

*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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Vol. XLVI

September-October, 2001

Nos. 9 - 10

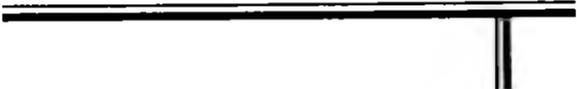
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**"The Spirit itself  
beareth witness with  
our spirit, that we are  
the children of God."**

— Rom. 8:16

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**OFFICIAL ORGAN  
of the**

**Concordia Lutheran Conference**

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

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**STATEMENT OF PURPOSE:**

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

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

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

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

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

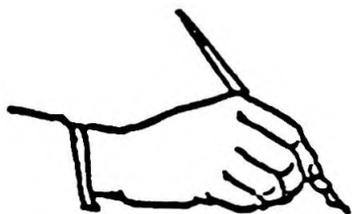
To show that we do not have among us a mixture of divergent teachings but that we are "perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment."

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

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

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

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



## *The President's Column*

On October 31st we observe the 484th anniversary of the Reformation. What an earth-shaking event that was when Martin Luther nailed his 95 Theses on the Castle Church door in Wittenberg. At last the blessed sunshine of God's Word of Truth began to shine forth in the midst of darkness. But as soon as the news spread throughout Europe, violent storms arose out of the Roman papacy in an effort to extinguish that light. The learned Albert Krantz (1448-1517) told Luther, "Dear Brother, what you say is indeed the truth, but you will accomplish nothing; therefore go back into your monastery cell and ask God to have mercy upon you." Even that bitter and vehement enemy of the Reformation, Cardinal Bellarmine (1542-1621) was constrained to write, "Who is not aware that the Lutheran pestilence after it had shortly broken out in Saxony, would soon envelope all of Germany, and from there go north and east, encompassing Denmark, Norway, Sweden, Finland, Hungary, even speeding to the west and south to France, England, Scotland, laying waste such flourishing kingdoms, and even crossing the Alps into Italy?"

While opposition was expected from the Roman hierarchy, one would think that there certainly would be none from those who rejoiced in the work of the Reformation. But such was not the case. The principal opponent was Ulrich Zwingli (1484-1531). At Marburg (Oct. 1529) when Luther and Zwingli met, they agreed on 14 of the 15 articles. The one on which they could not agree was the Lord's Supper. Although not agreed in this doctrine, Zwingli with tear-filled eyes offered Luther the hand of brotherhood and told Luther, "There are no other people upon earth with whom I would rather be one as with you Wittenbergers." Luther refused, saying to Zwingli, "You have a different spirit than we do."

Why? Was it because of pride or bitter hatred against Zwingli? Was it because Luther enjoyed fighting and dissension? Indeed not! It was Zwingli who had begun the fight and refused to take his reason captive

and submit it to the clear Word of God! Already in 1526 Zwingli claimed that he had a dream in which the teachings of the Lord's Supper were revealed to him. And from then on Zwingli attacked Luther in very vehement language concerning the Lord's Supper. In 1527 Luther published his book on the Lord's Supper. And what was Zwingli's reaction? He ridiculed it, picturing Luther as a sow in a flower garden, and calling all those who followed this teaching, stupid, flesh-eaters, and drinkers of blood. Most remarkably Luther did not refer to the past when he met with Zwingli in Marburg, but earnestly sought to establish true Scriptural unity. And even when Luther returned to Wittenberg, he wrote to Zwingli, closing with the prayer that the Lord Jesus would grant His enlightenment and make all of them one. Now is that the voice of one who is ruled by pride or who desires always to fight?

The only reason why Luther would not give the hand of fellowship to Zwingli was Luther's obedience to the Word of God. We are not to become partakers of other men's sins (I Tim. 5:22), but are to avoid the false prophets (Matt. 7:15; Rom. 16:17). The one who stubbornly holds to false doctrine is the one who bears the blame and responsibility for division. Yet, we find that those who abide with the teachings of God's Word invariably receive the blame. That was the case with the Prophet Elijah (I Kings 18:17,18), the Apostle Paul (Acts 21:28), and even with the Lord Jesus Himself (Luke 23:5). And this has been true down through the history of the church (Athanasius, AD 336) to the present day.

