

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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“My soul,
wait thou
only upon
God.”

—Psalm 62:5



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"By Word is a lamp unto my feet and a light unto my path." Psalm 119:105

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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 Joys of Being a Faithful Christian Pastor

“I thank Christ Jesus our Lord, who hath enabled me, for that he counted me faithful, putting me into the ministry.”
I Timothy 1:12

What are some of the joys (Galatians 5:22) of being a faithful, Christian pastor?

1. He has the joy of having the completely truthful and perfectly reliable Word of God, that Word of truth which directs him in all of his office as pastor. The Christian pastor can rejoice in the confession to his heavenly Father, *“Thy Word is truth”* (John 17:17), and in the declaration of the apostle: *“All Scripture is given by inspiration of God”* (II Timothy 3:16). Real, genuine joy for the pastor comes from the conviction that the teachings from God’s Word will never deceive him in any way (Titus 1:2). They are and will ever remain *“profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness”* (II Timothy 3:16). Other people (even pastors), his own evil flesh, and the devil can lie to the pastor, attempt to raise doubts in his heart, and deceive him with their wicked ideas and their false teachings, but the Holy Scriptures can never and will never do such things to him (Matthew 24:4, 11, 24; Jeremiah 23:31; Psalm 119:104-105). The faithful pastor *“rejoiceth in the truth”* (I Corinthians 13:6), an evidence of his grateful love for Jesus, *“the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world”* (I John 2:2).
2. He has the joy of knowing that God put him into this office, even though he did not deserve it because of his own many shortcomings and imperfections. The Apostle Paul made this confession: *“I thank Christ Jesus our Lord, who hath enabled me, for that he counted me faithful, putting me into the ministry, who was before a blasphemer, and a persecutor, and injurious, but I obtained mercy, because I did it ignorantly in unbelief. And the grace of our Lord was exceeding abundant with faith and love which is in Christ Jesus. This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all accepta-*

tion, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am chief” (I Timothy 1:12-15).

3. He has the joy of having the office of teaching and preaching the Law of God and the Gospel of Christ as a servant of the Savior to his congregation. Following His resurrection, Jesus Himself declared that “*repentance and remission of sins should be preached in His name among all nations*” (Luke 24:47). Why is the proclamation of Law and Gospel by faithful pastors so necessary? The answer is that the Lord is “*not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance*” (II Peter 3:9). When the pastor, according to his call from the Holy Ghost through his congregation (Acts 20:28), regularly and faithfully proclaims the Word of God, reproofing, rebuking, exhorting “*with all longsuffering and doctrine*” (II Timothy 4:2), he can be certain that the promises of God concerning His Word will be carried out: “*It shall not return unto Me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it*” (Isaiah 55:11). So the pastor is only the sower, the planter, and the waterer of the living, powerful seed of God’s Word; God alone can give the increase of that seed in hearts and lives (I Corinthians 3:6-7; Hebrews 4:12; Romans 1:16-17; 10:14-17; Philipians 2:13; I Peter 1:3-5, 9, 23). This takes the pressure off of the pastor as far as the success, the outcome, and the “church growth” following his “*speak[ing] as the oracles of God*” (I Peter 4:11).
4. And what real joy there is for the pastor when he does see the fruit of God working through the preaching and teaching of His Word in hearts and lives, bringing about genuine regret and repentance, quickening a soul from spiritual death to spiritual life, replacing sadness, despair, and guilt with joy, Godly confidence, and peace in Christ Jesus, producing fruits of willing worship, great gratitude, and increased love for and submission to God’s Word. The Apostle John confessed: “*I have no greater joy than to hear that my children walk in truth*” (III John 4).
5. He has the joy of knowing that as he carries out his office of teaching and preaching God’s Word, he is not in this work alone; he has the solid, comforting promise from Jesus, his only Savior: “*Lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world*” (Matthew 28:20). This wonderful reassurance is spoken of by the apostle in his second letter to Timothy: “*At my first answer no man stood with me, but all men forsook me; I pray God that it may not be laid to*

their charge. Notwithstanding the Lord stood with me, and strengthened me, that by me the preaching might be fully known, and that all the Gentiles might hear, and I was delivered out of the mouth of the lion. And the Lord shall deliver me from every evil work, and will preserve me unto His heavenly kingdom; to whom be glory forever and ever. Amen” (4:16-18).

Since the pastoral office brings such joys, should we not have men anxiously waiting to get into our seminary? Do we not have talented men of all ages in our Conference who want these joys in their future work? And, furthermore, would they not want to serve a faithful, Christian congregation as its pastor, at the call of God’s Holy Spirit? First Timothy 4 conveys this message: *“This is a true saying, If a man desire the office of a bishop [pastor, spiritual overseer], he desireth a good work”* (v. 1). The on-going desire and longing to be a pastor is pleasing to God. To all the men in our fellowship who have God-given talents needed for pastoral work, remember the Lord’s challenge to Isaiah: *“Whom shall I send, and who will go for us?”* (Isaiah 6:8a). How did Isaiah answer the Lord? Without hesitation, he replied: *“Here am I; send me”* (6:8b).

