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“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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“O send out
Thy Light and
Thy Truth!”

— Psalm 43:3



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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.

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An Epiphany Lesson in Mission Work

“Behold the Lamb of God!... We have found the Messiah!...”
— John 1:35-51

The holy season of **Epiphany**, in which we Christians celebrate the *manifestation* or *appearing* of the Lord Jesus as the Savior of all mankind, is a specially-appropriate time to consider, to study, and to embark upon **mission work** for His cause. Tying **Christian mission work** to the Epiphany of our Lord is quite natural actually when we, with John’s disciples, “*behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of **the world***” (John 1:29), when we see Him already as a young child manifesting Himself to the Wise Men from the East, to Gentiles who were “*aliens from the commonwealth of Israel and strangers from the covenants of promise*” (Ephesians 2:12); when we see Him appearing to men at His Baptism, manifested as the Vicarious Redeemer of sinful men, **true God** as well as **true man**; when we observe His recruitment of twelve chosen disciples whom He would later send forth “*into **all the world***” to witness in His Name; and when we hear Jesus say to Peter after that miraculous draft of fishes: “*Fear not! From henceforth thou shalt catch **men!***” (Luke 5:10b). —These and many other incidents in the early public ministry of our Savior point out the **need** for **Christian mission work**, the need for those who already **know** their Savior to **share their knowledge** with those who have never heard of Him, that He may be made “*manifest*” to “*all people;*” for “*God will have **all men** to be saved and to come unto the knowledge of the truth*” (I Timothy 2:4).

To many, however, the term “mission work” conjures up visions of strange far away places, of pagan tribes of uncivilized people, of having to learn and speak foreign languages, and of the need to be a good talker, debater, and preacher. To their way of thinking, those who don’t have the gifts for these kinds of activities aren’t really “qualified” to be **missionaries** and can participate in **mission work** only through their offerings and “moral support.” —But nothing could be further from the truth! Every Christian **is** (or certainly **ought to be**) a **missionary** for his Savior. For, in the true sense of the term, a “missionary” is simply one who is “sent out” to do a job, in this case, to get the word out about Jesus, the Savior. That’s our job as individual Christians, as His true dis-

ciples, to whom He says: “Go **YE** into all the world and preach the Gospel to every creature!” “Go **YE**... and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them... [and] teaching them!”

If we shrink from that task; if we don’t think we’re qualified; if we hesitate making the necessary commitment; **or** if we’re among those who are content to let others take the *risks* as well as the *heat*, oh, then we should learn an Epiphany lesson in mission work from the narrative in the first chapter of John’s Gospel. For we see in the recruitment of Jesus’ own disciples a kind of microcosm or reduced-scale model of how we Christians are to recruit prospects for His Kingdom of Grace here in this world. The lesson teaches us **two basic principles** about mission work: First, that **we** bring others to Jesus by our *TESTIMONY* of Him; but secondly, that **Jesus** makes them His disciples through *HIS WORD*.

My dear fellow missionaries, our **testimony** doesn’t have to be *extensive* in order to be *effective*. A few well-chosen words will do nicely if they come from the heart! Our **testimony** doesn’t have to be “flowery” to be attractive —sometimes the simpler the better! **BUT** our **testimony** DOES have to meet one criterion or standard: It has to be the TRUTH, grounded in God’s own precious Word. Otherwise we lead others **astray, away** from Jesus to some other savior!!

Let’s look briefly at the examples in our title-text, John 1:35ff. First, there’s **John the Baptist**, the gifted preacher who came “*in the spirit and power of Elias*” (Luke 1:17) as the Lord’s hand-picked messenger to prepare the way before God’s Messiah (Malachi 3:1). Yet, his longer, more extensive sermons were no more effective than his simple statement to the two disciples standing with him, watching Jesus “*as He walked*”: “*Behold the Lamb of God!*” (John 1:36). Those five words spelled out the boiled-down truth that Jesus was to be the all-atoning Sacrifice for the sins of the world, the Substitute for sinners, whose holy precious blood would appease God’s just wrath and purchase our redemption! Five little words of **Gospel truth** pointed to the Savior! —And their **effect**?? We read: “*And the two disciples heard him speak, and they followed Jesus*” (v. 37). Their curiosity was piqued by these good tidings of great joy; and, like the shepherds of Bethlehem, they went to “*see this thing which [had] come to pass*” (Luke 2:15) led by the invitation of the simplest Gospel brought to them by the Christmas angel!