Zwingli was ruled by his puny reason and not by the Word of God! The Lord Jesus states in unequivocal language concerning the Supper which He instituted, "This is My body ... This is My blood!" Luther emphasized these clearly revealed words of the Lord Jesus and refused to budge one iota from them. Zwingli, however, had said, "God does not give us such incomprehensible things."

What an example of true humility on the part of Luther. The Lord says, "To this man will I look, even to him that is poor and of a contrite spirit, and trembleth at My Word" (Is. 66:2). Would to God that such humility characterized everyone who goes by the name *Lutheran*. Unfortunately, however, many reveal that they are *Lutheran* only in name. And they show this in their words and actions by joint worship services (*Lutherans & Roman Catholics*, etc.) with those who reject the Scriptural teachings which Martin Luther restored through the work of the

Reformation. They minimize and excuse the abominable sins of homosexuality, abortion, etc. which Luther, following God's Word, condemned in no uncertain terms.

By God's grace, there are still even in these last evil days a small number who, like Luther, take their reason captive and submit it to the Word of God. They believe and confess with Martin Luther that every Word of Scripture is the infallible Word of God and that in the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper every communicant receives the true body and blood of the Lord Jesus, in, with, and under, the bread and wine, for the forgiveness of sins and the strengthening of his faith. They believe and confess with Martin Luther that there can be no joint worship with those who reject any portion of that sacred Word of Truth. This is the language of every true Lutheran: "God says it! I believe it! That settles it!"

[Editor's Note: The following is the second and final installment of the serialization of the Historical Essay delivered to the fiftieth annual convention of the Concordia Lutheran Conference.]

# HISTORICAL ESSAY

delivered to the

Fiftieth Annual Convention of the *Concordia Lutheran Conference*

by

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

## *"The formation of the Orthodox Lutheran Conference, 1951"*

### II. How It Came About

For the purpose of the present essay, only the Preamble and Articles I-IV are quoted below since they involve the REASONS for the formation

of the Conference, the **NAME**, the **CONFESSION**, the **OBJECTIVES**, and the conditions of **MEMBERSHIP**. Those sections read as follows:

**PREAMBLE:** Whereas the theology of The Lutheran Church–Missouri Synod has shown a progressive deterioration and unscriptural character for the past two decades:

a. In many articles appearing in the *Lutheran Witness*, the *Concordia Theological Monthly*, the *American Lutheran*, and elsewhere, as well as in published pamphlets;

b. Specifically in the so-called *Chicago Statement* of 1945, with regard to which neither the responsible officials of Synod nor Synod itself ever took decisive Scriptural action, and that, in spite of obvious doctrinal errors; and in the *Common Confession* of the Milwaukee Convention as a corporate body, a document, which is definitely inadequate for the purpose of resolving differences of doctrine obtaining in the various Lutheran bodies of America, especially the American Lutheran Church, and is in part out of harmony with Holy Writ; and

**Whereas** some of the Missouri Synod's leading theologians and clergymen have repeatedly become guilty of flagrant unionistic practices (See Memorials 603 to 622, 625 to 630, submitted to the Milwaukee Convention of 1950);

**Hence**, we, under the compulsion of the Word of God, find it necessary to declare, that The Lutheran Church–Missouri Synod has left its former orthodox position as a corporate body, destroying the former unity of doctrine and practice and separating itself from our fellowship. However, since we see no hope of cleansing the corporate body of the Missouri Synod from its leaven of false doctrine or ridding it of the presence of false teachers, and since Scripture commands us to “mark

and avoid” (Romans 16:17), we hereby withdraw from said Lutheran Church–Missouri Synod for reasons set forth in this Preamble and in our **Confession of Faith**, appended to this declaration.

**Article I — Name:**

The name of this body shall be the **Orthodox Lutheran Conference**.

**Article II — Confession:**

The confessional platform of this body is laid down in **The Confession of Faith Professed and Practiced by All True Lutherans**, appended to this declaration.

**Article III — Objectives:**

The objectives of this Conference shall be:

1. To hold fast the full truth of God’s Word. II Timothy 3:14-17; Psalm 119:105; John 8:31-32; Matthew 28:20.
2. To continue to voice its united opposition against errors in doctrine and practice, as indicated in the Preamble, Matthew 7:15, Romans 16:17-18, I Timothy 6:3-5, Titus 3:10.
3. To offer encouragement and assistance to pastors, teachers, laymen, and congregations, who are in the state of confession (*in statu confessionis*), that is, in protesting membership in heterodox Lutheran bodies, and who share our Confession of Faith.
4. It shall be a basic objective of this Conference to use all the efforts and abilities possible to build the Kingdom of God by the initiation of new mission stations wherever possible. Matthew 28:18-20.