In Matthew 9, Jesus said to His disciples: *“The harvest truly is plenteous, but the laborers are few. Pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that He will send forth laborers into His harvest”* (Matthew 9:37-38). The need for faithful pastors is still very great today. Let us, in our congregations and in our homes, pray fervently that the Lord Jesus would move capable men not only to have the longing to be pastors, but also, by His grace and mercy, to lead them to repeat the response of Isaiah: *“Here am I; send me.”* Such prayers for future, faithful, Christian pastors are not a waste of effort and time, for *“the effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much”* (James 5:16c). Let us repeatedly and boldly go to Jesus’ *“throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need”* (Hebrews 4:16), requesting that He especially fill the great need for faithful pastors who will joyfully serve in their office *“for the perfecting [equipping] of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ”* (Ephesians 4:11-12).

Let none hear you idly saying, “There is nothing I can do,”
while the souls of men are dying, and the Savior calls for you.
Take the task He gives you gladly; let His work your pleasure be.
Answer quickly when He calleth, “Here am I, send me, send me!” (TLH 496, 4)

—R. J. L.



How Does the Principle of *Sola Scriptura* Determine What Is Proper Bible Interpretation?

“No prophecy of the Scripture is of any private interpretation.”

II Peter 1:20

With Luther and all truly orthodox theologians, we, by God’s grace, “*hold fast the **form** of sound words*” (II Timothy 1:13) according to St. Paul’s injunction and insist on maintaining without accommodation or compromise, the “**FORMAL PRINCIPLE**” of the Lutheran Reformation: *SOLA SCRIPTURA* [SO-lah skrip-TOOR-ah]. Simply stated, this principle declares that **Holy SCRIPTURE ALONE is the only source and standard of Christian doctrine and practice** (Cf. *Formula of Concord*, Thorough Declaration, XI, 95, *Concordia Triglotta*, p. 1095; *Brief Statement*, ¶ 2). It was this **principle** upon which Martin Luther stood with God-wrought boldness and unflagging consistency, the principle that there is only **ONE** legitimate source of spiritual knowledge (*principium cognoscendi*), and that is God’s own, verbally-inspired revelation to man: **Holy Scripture**. This is, demonstrably and undeniably, **God’s** principle (not merely Luther’s), set forth in the plain and simple “*words which the Holy Ghost teacheth*” (I Corinthians 2:13), and is therefore not subject to human speculation, interpretation, compromise and exception as are “*the words which man’s wisdom teacheth.*”

This principle is *absolutely essential* to true doctrinal **theology** (*theós* = God; *lógos* = word) which **MUST** express and be based *solely* upon the **Word of God**. God Himself being the Author of His Word, the Scriptures of both the Old and New Testaments are predictably consistent in testifying of themselves that they are *identical with* the Word of God; and they testify not only of their *authority* (Ephesians 2:20; John 5:39; 8:31; Jeremiah 23:31; Matthew 15:9; etc.), but also of their *inerrancy* (John 8:32; 17:17; Psalm 119:140, 160; etc.); of their *integrity* (John 10:35b; Matthew 5:18; I Peter 1:25; etc.); of their *efficacy* (Romans

1:16; 10:17; I Thessalonians 2:13; Luke 16:29; etc.); of their *sufficiency* (II Timothy 3:16-17; Luke 16:31; II Peter 1:19; Galatians 1:8-9; etc.); and of their *clarity* (Psalm 19:7-8; 119:104, 105, 130; etc.). (Cf. also Graebner, A. L. *Outlines of Doctrinal Theology*, pp. 3-15.).

The **FORMAL PRINCIPLE**, including the recognition of the *attributes* of Holy Scripture outlined in the preceding paragraph, is the indispensable key to the fundamental rules of apprehension and interpretation of the Bible text. ***Biblical*** or ***Theological Hermeneutics*** is that branch of exegetical theology in which those principles and rules are set forth — rules according to which the *true sense* of Scripture may be discovered and according to which the Christian exegete (Bible interpreter) may give a *correct exposition* of the meaning which the Holy Spirit laid down in the words of Scripture (See: Ludwig Fuerbringer, *Theological Hermeneutics – An Outline for the Classroom*, St. Louis, 1924). Dr. Francis Pieper in his *Christian Dogmatics* states that we need exegetes who by God’s grace possess principally four qualities: 1) They know Scripture to be God’s own Word and treat it accordingly; 2) they have learned, from Scripture’s own testimony, that Scripture is clear; 3) they concentrate their efforts upon holding to bare Scripture (without interpretation); and 4) they uncover the deceit practiced when men propose, under the good name of exegesis, to shed light on Scripture by means of their human opinions (Pieper, *Christian Dogmatics*, Vol. I, p. 361). Moreover, with respect to *true* exegesis or Bible interpretation, Pieper rightly states:

All exegesis, whether it be in general the unfolding of the sense of Scripture or in particular the explanation of (or rather the attempt to explain) the more difficult passages of Scripture, is based on the fact that the entire Christian doctrine is revealed and set forth in Scripture passages so clear that the learned and unlearned alike can understand them; they do not stand in need of “exegesis” for explanation. If Scripture did not have this quality, it would not be for all Christians “a lamp unto their feet and a light unto their path” [Ps. 119:105], nor would all Christians be able to establish the truth of their faith by Scripture and in the light of Scripture to mark and to avoid false teachers. (Pieper, *op. cit.*, pp. 359-360.).