Take the second example in our title-text, namely, that of **Andrew of**

Bethsaida in Galilee. He was one of those two disciples of John who had then “*followed Jesus*” and had *spent the day with Him*, learning firsthand who He was and why He had come into this world of sin. “*He first findeth his own brother Simon, and saith unto him, ‘We have found the **Messias**,’ which is, being interpreted, **the Christ**” (v. 41). John’s simple testimony had pointed Andrew to **Jesus**. And what he learned at the feet of Jesus had so filled him with **joy** and **hope** and **zeal**, that he couldn’t keep it for himself!! — just the way **we** as Christians should feel about having Jesus as **our** Savior, bubbling over with excitement, and itching to tell someone else about Him, so that another poor sinner can share our joy!!*

Andrew didn’t go on a door-to-door canvass of the neighborhood, doing mission work on a grand and organized scale; but he merely sought out “*his own brother Simon*,” someone who hadn’t yet heard this great news; and again, in five simple words **testified** of this new-found knowledge of His Savior, saying: “*We have found the **Messias!**” — “**AND he brought him to Jesus**” (v. 42). He went one step **further**: He not only **taught** him; he **brought** him! —something that you and I are quite capable of doing with **our** mission targets: **BRING** them to Jesus! **Bring** them to *hear* the Word of God, “*which is able to save [their] souls!*” (James 1:21b; cf. Romans 10:17).*

And the third example we find in **Philip**, also of Bethsaida in Galilee. **JESUS** had found **him**; and, not content to keep Jesus for himself alone, “*Philip findeth Nathanael and saith unto him, ‘We have found Him of whom Moses in the Law, and the prophets, did write: Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph!’”* (v. 45). And, when Nathanael at first took the whole thing rather lightly and even joked about how surprising it was that **anything good could come out of that town** (v. 46a), was Philip “turned off” and discouraged? Did he give up on Nathanael as a “lost cause” and write him off as a “typical worldly blasphemer”?? No indeed! Instead, he **challenged** Nathanael to “*come and see*” (v. 46b). He **invited** him to see for himself the **evidence** that this Jesus was truly the promised Messiah prophesied by Moses and the prophets —even if His home town was was Nazareth. —You and I can do **the same, can’t we??** We can **invite** our skeptical friends and neighbors to “*come and see*” what the Scriptures, “*Moses and the prophets*,” have to say! We can **bring** them to Jesus! We can bring them to hear **His Word** proclaimed and taught by His ambassador from the pulpits of our congregations, so that they too can **see** “*the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ!*” (II Corinthians 4:6).

Given what we know, given what we have seen, given the **truth** we hear each and every Sunday preached and taught in its purity (as **no where else** to the best of our knowledge), given our advantages as Scripturally **informed** Christians, CAN we, DARE we just **keep** all that for **ourselves**?? CAN we, DARE we just **keep quiet** about it and **not share it** with dying souls starving for the knowledge of salvation?? —Do you, dear reader, have a friend or a relative who doesn't know the true way to heaven?? **TELL** him! Better yet, **BRING** him! There are probably plenty of empty seats in your church where he can sit at the feet of Jesus and hear His precious Word! Don't just give him the address of your church; give him a **ride**! Challenge him: "Come and **see**! Come and **hear**! Come and **learn**!" —These are short, small, and simple words of which **we all** are quite capable! We bring **ourselves**, don't we? Why not bring **him too**? —Don't be put off by some "cute" little comment designed to discourage your effort! **CHALLENGE** him: "***Come and see*** what great things God hath done for **ME!**" **That's mission work!** **That's** Christian testimony! **That's** confessing Christ before men! And **that's** the least you and I can do, for whom our Savior did **EVERYTHING** to effect our reconciliation with God!

But now, and fortunately for our own peace of mind, our title-text shows us that we don't have to be concerned or worried about the **results** of our mission work. The fact is that **WE** don't **convert anybody!** **WE** don't **convince anybody!** **WE** can't **create faith** in the heart of anybody! All **we** can do is **TELL** people, **BRING** people, and **CHALLENGE** people to "*come and see.*" Our **testimony** — in **word** and also in **deed** as we "*let [our] light shine before men*" (Matthew 5:16) — is our **mission tool**, testimony of the truth of God's own Word to **His** glory!

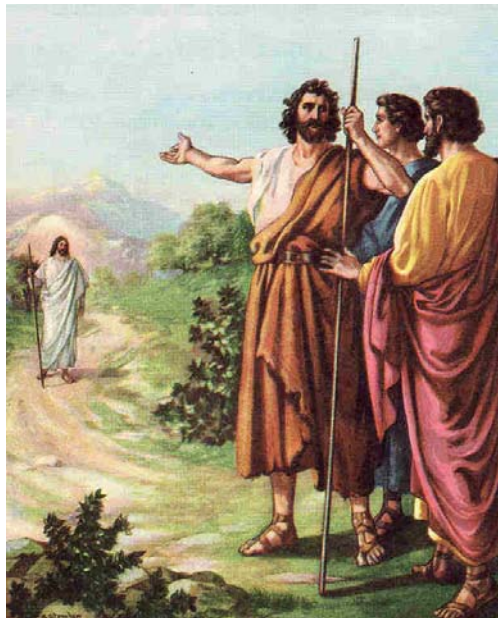
But it's **JESUS** who **makes** people His disciples, who **works in them** by His Holy Spirit through the Gospel "*both to will and to do of His good pleasure*" (Philippians 2:13). That's **God's** work, not ours! We see it plainly in John's narrative. When Andrew and his fellow disciple *followed Jesus home* and stayed with Him *the whole day* to learn at the feet of this heaven-sent "*Rabbi,*" it was **JESUS** who brought them *to the knowledge of the truth* (I Timothy 2:4), whose Word did not *return unto Him void* (Isaiah 55:11).