## Article IV — Membership:

1. Membership in this Conference may be acquired and held by individuals who subscribe to the **Confession of Faith**, and by congregations who subscribe to Part I of this **Confession of Faith** and who do not dissent from Part II.

2. Interim membership may be acquired and held by such pastors as share our Confession, but are not yet in a position to have their congregations join them in full membership in the **Orthodox Lutheran Conference**.

Signatories to these **Articles of Agreement** were the following:

### **Pastors—**

P. R. Bloedel, Wilmot, South Dakota  
Herbert F. Koehlinger, Detroit, Michigan  
P. E. Kretzmann, Cuba, Missouri  
Wallace H. McLaughlin, Pittsburgh, Penna.  
H. David Mensing, Tinley Park, Illinois  
Melvin L. Natterer, Lansing, Illinois  
Albert M. Schupmann, Plymouth, Nebraska  
Gustav G. Schupmann, Chesterfield, Missouri  
Otto G. Schupmann, Minneapolis, Minnesota  
George Schweikert, Okabena, Minnesota

### **Laymen—**

Fred J. Niebruegge, Clayton, Missouri  
H. A. Strumpler, St. Louis, Missouri  
O. E. Reimnitz, St. Louis, Missouri  
Warren W. Osterloh, St. Louis, Missouri  
William Koslowske, St. Louis, Missouri  
Emil L. Weis, Winter Haven, Florida

Elections were held at the First Annual Convention with the following result:

**President:** Pastor Wallace H. McLaughlin

**Vice President:** Dr. P. E. Kretzmann

**Secretary:** Pastor Albert M. Schupmann

**Treasurer:** Mr. Fred J. Niebruegge

**Editorial Committee:** Pastors George Schweikert and  
Herbert F. Koehlinger

**Member at Large, Board of Directors:** Mr. H. A. Strumpler

The *Orthodox Lutheran Conference* adjourned its first convention on the afternoon of September 26, 1951. A new church body had been born. By the manifold grace of God, men of one mind had found one another and had pledged themselves to faithful adherence to the truth of His precious Word, to a fellowship with no divisions among them, to a relationship in which all would be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment based on the Holy Scriptures as the only source and standard of their doctrine and of their life, to the privilege of engaging in joint church work and worship to the praise of God's grace in Christ Jesus and to the glory of His holy Name. It was a happy day indeed; and though stormclouds were even then gathering on the horizon for many of these stalwart confessors of their Savior's Name and Truth, the prospect of suffering wrongfully for Jesus' sake did not mar their joy, nor daunt their spirit, nor bend their backs. They were committed.

In the weeks and months that followed that first convention, the *Orthodox Lutheran Conference*, though small, took on the appearance of a truly viable church body; and the mechanics were devised and set in motion to accomplish the objects and goals of the Conference. Things moved so quickly that an interim special convention had to be held at about the halfway point in the year. At Chesterfield, Missouri, the Conference met chiefly to read and discuss the proposed draft of a constitution; but the presentation of a final draft had to be postponed to the 2<sup>nd</sup> Annual Convention the following August. The Conference did adopt two resolutions concerning the doctrines of the Church and the Ministry, the content of which gave official notice to the Wisconsin and Norwegian Synods of our Scriptural position as they grappled with these doctrines under internal pressure to adopt the theology of John Phillip Koehler and August Pieper regarding them.

By the time of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Annual Convention, held August 23-25, 1952 in Minneapolis, Minnesota, the organizational structure of a functioning Conference was complete. Several fine doctrinal essays were presented at the convention; and President McLaughlin reported, following his attendance at the recent meeting of the Synodical Conference, that the chasm between the orthodox and heterodox factions had deepened and that Missouri's liberal position would soon destroy that federation. The final draft of the Conference *CONSTITUTION* was finally approved, as

were a model constitution for Conference congregations and a model *Diploma of Vocation* or form for the calling of a pastor. A theological journal was proposed for the professional growth of the pastors in particular; and, since it had become evident that theological training at schools of the Missouri Synod and other Synodical Conference bodies would no longer be reliable and would no doubt prove to be sources of offense to our students by luring them into unionistic practices, our own Seminary was proposed at this convention and began operation already the next month in Minneapolis. The *Orthodox Lutheran Conference* was moving forward; and the Lord's gracious blessing was upon it, as all its members spoke the same thing and were perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment (1 Corinthians 1:10).