Thus, the ***analogy of faith***, the source and norm of doctrine, consists of the clear passages of Holy Writ which neither require (nor even

permit) interpretation, that is, exegesis in the sense of removing obscurities. They are the “seats of doctrine” [*sedes doctrinae*] that are clear and certain in and of themselves. And those clear passages are the rule according to which the faithful and diligent theologian is to interpret and explain the obscure and difficult passages. Thus “Scripture is its own light” (Luther); it interprets itself; and no exegesis is to be accepted which in any way conflicts with the clear passages of Holy Writ.

Rejecting this *formal principle* of the Reformation are, of course, all *sects*, that is, all heterodox churches within outward Christendom which to any extent consistently profess, teach, and practice contrary to the Word of God (Cf. *Brief Statement*, ¶ 29) and thus continue to “*cause divisions and offenses contrary to the doctrine which [we] have learned*” (Romans 16:17), as well as all non-Christian *cults* which deny and oppose the primary fundamental teachings of Scripture without which there is no salvation. For they either *deny outright* the authority of Holy Scripture as the only source and norm of doctrine and practice, **or** they *cunningly profess* the authority of Scripture as their “*sheep’s clothing*” (Matthew 7:15) to “*deceive the hearts of the simple*” (Romans 16:18), but, at the very same time, blatantly *supplement* it, *manipulate* it, and *pervert* it in such a way that it is not permitted to speak for and to interpret itself (*Scriptura Scripturam interpretatur*).

Since on October 31st we celebrate Luther’s monumental work of the Reformation, it is fitting that we first identify the **Church of Rome** as *officially* violating the *formal principle*; for it systematically *suppresses* the Word of God, the Holy Scriptures of the Apostles and Prophets, yea, the Word of Christ Himself, and substitutes for its authority “*the commandments of men*” (Matthew 15:9). While it declares that the Scriptures are “*a*” source of Christian doctrine—one of the “*traditions*” of “*Holy Mother Church*” among many others— it holds that the Scriptures, which are obscure, are the Word of God only *as interpreted by the Church* (Council of Trent, Session IV). Rome *also* includes as its authority the canons, decrees and traditions of “*Holy Mother Church*,” thus renouncing *sola Scriptura* and making the Pope both the source and standard of what is to be taught and believed. Thus we continue to state unequivocally with our orthodox fathers (*Smalcald Articles*, Part II, Art. IV, *Concordia Triglotta*, p. 474ff.) that the Roman Pope is the very Antichrist (II Thessalonians 2) who *continues* to reject Christ and His Word as the supreme authority in the Church.

Both the Calvinistic and Arminian **Reformed** bodies today *still* reflect the position of the Anabaptists and others of Luther's day in that they give lip service to the divine authority of Scripture but *pervert* its clear teachings by subjecting them to rationalistic manipulation. They force Scripture through the sieve of human reason, "penciling in" between the triple-spaced lines of Holy Writ what they would *like* God's Word to say, what they *imagine* God's Word to say, what they *determine* God's Word to "mean." In many cases, this subjective "spin" turns clear passages on their heads and represents them as teaching the very *opposite* of what they *state*. Not only do they thus deny, for example, the real presence of Christ's body and blood in the Lord's Supper according to the Savior's own words and those of the Apostle Paul, but they also reject Sacramental grace in Holy Baptism and steadfastly deny that "*Baptism doth also now save us*" (I Peter 3:21), and that it *washes away* and *remits* sins (Acts 22:16; 2:38). Calvinists still today hold themselves captive to human reason contrary to II Corinthians 10:5, denying universal grace (*gratia universalis*) in order to embrace salvation by grace alone (*sola gratia*). And the Arminians, *also* holding themselves captive to human reason, come to the **opposite** and synergistic conclusion, embracing universal grace but denying *sola gratia*. Thus *sola Scriptura* is denied in practice by BOTH of the Reformed camps, even though they claim it as their principle.