And when Andrew brought his brother Simon to Jesus, it was the **LORD JESUS** who saw through Simon, referred to *his father Jona* (whom Jesus had never met), and changed his surname to "*Cephas*" or *Peter* because of the "*stone*"-solid faith He would create in his heart (v.

42). It was Peter's contact with **JESUS**, not with Andrew, that **made him** the Savior's disciple!

And, in the case of Nathanael, it was not Philip's challenge, "*Come and see,*" that convinced him. It was **JESUS HIMSELF** who demonstrated His omniscience concerning Nathanael's earlier whereabouts "*under the fig tree*" (v. 48) that persuaded him! It was that miracle of the **LORD JESUS** that completely drove out Nathanael's skepticism and caused him to confess: "*Rabbi, Thou art the Son of God; Thou art the King of Israel!*" (v. 49). — And it was **JESUS** who informed Nathanael about the "*greater things than these*" which he would witness as the Savior's apostle, including His **glory** as the Mediator between God and men, typified by Jacob's ladder in the Old Testament! "*And He saith unto him, 'Verily, verily I say unto you, hereafter ye shall see heaven open, and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of Man'*" (v. 51).

John the Baptist pointed two disciples to Jesus with **only five words**. — Andrew pointed his brother Simon to Jesus with **only five words**,



AND "*he **brought him** to Jesus.*" — Philip was able to say a **little more** in *his* testimony to Nathanael, and he **challenged him** to "*come and see.*"

That's **mission work**, brethren! That's mission work that **you and I** can do equally as well by the grace and with the help of God! It's our **job!** It's our **mission not-at-all-impossible!** What's more, it's our great **privilege** as Christians to **share** with **others** what others once shared with **us**. Indeed, our hearts should be so overflowing with gratitude for our salvation (Ephesians 2:8-9), for the truth that made us free (John 8:32), for the purity of the Word by which we are kept through faith unto the Day of Jesus Christ (I Peter 1:5), that we should **shout out** with the apostles: "*We cannot **but speak** the things which we have seen and heard!*" (Acts 4:20).

But then, dear reader, don't forget also to put your **actions** where your mouth is, and your **efforts** where your heart is, letting the **Lord Jesus**, your blessed Savior, grant the increase according to His promise! The **fruit** of your labors is not up to **you**, as the Apostle Paul wrote to the Corinthians concerning his own ministrations: "*I have planted, Apollos [my co-worker] watered, but **GOD** gave the **increase**.*" (I Corinthians 3:6). Nevertheless, as to your **efforts** and your **motives** as laborers in the vineyard of the Savior, **challenge yourself** according to the Epiphany lesson on mission work you learned from this precious passage of God's Word, and ask **your** heart

*"Can **I**, whose soul is lighted with wisdom from on high,
can **I** to men benighted the Lamp of Life **deny**??
To spread the news of Jesus, that joyful task I'll claim,
til every friend and neighbor has learned his Savior's Name!*

(TLH 495, 3 adapted)

*"He paid for **my** transgressions and took away **my** guilt;
the fact of God's forgiveness, on that **my** hope is built!
But others haven't heard it, the news that joys my heart.
To share with **them** this Gospel: It's time to do **my** part!"*

— **D. T. M.**



Interim Report of the Committee on Missions

Our one and only Savior gives us, His dear followers, this ever-timely instruction: “*Love one another as I have loved you*” (John 13:34b). We need this verse’s reminder from God’s Law, but we especially need this verse’s never-changing motivation from the Gospel of Jesus’ sacrifice for us (Galatians 2:20d). This Gospel-produced love moves the children of God to take to heart and to act upon the words of Galatians 5, verse 13: “*Brethren, ye have been called unto liberty; only use not liberty for an occasion to the flesh, but by love serve one another.*”

In this report, we will give you an update on the loving service, by God’s grace (I Corinthians 15:10; Ephesians 2:10), given to and received by our brethren in Ekaterinburg, Russia, in various locations in Nigeria, and in Sauk Village, Illinois.

RUSSIA

Our Conference’s June 2010 Convention provided Pastor Schurganoff with a special gift of \$500.00 to purchase a new computer. (His old one had “died” on him.) On September 29, he reported: “About 10 days ago I bought a new, inexpensive computer (\$640.00). Unfortunately, I could not find a computer more cheaply than this price. These days I established a software necessary for me and internet connection, and also I continue to try to restore some important files and documents for church work which I have remained on an old computer.”