### III. What Happened as the Result

The news of the organization of this new church body in September 1951 traveled with lightning speed, but the effect that it had varied greatly from place to place and from person to person. Many of those who considered themselves "conservatives" in the Missouri Synod were literally awestruck by the fact that our men had actually cut their ties with the Synod and had set out "on their own." While some *few* rejoiced with us, and some *fewer* even admired us, others warned of dire consequences to come once synodical officials got wind of this development. What were our men thinking?? What about their families?? What about their synodical pensions??? Didn't they think that perhaps they had been a bit precipitous? How could they hope to save the Synod by leaving it?? Did they really envision the *Orthodox Lutheran Conference*, with its small size, "competing" with the Synod?? —They were filled with questions which only betrayed their personal unwillingness to obey the Word and will of God, to "*avoid them*" whom they had marked as continuing to cause divisions and offenses contrary to the doctrine which they had learned, and to stand shoulder-to-shoulder with their fellow "conservatives," always abounding in the work of the Lord, and trusting that their labor and sacrifice and want and even persecution for the Lord's sake would not be in vain. Disappointingly, our numbers did not grow significantly; and the bold step that our men took at Okabena and that they hoped would serve as an example and impetus to others, did NOT trigger a like response from the remaining fifty-two signers of the *Confession of Faith*, nor from those who had pledged at least "moral support" to our men-in-combat. "*They all with one consent*

*began to make excuse*" (Luke 14:18) for their inaction, excuses not unlike those offered by the invited guests who scorned the Lord's great supper of grace: All sorts of temporal concerns consumed their thinking, and it was as if they had mutually agreed to cite just certain ones as "legitimate." Some became "spiritually creative" like Saul of old, blaming their disobedience upon "*the people*," for whose sake they had decided to "stay in and fight"! They would have a fearful accounting to give!

But this news caught many in the synodical hierarchy completely by surprise, and they found themselves hard put to exercise prompt and effective "damage control" once the story was out. One incident in particular is worth mentioning by way of example. Pastor H. David Mensing of Tinley Park, Illinois, one of the original founders of the Conference and your essayist's late father, wrote up a news release about the founding of the O. L. C. and took it to the local paper, hoping that it would be printed without much cutting and editing. He specially wanted the reason for its founding to be made public so that his congregation, still in the Synod, and the general population of the town would know the unvarnished facts. Little did he expect that the article would run as front page news and that the editor would typeset the following headline on the basis of the article's content: **LUTHERAN CHURCH—MISSOURI SYNOD SPLITS; NEW CHURCH FORMED.** The story spread like wildfire.

[**Editor's Note:** The following is the first installment of the serialization of the Doctrinal Essay delivered to the fiftieth annual convention of the Concordia Lutheran Conference.]

## DOCTRINAL ESSAY

delivered to the

Fiftieth Annual Convention of the *Concordia Lutheran Conference*

by

The Rev. Paul R. Bloedel, Pastor □ St. Luke's Lutheran Church,  
Seattle, Washington

## **General Introduction:**

It is not the purpose of this essay to present a theological dissertation on the Person and Work of the Holy Ghost in thesis and antithesis or to wax polemical against the contemporary perversions of this doctrine among various sects claiming to be Christian. It is rather the purpose of the essayist, on the auspicious occasion of the celebration of the 50th Anniversary of our beloved Concordia Lutheran Conference, to extol the work of the Holy Ghost in our midst during the past 50 years and to look forward to His continued health and strength among us in the future. The title of our essay is therefore:

# The Work of the Holy Ghost in View of the 50<sup>TH</sup> Anniversary of Our Conference

## **Introduction:**

The word “ghost” often has a weird connotation with regard to its common use in our language. As a child, years ago, the word “ghost” had come to mean something scary like a goblin which I came to accept as entirely make-believe. At the same time, as a very young child, I learned the Apostle’s Creed in which I was taught to confess my faith in the Holy Ghost. The term “ghost,” as it is used in a purely secular, make-believe sense had no relationship whatever in my mind to the “Holy Ghost” as He is referred to in the KJV and in whom I was taught to confess my faith in the words of the Apostles’ Creed. When hearing of or speaking about the “Holy Ghost” the term “ghost,” as it is used in fairy tales and on the occasion of Halloween, never entered my mind—the one being merely make-believe and the other being a true and real person of the true God, the Holy Trinity. Similarly, there are those who, because of lack of knowledge and Scriptural understanding, think of “angels” as being in the same category with fairies and elves. Such, of course, should not be the case with Christian children who are brought up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord.