And while some hold out the hope that, as "heirs of the Reformation," the **Lutheran** bodies still hold fast to the *formal principle* of *SOLA SCRIPTURA*, the sad fact of the matter is that most so-called "Lutheran" church bodies subscribe to it only as a *general concept* or *axiom*, subject to a whole host of conditions and definitions, interpretations and applications. *Sola Scriptura* cannot mean much to "liberal" Lutherans (the majority of those who still lay claim to Luther's *name*, though hardly to his *doctrine*), when they openly deny the verbal inspiration, inerrancy, clarity, and real authority of the Bible; when they interpret Scripture according to "higher criticism" and treat it as a compilation of human writings; when they teach contrary to its clear words and speak of its injunctions as "the views" or the "personal opinions" of the holy writers; and when, on the basis of modernistic hermeneutics, they represent Scripture as being open to each one's personal opinion and subjective world-view.

One would think, on the other hand, that the so-called "confessional" or "conservative" Lutheran bodies were different. Indeed, they pay

plenty of lip-service to *sola Scriptura*; but we find more authority ascribed *in practice* to the decisions of synodical officials, boards and committees; more credence given to the views and pronouncements of seminary faculties and theological scholars; more weight ascribed to “the will of the majority” (perceived, polled, or balloted) than to the Word and will of God; and more effort (and money) expended in the pursuit of *political* influence and control than in doctrinal discipline and the preservation of spiritual unity. Witness the *will of the majority* accomplished in the Missouri Synod at its recent convention when it elected by a substantial margin the “liberal wing” to the highest offices of the synod. Its leaders persuaded the multitude to ask for “*Barabbas*” (Mark 15:7); and, despite clear and indisputable evidence that he and his cronies had made spiritual “*insurrection*” against God, had defied *sola Scriptura*, and had been guilty of unionism, syncretism, gross idolatry, and of the rule of political decisions over Scripture *sedes*, the delegates made him the titular head and chief executive officer of what still masquerades itself as a “conservative” Lutheran church-body!

How can there be pronounced differences in doctrine and practice among those who claim Scripture as their authority, yea, among those who claim Scripture as their *sole* authority?? Does the Holy Spirit of God speak “with forked tongue” so that He contradicts Himself now and then or becomes guilty of duplicity? Does He perhaps speak in such vague terms that what He “*means to say*” is not really clear or is not truly evident? Is “*the truth*” of God (John 8:32) something definite and concrete upon which we can and must depend, or does He leave it to fallible, sinful human beings to determine *for themselves* what “*the truth*” is? Was Pontius Pilate correct in his skeptical and blasphemous quip, insinuating that the Lord Jesus really didn’t know what He was talking about (John 18:38), and that “*the knowledge of the truth*” (I Timothy 2:4) is of little or no consequence?? If we answer “yes” to even ONE of these questions, we need not go on; for we are not the sheep of Jesus (John 10:27). Indeed, we would then be falling prey to the cunning question of Satan to Eve in the Garden of Eden: “*Yea, hath God said??*” From this preserve us, heavenly Father, for Jesus’ sake!

—D. T. M.



Martin's Lullay

Ein feste Burg ist unser Gott, ein gute Wehr und Waffen
 Er hilft uns frei aus aller Noth, die uns hat überfallen
 Von Sünd der Teufel viel beschuldigt, und Tödt uns gar verfallen
 O Propheten diese Sätze, so solt uns doch gelingen
 Der alte Böse Feindt mit unscht esicht merckt, ^{grobmächtig}
 Der Feindt der Feindt - was seine so sich selbt, ehnt er
 Und wolt list, sein grausam Anschlag, auf sich ist nicht sein Lob
 Und hochmüthig macht er sich groß, im Wollen kein in Selten

A mighty Fortress is our God, a trusty Shield and Weapon.
 He helps us free from every need that hath us now o'ertaken.
 The old evil Foe now means deadly woe.
 Deep guile and great might are his dread arms in fight!
 On earth is not his equal!

Though devils all the world should fill, all eager to devour us,
 we tremble not, we fear no ill; they shall not overpower us!
 This world's prince may still scowl fierce as he will.
 He can harm us none. He's judged; the deed is done!
 One little word can fell him!

TLH 262, 1, 3



A Reformation Prayer

*“God is our refuge and strength,
a very present help in trouble.”*

Psalm 46:1

O Lord of Hosts, we thank Thee for Thy loving-kindness to us and to our fathers, in that, through Thy servant, Martin Luther, Thou didst restore to Thy church on earth the precious truth of Thy Word and the pure doctrine of Thy saving grace in Christ Jesus. What shall we indeed render unto Thee for these Thy gracious benefits toward us? For, without the light of Thy precious Gospel, so long hidden under the Papacy, we would still be ignorant of Thy grace, languishing in spiritual darkness, and trembling in the shadow of eternal death. But, through Thy Word, Thou hast shined into our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ, our Savior; and for this undeserved, gracious favor, we are humbly and eternally grateful. Through the power of that same Word, dear heavenly Father, cause us, who are the heirs of that Reformation and Thine adopted children by faith in Christ Jesus, ever to value Thy Word in its purity as a lamp unto our feet and a light unto our path, the only sure foundation of our faith, and the only reliable standard of Christian practice. By Thy Holy Spirit, Keep us steadfast in Thy Word, so that the devil, the world, and our old sinful flesh do not deceive us nor seduce us into misbelief, despair, and other great shame and vice; and though we be assailed by them, grant us Thy grace finally to overcome and obtain the victory through our Champion on the battlefield of this world, Christ Jesus, the Lord of Hosts, our only mediator and advocate at Thy Throne. For His sake, forgive us all our trespasses, grant us a blessed end, and graciously take us from this vale of tears to Thyself in heaven. Amen..