Last summer Mr. Alex Popoff, a member of St. John’s, Lebanon, Oregon, who is fluent in both English and Russian, completed the translation into Russian of our Conference tract, *The Scriptural Principles of Christian Giving*. His translation was then sent to Brother Schurganoff for proofing, for printing, and for distribution to the members of our Russian sister congregation and any other interested persons. Furthermore, Mr. Popoff has translated one of Pastor Schurganoff’s recent sermons from Russian into English. We are most grateful to Brother Popoff for his translation work, which he is so happy to do for the Lord’s work in human hearts through His Word of truth and grace in the language of the people.

In a September e-mail, Brother Schurganoff relayed this message: “Concerning my health, I can inform you that I feel little bit better now. Thanks for your prays [prayers]. At least I have forces [energy] to continue church work.” Last November he gave us this update: “My health is much better now. The truth [is] I have still the common weakness and some complexities with physical activity. I continue recommended treatment. My wife and son have good health now.” In his most recent e-mail, dated February 17, he said: “Excuse me for my delay with the answer to you. Last two weeks I had a problem with my health again.” He gave no detail on what the “problem” was with his “health.”

About one year ago, a copy of the *Rosetta Stone* Learning English course was purchased and sent to Pastor Schurganoff. It is a highly rated course which, in an interactive manner, teaches the student how to speak, understand, read, and write a foreign language. Pastor Schurganoff reports that, as of the end of January, he is on Level I, Unit 4, Lesson 1. This is a computer-based program, which will not allow the student to go forward until the previous lessons have been mastered by him. In his monthly reports to us, Pastor Schurganoff includes his progress with the *Rosetta Stone* course.

We have informed Pastor Schurganoff and his congregation that the amount of financial subsidy that the Conference will send them in the 2011-2012 fiscal year may have to be adjusted, depending on the congregational 2011-2012 pledges of support for our Conference’s General Fund. As we consider their monetary needs, let us continue to “*come boldly to the throne of grace*” (Hebrews 4:16a) on behalf of our Russian brethren, not only for the motivation to help them tangibly, but especially that they may continue to “*grow in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ*” (II Peter 3:18a).

NIGERIA

One of the actions by our Conference’s 2010 Annual Convention was to provide funding to help cover the urgent needs of the seven pastors in Nigeria. In the meantime, one of the seven, Pastor Kaladokubo, who is 64 years old and the pastor of the Elem-Sangama congregation, became very sick. On September 9, Pastor Fyneface wrote the following: “Rev. Kaladokubo’s illness is getting complicated. Half of the amount sent to us was voluntarily given to settle some of his medicals, as his case was worst than any of us. Please remember him and his family in your

prayers. ...His sickness has worsened and the doctor said his chance for survival is slim.” This example of sharing with someone in greater need was wonderful to behold and was an application of Galatians 6, verse 10: “*As we have therefore opportunity, let us do good unto all men, especially unto them who are of the household of faith.*” On November 8, we received this health update: “Brother Kaladokubo’s health is improving. His new doctor’s prescription is helping him a lot. He needs to take the recommended food, vegetables, and fruits.” However, on January 10, we received this message: “Brother Kaladokubo’s health is not stable. He is still receiving treatment.” May our merciful and compassionate God (Lamentations 3:22-23), if it be His gracious and good will, preserve Pastor Kaladokubo’s life and restore him at length to health and strength so that he can continue to serve his congregation as the Savior’s faithful steward (I Corinthians 4:1).

Earlier this year we sent to our Nigerian brethren four boxes of printed materials for all the congregations. Two of the boxes, with 24 copies of the *Small Catechism*, 100 copies of *A Sketch of the Doctrinal Position of the Concordia Lutheran Conference*, and other materials, were sent about six weeks ago and did arrive safely in Nigeria. However, the other two boxes with 24 Bibles, recent copies of *The Concordia Lutheran*, plus some other items, did not arrive in Nigeria until February 28!

What about Pastor Fyneface’s health issues? There is still no final answer as to whether surgery should be carried out to correct one of them. In early January, he wrote that he had not seen his doctor since November because a payment is required even for a mere consultation or check-up. It is quite obvious that the poverty of our brethren abroad directly affects things that we here often take for granted. We pray Almighty God, with whom “*all things are possible*” (Matthew 19:26b), that, if it be His will, He grant relief and recovery to Brother Fyneface in His best time and way, and work even this condition for his “*good*” according to His promise (Romans 8:28); for “*whom the Lord loveth He chasteneth*” (Hebrews 12:6a).

Recently, it came to our attention that Pastor Fyneface and his family were in great need of financial assistance. This particular need was conveyed to our Conference congregations; and they, moved by the Gospel of God’s rich mercy toward them in and through Christ, responded generously to the appeal to help these dear brethren. We should, of course, stand ready to help to the best of our ability also others of our Nigerian brethren when we hear of their needs (I John

3:17), always motivated by the love of Him who first loved us (I John 4:19). *“Hereby perceive we the love of God, because He laid down His life for us”* (I John 3:16a). *“As we have therefore opportunity, let us do good unto all men, especially unto them who are of the household of faith”* (Galatians 6:10).