Now, evidently because of the confusion which may exist in the minds of some, there are and have been those who prefer to neglect the familiar expression, "*Holy Ghost*," and to substitute for it "*Holy Spirit*" which, of course, in itself is not wrong—except that a question might arise, in the light of our preference for the King James Version of the Bible, why we use the word "Spirit" when the actual word used in our preferred translation is "Ghost." Without hesitation, we use the term "Holy Ghost" in the Apostles' Creed, the Nicene Creed, and the Athanasian Creed, and it is used in many Bible passages with which our congregations are familiar and which our confirmands are encouraged to memorize, for example, the angel said to Mary, "*The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee*"; in the Great Commission the Lord Jesus says, "*Baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost*"; Peter says, "*Ananias, why hath Satan filled thine heart to lie to the Holy Ghost?*"; and the Apostle Paul writes, "*that ye may abound in hope through the power of the Holy Ghost.*" Certainly, the Holy Ghost is called by different names in the Bible, such as, the Spirit of God, the Holy Spirit, the Spirit of our God, the Breath of His mouth, the Comforter, the Spirit of Truth, the Oil of Gladness, etc, but my point is that we should not at all shy away from the term "Holy Ghost" simply because the word "ghost" is frequently used in a secular, make-believe sense (so is "spirit" for that matter).

There was a time in the Missouri Synod when Lutheran pastors did not instruct their confirmands so as to give them a good understanding of the Holy Ghost and His work—perhaps they did not feel too much threatened by false teachers with regard to this doctrine in the second quarter of the last century. In my youth and as I was growing up, in my prep-school and seminary experience, and in the short period of my ministry in the Missouri Synod, it became quite obvious that the pastors were no longer considering themselves in duty bound to teach the entire Word of God thoroughly to their people. It was becoming quite customary that a member of a heterodox Lutheran body would simply be accepted as a communicant member of a Missouri Synod congregation merely on his application for membership or on the assurance that he and his family would be faithful in their church attendance. Some pastors evidently felt that a thorough confirmation instruction would be a hindrance to the growth of their congregations. Pastors also yielded to the pressure of the parents of confirmands as to when their children would be confirmed—whether the children knew anything or not. And they would yield to adults who would complain about the length of time it would take to become communicant members or complain that they were never good at memorizing.

As time went on, the Scriptural integrity of once staunch Lutheran congregations began to erode; Scriptural doctrine and practice became more and more insignificant; proper church discipline fell into disuse and was seldom exercised; outward growth in numbers and influence took precedence over spiritual growth; beautiful buildings, trappings, and display became more important than that building of God, made without hands, eternal in the heavens, built upon the firm foundation of the Apostles and prophets, our Savior Himself being its Chief Cornerstone; women began to be accepted as voting members and officers in congregations as well as delegates to synodical conventions; liberal professors, synodical officials who tolerated error and false doctrine, and so-called broad-minded theologians gradually filled seminary chairs and occupied positions of influence in the synod so that, year after year, students, who were not well-grounded in the Word of God or had no firm Scriptural convictions, flowed out of colleges and seminaries and filled pastoral vacancies nationwide throughout the synod. Synodical discipline no longer prevailed except, sad to say, to take swift and decisive action against those who desired to remain faithful to the pure teachings of God's Word. Then, in a complete hierarchical manner befitting the church of Rome, congregations were invaded by synodical officials and pastors were ejected from their offices for no scriptural reasons whatever. Pastors, who were once faithful to the Word of God and diligent in their teaching and practice, either became leavened or, through fear and for the sake of outward peace, financial considerations and domestic tranquility, did not teach their own congregations about the great errors in doctrine and practice which were being tolerated and later embraced by the Missouri Synod. A few severed their connections with synod altogether while others thought themselves wiser than God by taking the position that they would stay in the Missouri Synod, continue to instruct their congregations and, at the same time, fight from within—and they encouraged others to do likewise. Where are they now? They're still there, at least their congregations are, in the heterodox Missouri Synod—leavened with all the rest! How can they thoroughly instruct their people and, at the same time, ignore what the Bible says? As our essay continues, we will see how all of this occurred as a direct result of the fact that the work of the Holy Ghost was hindered through the gradual lack of thorough instruction in the pure teachings of God's Word. This, of course, holds a tremendous lesson for us as we turn the half-century mark in the history of our little Concordia Lutheran Conference.