—D. G. R.



For the information of our readers...

On September 12, 2004, **Faith Ev. Lutheran Church** of Stover, Missouri, formerly a member-congregation of the *Fellowship of Lutheran Congregations*, officially dissolved because of conditions and circumstances which they sadly recognized to have been beyond their control or ability significantly to change. Among these were complete lack of interest in the local community for the congregation and its stand on the Word of God alone in doctrine and in practice; the lack of candidates to fill the vacant pastoral office at Faith; the inability of the tiny congregation to support a pastor according to God's ordinance (Luke 10:7; I Corinthians 9:7-14); and the fact that, of the remaining members, none lived any longer in the community itself.

The brethren there resolved, however, to continue their endeavor to "keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace" (Ephesians 4:3) in the fellowship of the *Concordia Lutheran Conference*, and to that end to seek affiliation with other congregations of the Conference through whose ministry of Word and Sacrament they will be edified and strengthened in that priceless unity.

—The Rev. Robert J. Lietz, Conference President

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

Concordia Lutheran Conference

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

<http://www.concordialutheranconf.com>

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Coming Events

OFFICIAL ANNOUNCEMENT

This is to inform the congregations and fellowship of our *Concordia Lutheran Conference* that, contrary to the Word of God, which enjoins all Christians to try the spirits whether they are of God (I John 4:1) and to reject an heretic, that is, one who persistently teaches and practices contrary to Holy Writ (Titus 3:10), **Holy Scripture Evangelical Lutheran Church** of Windcrest, Texas, has left our Conference, preferring to follow the heterodox theology of its pastor rather than the pure doctrine of God's Word. This decision was communicated to your President in a letter from the congregation dated September 5, 2004.

It is our fervent prayer that this congregation, without long and dangerous delay, heed the instruction of the Lord through His Apostle Paul that it continue in the things which it has learned from His inerrant Word and, for their own souls' safety, reject the religious teacher who is presently leading them to forsake the doctrine that is according to Godliness (II Timothy 3:14; Titus 3:10; I Timothy 6:3).

—Robert J. Lietz, President

“They went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would no doubt have continued with us. But they went out, that they might be made manifest that they were not all of us.”

1 John 2:19



City of Ekaterinburg

ANNOUNCEMENT

The Committee on Missions is pleased to announce the anticipated visit of Pastor Roman G. Schurganoff from Ekaterinburg, Russia. He is scheduled to arrive at O'Hare International Airport in Chicago, Illinois, on Wednesday, October 20th; and his visit will extend until November 3rd. Brother Schurganoff's plans include a meeting with the Committee on Missions in Jackson, Michigan, on October 22nd, worship at Peace in Oak Forest on October 24th, and attendance at our **Fall Pastoral Conference**, the week of October 25-27 in Lebanon, Oregon, where he, God willing, will undergo an informal colloquy. There he is also looking forward to meeting all of our Conference pastors and many of our West Coast members. Following the conference, he will return to Illinois for a joint *Reformation Festival of Peace*, Trinity, and St. Mark's congregations at Oak Park on Sunday, October 31st, and is scheduled to leave for Russia on November 3rd. Please pray for his safe travel and for God's blessing upon our discussions, that the Holy Spirit continue to keep us in the bond of fellowship, perfectly united in His precious Word, for Jesus' sake.

The Rev. Ross A. Mahan, Chairman
Committee on Missions

*Spread, oh, spread, thou mighty Word,
spread the kingdom of the Lord,
wheresoe'er His breath hath given
life to beings meant for heaven.*

*Lord of Harvest, let there be
joy and strength to work for Thee,
till the nations, far and near,
see Thy Light and learn Thy fear!*

TCH 507, 1, 4



Obedience to the Pastor as Commanded by Scripture...

...contrasted with the
Obedience Required
by the Pope



Papal Seal

*“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.” —Hebrews 13:17*

When a pastor requires that the members of his congregation accept and follow the instruction that he gives them from the Word of God, he is sometimes accused of acting like a “pope.” But we see in the Scripture cited above that the Lord God Himself commands His people to “*obey*” and “*submit*” themselves to their pastors—those that have been given the “*rule,*” or leadership, over them in the church and are accountable to God for the souls placed under their watchful care. None of the pastors and none of the laymen in our fellowship should be “*ashamed*” (Luke 9:26) of this command of the Lord or resent it when it is properly applied. Following what this verse of Scripture teaches is *not* a mark of Roman Catholicism. On the contrary, allowing *every* teaching of the Bible to stand and to govern our faith and life is a mark of true Christianity as Luther rightly emphasized—stressing *sola Scriptura* (Scripture alone).