Let us also, concerning all of our sister congregations in Nigeria, continue to *“come boldly to the throne of grace”* (Hebrews 4:16a), crying out to our gracious God that He would strengthen and help them according to His merciful will (Matthew 6:10b; Isaiah 41:10 and 13), ever reminding them of His sure promise: *“I will never leave thee nor forsake thee”* (Hebrews 13:5c).

SAUK VILLAGE

At our Conference’s 59th Annual Convention last summer, St. Mark’s, Sauk Village, for the first time, requested a monthly subsidy to assist the congregation in defraying its financial needs. Though a considerable amount and a significant addition to the annual budget, this subsidy was granted by the convention delegates. During the intervening months, Pastor Bloedel has continued faithfully to serve his congregation, teaching and preaching God’s Word to his dear people as their God-given shepherd (Acts 20:28). The congregation has, for 2011-2012, appealed for subsidy once again, though the monthly amount requested has been lowered somewhat. However, the congregation, like our sister congregation in Russia, has been informed that their request may still need to be adjusted, depending on the 2011-2012 pledges of the other congregations for the General Fund of our Conference.

Let us also, in regard to our dear brethren at St. Mark’s, continue to *“come boldly to the throne of grace”* (Hebrews 4:16a), beseeching our compassionate God to keep them *“faithful unto death”* (Revelation 2:10d), ever guiding and directing the future of this congregation according to His good and gracious will in Christ Jesus, *“[who] is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think”* (Ephesians 3:20).

—R. J. L.

Christian Survival:

How to Live With an Unbelieving Husband

“Likewise, ye wives, be in subjection to your own husbands; that, if any obey not the Word, they also may without the word be won by the conversation of the wives” — I Peter 3:1

In the early church, many married women were converted to faith in Christ Jesus; but their husbands often remained unconverted. It was not that the Christian women *entered into* marriages with unbelievers, thus putting their own faith in jeopardy by establishing an “*unequal yoke*” which Scripture forbids (II Corinthians 6:14); but they were already IN the matrimonial estate with unbelieving husbands when they, by means of the Gospel, were brought to faith. Holy Scripture provides counsel to Christian women who find themselves in this situation. May our gracious God enlighten our hearts and minds by His clear Word and empower us by the Gospel to obey His injunctions as we learn how such Christian wives should live with unbelieving husbands.

Religious Differences No Cause for Divorce: I Corinthians 7

God instituted Holy Marriage in the beginning to be a lifelong union of one man and one woman unto one flesh (Genesis 2:24; I Corinthians 7:39; cf. *Catechism* Q/A 61); and God Himself dissolves the marriage bond through death (Romans 7:2). Scripture emphatically teaches that fornication is the only legitimate cause for an innocent party to procure a divorce (Matthew 19:3-9). The only other way an innocent party is loosed from the marriage bond is when he or she is maliciously deserted by the spouse (I Corinthians 7:15), that is, by the persistent refusal of the spouse to live in holy wedlock. In this case the innocent party suffers a divorce because the unfaithful party has already broken the marriage; and a civil divorce merely recognizes that “*a brother or a sister is not under bondage in such cases.*”

Given these facts, a believer is required to live with an unbelieving spouse and may not leave or terminate the marriage because of a difference in religion. This principle is stated by the Apostle Paul in no un-

certain terms: *“And unto the married I command, yet not I, but the Lord: Let not the wife depart from her husband; but and if she depart, let her remain unmarried, or be reconciled to her husband; and let not the husband put away his wife. But to the rest speak I, not the Lord: If any brother hath a wife that believeth not, and she be pleased to dwell with him, let him not put her away. And the woman which hath an husband that believeth not, and if he be pleased to dwell with her, let her not leave him. For the unbelieving husband is sanctified by the wife, and the unbelieving wife is sanctified by the husband; else were your children unclean; but now are they holy. But if the unbelieving depart, let him depart. A brother or a sister is not under bondage in such cases; but God hath called us to peace. For what knowest thou, O wife, whether thou shalt save thy husband? Or how knowest thou, O man, whether thou shalt save thy wife?”* (I Corinthians 7:10-16). The apostle first states what the Lord Jesus expressly taught in His earthly ministry (I Corinthians 7:10-11; Matthew 19:3ff), and then speaks to a circumstance which the Lord did not directly address, namely, a so-called “mixed marriage.” On this subject God’s will is manifest: A believer has no right to break up a marriage to an unbeliever when the unbelieving wishes to remain and continue the marriage (I Corinthians 7:12-13); in other words, difference of religion is no cause for divorce.