In the essay before us we will consider FIRST a general review of the work of the Holy Ghost, (this sets forth the Scriptural basis for this essay), SECONDLY the Work of the Holy Ghost in our Conference during the past 50 years, and THIRDLY the Work of the Holy Ghost which we in our Conference should do everything possible, by God's grace in Christ Jesus, to promote and to look forward to in the future. And may God the Holy Ghost bless in your hearts the consideration and application of His Word in this essay.

## I. A General Review of the Work of the Holy Ghost

The Holy Ghost, as we define Him in our Catechism, is "*the Third Person in the Holy Trinity, true God with the Father and the Son.*" He is not third in rank but third *in number*, that is, He is the third person named in such passages as the Great Commission and the Apostolic Benediction where the three persons in God are mentioned. He is equal, from eternity, in majesty, power, and glory with the Father and the Son. He is distinguished from the Father and the Son, as a separate person of the Godhead, by the word "*proceeding*" as it is used in John 15:26 where the Lord Jesus says, "*When the Comforter is come, whom I will send unto you from the Father, even the Spirit of Truth, which proceedeth from the Father, He shall testify of Me.*"

The personality of the Holy Ghost, namely, that He is **not** merely an **inanimate force** emanating forth from the Father and the Son or simply a different face or mask which God uses in the revelation of Himself, but that He is a distinct person of the Godhead, true God, whole and entire—having ascribed to Him all the attributes of God and participating in the works which only God can do including the works of creation and redemption which are *especially* ascribed to the Father and to the Son respectively—is clearly taught in Scripture. That the Holy Ghost was also involved in *the work of creation* is seen from Genesis 1:2 where we are told that the Holy Ghost "*moved*" or brooded over the waters as a hen broods over her eggs, and in Psalm 33:6 where we are told that the host of the heavens were made by the "*Breath of His mouth.*" That the Holy Ghost also participated in *the work of redemption* is clear from such passages as, "*God giveth not the Spirit by measure unto Him,*" namely unto Jesus, (John 3:34) and that "*God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Ghost and with power,*" (Acts 10:38). The Holy Ghost as a person is also emphasized in Scripture when He is spoken of as being "*grieved,*" "*tempted,*" "*sinned against,*" etc.

The work of the Holy Ghost is nicely set forth in our synodical Catechism. His work is called "*sanctification*." To sanctify means to **make holy** and this is exactly what the Holy Ghost does when He brings you to faith in Christ and imparts to you the wonderful blessings of our Savior's work of redemption. This **sanctification in the wider sense** involves **vocation**, namely, the universal call of the Holy Ghost which goes out to all people through the Gospel. It also involves **conversion, regeneration, quickening and enlightenment**—all of which refer to the fact that, through the Gospel, the Holy Ghost works "*a saving knowledge of Jesus*" in your heart so that you "*trust and believe, rejoice and take comfort in Him*." It also involves **sanctification in the narrower sense** which refers to the fact that, by the power of the Gospel, the Holy Ghost creates a new man in you through which you are enabled to avoid sin and to do works pleasing to God; and, finally, this work of the Holy Ghost (sanctification in the wider sense) involves **preservation in the true faith** by which the Holy Ghost, through the Gospel, keeps you in the true faith unto life everlasting. Now each one of these functions of the Holy Ghost could be elaborated on at great length with no little profit—but this would take us beyond the narrower practical scope of this essay on the occasion of our 50th Anniversary.