But how does the God-given “rule” of the pastor differ from the kind of rule that the Pope exerts over the church of Rome? In the first place, the Pope’s asserted rulership is of human origin—it is *not* given to him by God anywhere in the Scriptures. Secondly, the Pope exalts himself as the “vicar (substitute) of Christ on earth,” and, as such, claims to have ultimate rule and authority over all people (even in political affairs), and especially over all Christians in matters of religion. Thirdly, the

Pope claims the authority to render judgments concerning faith and morals in areas that are not addressed in the Scriptures at all. These decisions of the Pope—as the supposed vicar of Christ and successor of Peter—are regarded by faithful Catholics as the divinely inspired Word of God, and accordingly are believed to be infallible, binding upon all men, and of even greater authority than what is written in Holy Scripture itself (since it is a more recent revelation).

That the Roman Catholics make these assertions is confirmed by their own officially recognized and sanctioned historical documents. In the Council of Trent (1545–1563), those who occupy the office of pope are referred to as “the highest priests” and “Sovereign Pontiffs” possessing “supreme power delivered to them in the universal Church” (Session XIV, Chapter VII). Such terms cannot be found recorded in the Bible with reference to a pastor or *any mere man*, but can only rightly refer to our Lord Jesus Christ (Hebrews 7:26–27; Romans 9:5; I Timothy 6:15–16; Matthew 28:18; 23:8; Ephesians 1:20–23; etc.). When the Church of Rome uses such titles in extolling the Pope, it exposes this “sovereign pontiff” as “*that man of sin...the son of perdition; who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped: so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God*” (II Thessalonians 2:3–4), the very Antichrist.

The Roman Catholic Church teaches that when the Pope speaks from his throne concerning what true Christians should believe and how they should act, his words are to be accepted as the completely true and inerrant words of God Himself (*whether or not his words contradict the clear words of Holy Scripture*). In the fourth session of the First Vatican Council held on July 18, 1870, the following definition of papal infallibility was approved:

“We teach and define as a divinely revealed dogma that when the Roman pontiff speaks *ex cathedra*, that is, when, in the exercise of his office as shepherd and teacher of all Christians, in virtue of his supreme apostolic authority, he defines a doctrine concerning faith or morals to be held by the whole Church, he possesses, by the divine assistance promised to him in blessed Peter, that infallibility which the divine Redeemer willed His Church to enjoy in defining doctrine concerning faith or morals. Therefore, such definitions of the Roman pontiff are of themselves, and not by the consent of the church, irreformable. So then, should anyone, which God forbid, have the temerity to reject this definition of ours: let him be anathema [accursed]” (Chapter 4).

This decree of the Romanists is a complete reversal of what the Apostle Paul wrote in his letter to the Galatians, saying: “*Though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed*” (1:8). Taking heed to this inspired warning, no pastor or layman dare ever teach anything contrary to the Scriptures, or go beyond the instruction given in the Bible—representing the words and wisdom of men as if they were the teachings of God. “*Behold, I am against the prophets, saith the Lord, that use their tongues, and say, He saith*” (Jeremiah 23:31). “*In vain they do worship Me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men*” (Matthew 15:9).

Hebrews 13:17 states that the pastor is in the position of leading the congregation, which is to submit to his leadership and obey him. He is not a self-styled leader who assumes this office for himself. But the Holy Ghost has given him this authority as the “*overseer,*” or bishop, of all the members of his own flock (Acts 20:28); and he is accountable to the Lord for the spiritual welfare of each soul entrusted to his care. So then, what kind of obedience can the pastor rightly require of his members? According to I Thessalonians 5:12, the pastor is “*over*” the congregation “*in the Lord.*” In other words, *the pastor’s authority rests completely in the Word of the Lord.* This is why the Apostle Paul wrote to the young pastor Timothy: “*Preach the **Word**; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and **doctrine***” (II Timothy 4:2). The pastor is certainly *not* permitted to require his members to do anything that would transgress God’s Law (Acts 5:29), nor may he require obedience in matters not addressed in the Scriptures (I Timothy 4:1–7; Titus 1:14). If the “*ministers of God*” are to be found “*faithful*” (I Corinthians 4:1–2) in the work that the Lord has given them to do, then they need to “*speak [His] Word faithfully*” (Jeremiah 23:28) “*as the oracles of God*” (I Peter 4:11) and not “*handling the Word of God deceitfully*” (II Corinthians 4:2) by foisting upon the sacred text “*any private interpretation*” (II Peter 1:20) or by twisting the meaning of any passage of Scripture (II Peter 3:16).