Paul also gives the reason the believer should and must remain married to the unbeliever: For the sake of the unbelieving partner and their children. Both the unbelieving spouse and the children receive a peculiar blessing for the sake of the Godly wife or husband. Certainly the believer offers a special opportunity for the rest of the family to hear God’s Word and also to enjoy the temporal blessings God gives His children. In other words, the believing spouse should realize that God can and will use him or her to bless the entire family and should be willing to suffer whatever is needed and required in order to keep the marriage bond intact.

Now if the situation changes, and the unbelieving spouse maliciously deserts the believing spouse, then the Christian is free from the marriage bond (I Corinthians 7:15). But until such a situation arises, there remains the distinct possibility that the Christian may lead the unbeliever to Christ, to saving Christian faith. After all, a Christian according to his New Man has the same desire as the Lord that all men be saved (Ezekiel 33:11; I Timothy 2:4; II Peter 3:9), and should especially desire the salvation of one so close as his or her spouse (I Corinthians 7:16).

How, then, does one go about winning the unbelieving spouse? This we shall learn in our next section.

How to Win an Unbelieving Spouse for Christ: I Peter 3

The Apostle Peter has the definitive word on the problem of living with an unbelieving spouse. The major portion of his counsel deals with how to live with an unbelieving *husband*, so as to win him over to faith in Christ. He discusses the wife's duties to husbands in I Peter 3.

After discussing the duties of servants he turns to the duties of wives with these words: "*Likewise, ye wives, be in subjection to your own husbands; that, if any obey not the Word, they also may without the word be won by the conversation of the wives, while they behold your chaste conversation coupled with fear*" (I Peter 3:1-2). For the purpose of stressing the present tense of the verbs, and clarifying the use of the noun used, let us note a literal translation of the Greek: "Likewise, wives (be) continuing in subjection to your own husbands in order that, even if some are disobedient to the Word, by means of the conduct (behavior) of the wives without a word may be gained (won), having looked upon your pure conduct (behavior) in fear."

Christian wives are called to live in submission to their own husbands, regardless of whether the husbands are or are not believers. This is their Christian duty, ever to be living in submission to the will of their husbands and in obedience to their just authority. For this is the united testimony of Holy Writ regarding the proper station and relation of wives toward their own husbands (cf. Ephesians 5:22; Colossians 3:18).

With a purpose clause, Peter tells Christian wives that they should live in subjection in order to win their unbelieving husbands to Christ. Those that remain unpersuaded by the Word of God ("*disobedient,*" cf. Ephesians 2:2), may be won without a word from their wives. How? By being shown the unmistakable fruit of that Word in the conduct and behavior of their wives. Wives, concentrate on the witness of your lives in your efforts to win your husbands for Christ! Remember that an effective way of demonstrating the power of God's Word in your life is your own Christian conduct —your deeds will speak louder than your words! Practice what you have been preaching! For you need to give your husbands evidence of how much you value God's Word: Objective, concrete, irrefutable evidence; evidence that will move his stubborn heart to reconsider his position over against Christ. Too often

wives hope to get their husbands to come to church by wearing them down with constant nagging and pleading. Instead this often has the *opposite* effect of driving the spouse further away as he hardens his heart still further. Rather than nagging her husband and attempting to force, coerce or shame him into church, let the wife win him over by her Godly life of submission: Be a wonderful wife! That is a witness no husband should shun or ignore. After your life has laid the foundation and groundwork, then your words will carry a greater weight; for they stand as testimony confirmed by objective evidence. The behavior of the wife at home is the key witness to husbands who obey not the Word of God.

What type of life should the wife display? A Godly life of purity and reverence, “...*chaste conversation coupled with fear*” (I Peter 3:2). The word translated here as “*chaste*” is the Greek word meaning “pure from every fault, immaculate.” This adjective means morally pure and includes every aspect of a Christian’s behavior. In general, all Christians are called to moral purity in thoughts, words and deeds (cf. Philippians 4:8 with I Timothy 5:22). Wives are no exceptions. They are to be “*discreet, chaste [i.e., pure], keepers at home, good, obedient to their own husbands, that the Word of God be not blasphemed*” (Titus 2:5).

Now, hand in hand with moral purity goes “*fear*,” that is, loving reverence and respect for the authority of the husband. The wife must “*see that she reverence [literally, “fear”] her husband*” (Ephesians 5:33). She does this by respectfully obeying his authority. Under this word we find both the proper respectful *attitude* and the concrete *expression* of a woman who obeys the apostle’s injunction in Ephesians 5:22, 24: “*Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as unto the Lord*” (v. 22). “*Therefore as the Church is subject unto Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands in everything*” (v. 24).

