Church and the standard of what is to be taught, accepted, and believed; and brought to maturity by the use of intimidation, force, inquisition, and persecution. The Papacy *as a concept* was the "mystery of iniquity" that had already begun to work (II Thessalonians 2:7) at the time of the Apostle Paul, who saw its seed already sown in the fertile ground of the Apostolic Church, and who beheld by inspiration of God its vicious fruit ripening before "*the day of Christ,*" when "*that wicked shall be revealed, whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of His mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of His coming.*" How does the Apostle describe this Antichrist to us? "*That man of sin... , the son of perdition; ... 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... whose coming is after the working of Satan with all power and signs and lying wonders, and with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish; because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved"* (II Thessalonians 2:3-10). On the basis of Paul's description in its specific detail, which identifies, as with a thumb print, the Roman Papacy and no other personage or system in the annals of history, we confess with our sainted Lutheran fathers in the *Smalcald Articles* (Part II, Article IV, *Concordia Triglotta*, p. 474ff.): "This teaching shows forcefully 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, which, nevertheless, is nothing and is neither ordained nor commanded by God."

Given how the Pope leads precious souls to hell by teaching them to rely upon good works for favor with God; given how he curses the central doctrine of the Christian faith, namely, the doctrine of Justification by grace, for Christ's sake, through faith, without the deeds of the law; given how he opposes the truth of God's Word and rampantly teaches for doctrines the commandments of men; given that he *sits* on Peter's chair [*Cathedra Petri*] in the Vatican at Rome, in a *temple* of outward Christendom, in the *guise* of God Himself [*Vicarum Christi*]; given how the Papacy sustains itself by wielding both ecclesiastical and temporal power, claiming and demonstrating bogus miracles of all sorts to deceive the spiritually gullible; given how this wicked system deludes trusting souls into believing that outside of the Roman Church there is no salvation, so that they reject the true Gospel when it is brought to them — how can we NOT recognize the Roman Papacy as the very Antichrist?? This is not the time to deny the truth for the sake of "political correctness," "*for the sake of temporal peace, tranquility, and unity*" (*Formula of Concord, Thorough Declaration, XII, Concordia Triglotta*, p. 1095). This is the time to confess openly and unashamedly that the Roman Papacy IS the very Antichrist described by St. Paul in II Thessalonians 2, and to pray to our Lord Jesus, the Savior and only Head of His Church:

*The haughty spirits, Lord, restrain,  
who o'er Thy Church with might would reign  
and always set forth something new,  
devised to change Thy doctrine true!*

# Around the World

*with editorial comment*

*by M. L. Natterer*



On the south end of town, where land is still cheap and Baptist churches dominate the piney landscape, a small sign at the end of a dirt road is the only evidence that a growing Muslim community is quietly putting down roots here in Columbus, Georgia. Masjid, the sign read. Further down the road, in the middle of a 10-acre field, songs to Allah can be heard swelling from the open window of the city's first mosque. The day is Eid-Al-Adha, the annual spring festival of sacrifice that begins with morning prayer and will end at sunset with the slaughter of sheep on a farm 40 miles away. The mosque's opening this spring came on the heels of Ramadan, a holy observance of fasting and prayer. It culminates nearly a decade of raising money to buy the land and to renovate an abandoned two-bedroom house purchased from the city for \$1. "Everything comes in its own time. We have been blessed to have this," says Yaha Islam, sitting on a prayer rug in the bare, unadorned worship hall. Mr. Islam is a black welder, who converted 10 years ago and is one of the founders of the mosque. Since 1911, when the country's first mosque was built in Ross, N.D., the number of mosques or Islamic centers has grown to 675. Until now, however, Muslims of Columbus had no central worship place. With the nearest mosque more than 100 miles away in Atlanta, most have prayed out of their homes or in makeshift prayer rooms at nearby Fort Benning – training ground for scores of Middle East soldiers. The increasing visibility of this tight-knit Islamic community reflects the steady growth of Islam across the country. Conversion, migration and procreation have pushed its members to 2.2 million. Adherents to Islam now outnumber Episcopalians and are ex-

pected to surpass U.S. Jews by the year 2,000 says Yvonne Haddad, professor of Islamic Studies at the University of Massachusetts. (Religious News Service)

**Just think! The above article was written on September 11, 1989! Today there are approximately four million Mohammedans in the United States. More and more mosques and minarets are to be found throughout Europe and the United States. The teachings of Islam originated with Mohammad who allegedly received a number of visions from Allah through the angel Gabriel about 610 to 630 after Christ. Mohammad was an illiterate Arabian trader who entrusted the recording of these revelations to his aide, Zayd ibn-Thabit, who completed the official codification of the Koran in 657, twenty-five years after Mohammad's death. "The Five Pillars of Islam" are: 1) The Creed, "There is no God but Allah, and Mohammad is his prophet." 2) The Ritual Prayer upon rising, at noon, mid-afternoon, after sunset and before retiring. 3) Almsgiving two and one half per cent of all that a man possesses. 4) Fasting from sunrise to sunset during the month of Ramadan. 5) The Pilgrimage to Mecca, which is obligatory for every Muslim during his lifetime. Muslims believe that they can be saved by keeping these "Five Pillars," contrary to Rom. 3:28; Eph. 2:8,9. They reject the Scriptural teaching that Jesus is the only begotten Son of the Father, true God and true Man in one undivided Person, who suffered, died and rose again to atone for the sins of the world, and that only by believing in Him as our Savior do we have eternal life, John 3:36. The whole Islamic religion is based on a lie from the father of all lies, the devil, John 8:44.**

*REMEMBER IN PRAYER:* A few weeks ago our fellow Pastor and beloved Brother, Rev. Paul R. Bloedel, was diagnosed with cancer. Let us remember Pastor Bloedel, his family, and his congregation in our prayers. *"My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness."* II Cor. 12:9.