In stark contrast to the absolute obedience required by the Pope, a pastor who leads his congregation “*well*” (I Timothy 5:17) is one who does not require obedience in anything that God has not commanded or forbidden in His Word. This is something that the pastor needs to keep in mind at all times, lest he ever demand obedience in a matter that is

strictly speaking an *adiaphoron* (something neither commanded nor forbidden by God). Furthermore, a pastor who is faithfully teaching the whole counsel of God's Word (Matthew 28:20; Acts 20:27) will not neglect to instruct his people only to follow him in what he teaches from the Bible—exhorting his flock to “*search the Scriptures*” (John 5:39) as the Christians at Berea did (Acts 17:10–11) and to “*grow*” in their faith and knowledge of the Bible (I Peter 2:2; II Peter 3:18) so that they be not like “*children, tossed to and fro, and 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). As the Apostle John writes: “*Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world*” (I John 4:1).

However, a pastor's instruction is not to be despised and his commands are not to be disobeyed when such instruction and commands are solidly founded on the teachings of the Bible—God's Word. The words of Jesus to His disciples when He sent them out to preach most certainly apply in the case of pastors who are preaching and teaching in full accord with the inspired revelation of Scripture: “*He that heareth you heareth Me; and he that despiseth you despiseth Me; and he that despiseth Me despiseth Him that sent Me*” (Luke 10:16). The pastor must not tolerate any objections to his Scriptural teaching, but must stop the mouths of any gainsayers that may arise (Titus 1:9–11) and “*shun profane and vain babblings: for they will increase unto more ungodliness. And their word will eat as doth a canker [gangrene]...who [the gainsayers] concerning the truth have erred... and overthrow the faith of some*” (II Timothy 2:16–18).

According to Hebrews 13:17, if the pastor's flock follows his leading in the true paths of God's Word, it makes his work a “*joy*” for him and the congregation reaps the spiritual benefits as described by Christ: “*If ye continue in My Word, then are ye My disciples indeed; and ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free*” (John 8:31–32). However, if the people do *not* submit to their pastor's God-given authority, but stubbornly oppose themselves against his Scriptural preaching and teaching, the result is a very sad situation both for the pastor and for his members. Such rebellion against the Lord and His messenger after the manner of Korah (Numbers 16) causes the pastor's labors to be done with “*grief*” (Greek: with “*groaning*”), and is also “*unprofitable*” for the souls of those who refuse to be led by him.

May our gracious Lord and Savior, “*the chief Shepherd*” (I Peter 5:4) “*and Bishop of [our] souls*” (I Peter 2:25), rest His tender hands of blessing upon all the congregations of our fellowship, so that our pastors never try to require obedience from their members in anything that goes beyond the bounds of Holy Scripture, and so that all the lambs and sheep under their care may always humbly follow the faithful leading of their own pastors. Amen.

—P. E. B.



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The Proper Biblical Relationship between Employers and Employees

*“Servants...with good will doing service as to the Lord and not to men;
...and ye masters, do the same things unto them.”* —Ephesians 6:5, 7, 9

As we consider the proper relationship between employers and employees from the Word of God, we begin in Genesis. There we discover that **man’s work is the ordinance of God**. Work was a positive and pleasant aspect of Adam’s daily life before the fall into sin but became also a labor fraught with sorrow and drudgery when afterwards God pronounced a curse upon the ground for Adam’s sake (Genesis 2:15; 3:17-19). The curse of sin was the hardship and frustration he would experience as he tilled the ground by the sweat of his face until the day he died. But God gave work to man also for his good and well being, labor being both a duty and a blessing from God. Our work is so important that, if a man refuses to work for a living, he places himself outside the Christian faith. When a man will not support his family, he *“hath denied the faith, and is worse than an infidel”* (I Timothy 5:8). Elsewhere we read the Holy Spirit’s judgment against able-bodied people who refuse to work: *“If any would not work, neither should he eat”* (II Thessalonians 3:10b). God commanded work for all of mankind, not only for the heathen but also for those who are the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus. Therefore, any religious viewpoint, doctrine, or practice that denies or minimizes man’s obligation to labor is false.

In some spheres of labor, God has placed workers into a position of subjection to their employers and overseers. We are to submit to those God has placed over us in this life, and in turn God requires those in authority to be just and honest with the people under their rule. But natural man, and even Christians at the prompting of their Old Adam, despise authority, chafe under the rule of human government, and resent their employers and anyone attempting to rule over their life (Romans 8:7; II Peter 2:10). Natural man, that is, the unconverted sinner, resents and even hates authority of any kind and must be compelled to obey and serve earthly superiors by the threats of the Law. On the other hand, believing sinners, who through the operation of the Spirit through the Means of Grace have been born again and quickened to a new life of faith in Jesus Christ, not only understand *God’s* authority in the earth and gladly submit to it according to the New Man within

them, but they also obey all *earthly* authorities as the fruit of their faith in Jesus (Romans 7:22). We must serve and obey our employer, as we would the Lord Himself, being faithful in our duties, serving cheerfully even if our supervisor is a difficult person, as the Apostle Peter writes: “*Servants, be subject to your masters with all fear; not only to the good and gentle, but also to the froward*” (I Peter 2:18; John 14:15).