Peter continues by telling wives in verse three how *not* to behave, and then giving *positive* instruction regarding *proper* behavior in verses four and following: “*Whose adorning let it not be that outward adorning of plaiting the hair, and of wearing of gold, or of putting on of apparel; but let it be the hidden man of the heart, in that which is not corruptible, even the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit, which is in the sight of God of great price*” (I Peter 3:3-4). Rather than putting on a worldly show through outward adornment, the Christian wife should concern herself with her inward self, her heart and spirit. She should cultivate a

meek and quiet spirit, a true inner beauty which shall endure imperishable long after outward beauty fades away.

The first quality which God highly praises is that of a “meek” spirit. The word “meek” means “gentle, mild, benevolent, humane.” Christ describes Himself as “meek...in heart” (Matthew 11:29), and the meek-



ness and gentleness of Christ is again mentioned by Matthew (Matthew 21:5) and by Paul (II Corinthians 10:1). Meekness is a “fruit of the Spirit” (Galatians 5:22-23), which all Christians should cultivate (Ephesians 4:2; Colossians 3:12; I Timothy 6:11; II

Timothy 2:25; Titus 3:2; James 1:21; 3:13). We are to be humble and lowly, not conceited, overbearing, pretentious and showy. We are to be gentle and kind, patient and submissive, mild and easy to get along with, as Paul says, “I therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you that ye walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called, with all lowliness and meekness, with longsuffering, forbearing one another in love; endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace” (Ephesians 4:1-3). Meekness is an attribute of the New Man, a distinctly Christian grace. Paul therefore exhorts us to meekness, saying: “Put on therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, longsuffering, forbearing one another and forgiving one another if any man have a quarrel against any; even as Christ forgave you, so also do ye. And above all these things put on charity, which is the bond of perfectness” (Colossians 3:12-14). We are called to flee sinful emotions and attitudes and rather, “follow after righteousness, Godliness, faith, love, patience, meekness” (I Timothy 6:11). Meekness should be a way of dealing with even the most obstinate individuals, a way of dealing with all men (cf. II Timothy 2:24-25). We are to be “ready to every good work, to speak evil of no man, to be no brawlers, but gentle, showing all

meekness unto all men” (Titus 3:1b-2). A Christian should “*show out of a good conversation his works with meekness of wisdom*” (James 3:13).

The other quality mentioned by Peter is that of a “*quiet*” spirit. The word “*quiet*” means “tranquil, peaceful.” Her whole attitude should be temperate, tractable, moderate, devoid of pride and of an angry disposition, and characterized by cooperative and obliging conduct towards their husbands. How many husbands claim they can find no “peace and quiet” in their homes? Let them find a meek and quiet spirit within the heart of their wives! Thus, meekness and quietness go hand in hand in describing the nature of a lovingly submissive wife, a wife who seeks to win her husband for Christ by living her creed, loving him, not only in word, but in deed.

In so doing, such a wife follows the Godly example of the Old Testament saints: “*For after this manner in the old time the holy women also, who trusted in God, adorned themselves, being in subjection unto their own husbands: Even as Sara obeyed Abraham, calling him ‘Lord,’ whose daughters ye are, as long as ye do well, and are not afraid with any amazement*” (I Peter 3:5-6). Such submission is a fruit of faith, an expression of respect for the headship of the husband (Ephesians 5:23). As a helper to her husband, the wife should obey him to please her God, to do good to her husband for the sake of Christ. In so doing she is not to be afraid of anything that might deter her from carrying out her Christian obligation in cheerful obedience to God’s Word. By such loving and respectful submission, the wife may indeed win an unbelieving husband for Christ.

Although our text from I Peter specifically deals with Christian *wives* married to unbelieving *husbands*, Scripture sets forth the general rule in this text that the Godly behavior of the believing spouse should testify to the unbelieving spouse in deeds instead of words. For Christian husbands should conduct themselves as Scripture enjoins in unselfish, sacrificial love toward their wives (Ephesians 5:25-33), and avoid all bitterness toward them (Colossians 3:19). Enlightened by God’s Word, a Christian husband should treat an unbelieving wife as Scripture enjoins the Christian wife to conduct herself over against her unbelieving husband (cf. I Peter 3:7). Empowered and motivated by the Gospel as the evidence of his thankful faith, the Christian husband should do all he can to set a good example for his unbelieving wife, as God works in him, both to will and to do, of His good pleasure (Philippians 2:13). He should also pray daily that God move his wife

to repent of her sins and believe the Gospel. His Christian life and Godly behavior toward her as her husband testifies to her of the power and the blessing of Christian faith.

Dr. Luther exhorts Christians to live for Christ as they seek to minister to their unbelieving spouse:

What If Spouse Is Unbelieving? [You Christians] should live peacefully with one another in marriage, also with your unchristian spouses—as long as they do not hinder your Christian conduct—and you should not be obstinate; neither drive nor force them to faith. For, after all, it is not by your work or power but by God’s grace alone that someone is brought to faith. Since, then, you do not know whether you are so worthy that God will save your spouses through you, you should live at peace with them. No man should put pressure on his unchristian wife or quarrel with her about faith. Nor should a wife so conduct herself toward her unchristian husband. If, however, God wants to convert him or her through you, He will help you to do so and will distribute such grace and gifts among you as will serve this end. ...An insincere Christian spouse is to be dealt with in like manner. His evil life is to be borne in peace. One should not defy him or drive him to do good; one should do no more than quietly and kindly hold and help him to do it. For you may not be worthy to make anyone pious. But in case you are accounted worthy, God will invest you with the ability to do so and will mete out His gifts to you according to His will. Meanwhile be satisfied to live with your unchristian and wicked spouse as long as you do not follow or sanction his unbelief and wicked life and he does not urge or hold you to it. You suffer such unbelief and wrong in your spouse just as one must suffer it from all the world, including the devils; and you continue to work on him with good words and a peaceful life until God grants His grace so that he also is converted.” (E. Plass, *What Luther Says*, Vol. II, p. 901, #2814).

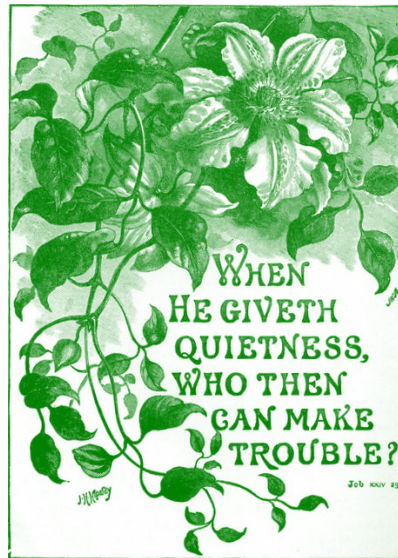
Since a happy marriage is a temporal blessing of God’s providence, especially for Christians, God’s promise regarding the fulfillment of temporal needs certainly applies: “*But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and His righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you*” (Matthew 6:33).

The Power of the Gospel Enables a Christian Woman

The Gospel, the good news of our gracious salvation because of the merit and blood of our Savior, Jesus Christ, enables a Christian woman

to live Godly in her marriage. Empowered and motivated by the sure and certain promise of the righteousness of Christ imputed to her and of the forgiveness of all her sins, a Christian woman, according to the New Man, is able *“both to will and to do of [God’s] good pleasure”* (Philippians 2:13). A Christian woman therefore should rely on God’s gracious promise in Christ: *“...God shall supply all your need according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus”* (Philippians 4:19). She should cling in confidence to this precious truth: *“He that spared not His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him also freely give us all things?”* (Romans 8:32). By God’s grace she has a faith *“which worketh by love”* (Galatians 5:6b). By means of the Gospel, God works in her *“that which is well-pleasing in His sight, through Jesus Christ”* (Hebrews 13:21b). She should therefore pray for her unbelieving husband constantly, setting forth a Christian witness before him on a daily basis, as Scripture enjoins in I Peter 3 and elsewhere, beseeching God to open her husband’s ears and heart to the hearing of His Word whereby saving faith is engendered, fruited, and preserved unto life everlasting. To that end, may God graciously bless truly Christian wives!

— E. J. W.



*May God bestow on us His grace,
with blessings rich provide us;
and may the brightness of His face
to life eternal guide us
that we His saving health may know,
His gracious will and pleasure,
and also to the heathen show
Christ's riches without measure
and unto God convert them!*

*Thine over all shall be the praise
and thanks of every nation!
And all the world with joy shall raise
the voice of exultation!
For Thou shalt judge the earth, O Lord,
nor suffer sin to flourish.
Thy people's pasture is Thy Word,
their souls to feed and nourish,
in righteousness to keep them.*

*Oh, let Thy people praise Thy worth,
in all good works increasing!
The land shall plenteous fruit bring forth;
Thy Word is rich in blessing.
May God the Father, God the Son,
and God the Spirit bless us!
Let all the world praise Him alone,
let solemn awe possess us.
Now let our hearts say "Amen!"*

Martin Luther, 1524

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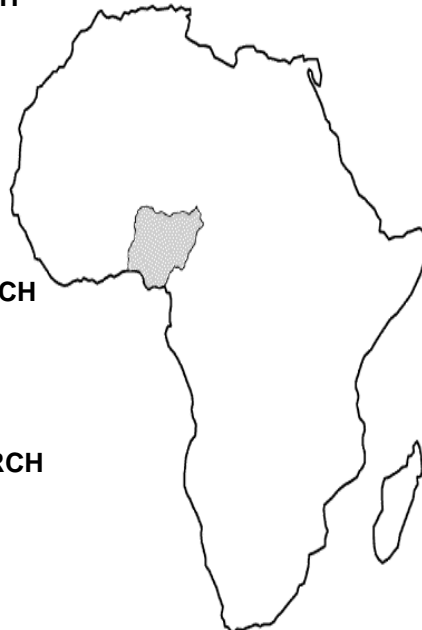
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Ephesians 2:20

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