Diligent and honest labor on the part of a true believer is a good work in the sight of God (Ephesians 4:28; Ecclesiastes 9:10). The true believer carries out his work with a proper sense of responsibility and diligence, as St. Paul reveals the Christian’s true motivation in everything: “*Ye are bought with a price; therefore glorify God in your body and in your spirit which are God’s*” (I Corinthians 6:20). This humble motivation will also help protect us from the vice of working merely to please men. In our work we are serving not merely our employer but the Lord Jesus Christ. “*Servants, obey in all things your masters according to the flesh; not with eye service, as men pleasers; but in singleness of heart, fearing God: And whatsoever ye do, do it heartily, as to the Lord, and not unto men; knowing that of the Lord ye shall receive the reward of the inheritance: for ye serve the Lord Christ*” (Colossians 3:22-24). The same Gospel motivation will help prevent laziness, shoddy workmanship, working only when the boss is watching, or doing just enough each day to keep our job and nothing more.

The employer-employee relationship, if it is to be God-pleasing, must be conducted according to His precepts. The relationship between them must operate with honesty (Romans 12:17) and with justice (James 5:4). God warns employers against stealing from their employees by withholding from them proper wages (Jeremiah 22:13). The Christian employer should always remember that he also has a master in heaven: “*Masters, give unto your servants that which is just and equal; knowing that ye also have a Master in heaven*” (Colossians 4:1). The employer should deal fairly with his workers, carefully fulfilling all agreements, contracts, and understandings with his employees, whether written down or given verbally (Ephesians 4:25), and avoiding whenever possible the use of threats and intimidation to secure their cooperation (Ephesians 6:9). Labor contracts alone cannot govern the relationship of employers to employees, particularly when that relationship exists between fellow-Christians and brethren; for their relationship, if proper according to God’s Word, is to shine before the world as evidence of faith in their Savior and a bold testimony to them that are without of the power of God’s grace in those who are His believing children (Matthew 5:16).

It is that relationship of both employer and employee to their God in Christ Jesus that provides the answer to the following common questions regarding what we call today “labor-management issues:” How can sinful man, who by nature is rebellious to authority, selfish, and unloving, manifest such godly qualities in the workplace? How can employees find meaning in their work? How can work be a source of personal fulfillment? And what will make employees want to give their employers hearty, willing, and happy performance each day? What can give an employer love for his employees? What can grant him the ability to recognize the distinctive gifts of each person and the strength to act toward him with honesty and integrity in all their mutual dealings? The answer is the power of the Gospel received by faith in Jesus Christ. In those who have been justified by God’s grace, for Christ’s sake, through faith, the Holy Spirit “*works...both to will and to do of His good pleasure*” (Philippians 2:13), plants the love of God in their hearts and, in turn, their love for Him who first loved them (I John 4:19) and a cheerful obedience to His Word (John 14:23). “*The love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us*” (Romans 5:5). This love of God in Christ Jesus motivates and enables us to love His Law, to love those who are over us in authority, and to love also those whom God has placed beneath us in His providence. May God grant each of us this manifest fruit of our faith, that, constrained by the love of our Savior (II Corinthians 5:14), our love toward others may continue to grow, that we in gratitude and reverence for our Savior do our work each day to the glory of God, and that we willingly serve our fellowmen, knowing that thereby we are serving our Lord Jesus Christ (Colossians 3:23-24).

—R. A. M.

“*Servants, be obedient to them that are your masters according to the flesh, with fear and trembling, in singleness of your heart, as unto Christ; not with eyeservice, as men-pleasers, but as the servants of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart; with good will doing service as to the Lord, and not to men; knowing that whatsoever good thing any man doeth, the same shall he receive of the Lord, whether he be bond or free. And, ye masters, do the same things unto them, forbearing threatenings, knowing that your Master also is in heaven; neither is there respect of persons with Him.*” —Ephesians 6:5-8

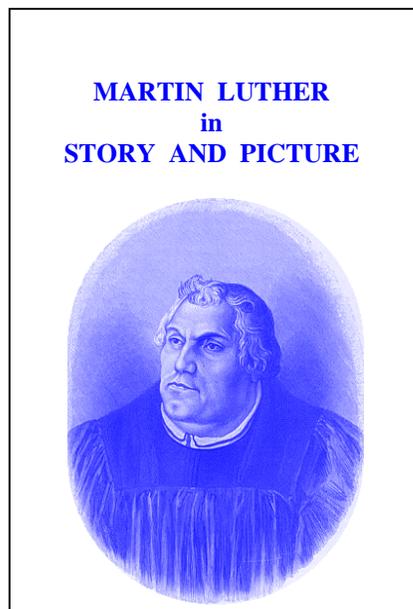
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