Let us dwell then upon the most important work of the Holy Ghost. Of all the great and wonderful miracles which the Lord God constantly does in the world about us—the balance in nature, the water cycle, providing food for all flesh—there is only one miracle which stands out above all others, a miracle upon which the eternal salvation of mankind depends, and that miracle is the miracle of changing the human heart, the miracle of raising the spiritually dead, of making those who are spiritually blind to see—the miracle of making people believers in Christ their Savior. This miracle involves changing the hearts and, as a consequence, the lives of people who, by nature (as they are born into this world since the Fall of Adam—**which includes all of us**) are without true fear, love, and trust in God—who have no respect for God in their hearts and no disposition to honor Him with their lives or to avoid what displeases Him; who have no desire to put the Lord God first in their hearts and lives or to serve Him gladly; and who do not want to commit their lives to God's keeping or to rely on Him for help in every need—who have absolutely nothing good in them and have no inclination to do anything good, but only a strong inclination to do that which is evil and wicked; who are spiritually blind, dead and enemies of God.

How impossible this miracle of making people believers is for us—for we, ourselves, are in the same corrupt condition from our mother's womb and "*cannot,*" as Luther says, "*by our own reason or strength, believe in Jesus Christ, our Lord, or come to Him!*" But the Holy Ghost, by His grace alone, has enlightened our spiritually blind eyes and has caused us to see clearly the way of salvation in Christ our Savior. He has raised us from spiritual death to spiritual life through faith in Jesus and His work of Redemption. He has changed us from enemies of God to friends of God who realize from the heart the great blessings which our Savior, by His active and passive obedience, has earned for us and freely bestows upon us, namely, the forgiveness of all our sins, life, and eternal salvation. He has caused us, who are conceived and born in sin and corruption unto eternal damnation, to be born again—this time unto life everlasting, and we who, by nature, are on the pathway to hell, He has turned about and has placed us on the pathway to the joys of eternal bliss in heaven—having worked in our hearts the saving knowledge of Jesus, filling our hearts with true comfort, peace and joy in our Savior and filling us also with the earnest desire to amend our sinful lives out of love for Jesus and gladly to perform works pleasing to God and thus to serve Him who sacrificed His life for us on the accursed tree of the cross. And the Holy Ghost has done all this in us **BY MEANS OF HIS WORD**, specifically the Gospel. The Apostle Paul therefore says, "*I am not ashamed of the Gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation,*"—it is God's power to save us and the entire sinful human race. Oh, the more people recognize how rotten they are by nature, the more will they appreciate the miraculous work of the Holy Ghost in their hearts and lives.

Here we must remember that the Holy Ghost never works through false doctrine or through human philosophy or through the words of man's wisdom but through those words "*which the Holy Ghost teacheth,*" which He moved Moses, the Prophets, the Evangelists and the Apostles to write and which He breathed into their minds, which is proclaimed from every true Christian pulpit and should be on the tongues of Christian people everywhere. The Lord is against those who use *their* tongues and attribute their own ideas and notions to the Lord. He does not want His people to "cozy up" to false teachers but to "*beware*" of them. He does not want His children to be "*unequally yoked together*" with unbelievers or to join in religious work or worship with those with whom they are not united in doctrine and practice but to "*mark and avoid*" them. "*By good words and fair speeches*" the false prophets

*“serve their own bellies and deceive the hearts of the simple!”* They grieve the Holy Spirit of God and put the Son of God to an open shame by teaching that which is contrary to God’s Word. False doctrine is called a *“leaven”* which works its way into the very fiber of a congregation or church body—displacing the Gospel, and a spiritual *“cancer”* which eats at and destroys the very vitals upon which saving faith in Christ Jesus is built and through which the Holy Ghost has chosen to work. With these things in mind let us move forward to consider:

## **II. The Work of the Holy Ghost in our Conference during the past 50 Years**

An anniversary occasion gives us the opportunity to look backward over what has transpired during the years past, and also forward into the unforeseen future, and to learn lessons from the past from which we and our children should benefit in the years to come.

What then should we observe about the work of the Holy Ghost among us during the past 50 years? We can indeed say that our Conference has gone through hardships and difficulties which have tried the souls of men, not the least of which is to have been maligned and spoken evil of as a legalistic splinter group—and to be looked upon as such by other Lutheran bodies. What such sinful gossip has done to hinder the work of the Holy Ghost in our midst we will never be able to estimate, and this false reputation, begotten of perverse minds, will, of course, continue, to a greater or lesser extent, as long as the Word of God is taught among us in its full truth and purity, and false doctrine and practice is exposed, warned against, and condemned. We are a thorn in the side of all liberal and modernistic Lutherans who have betrayed their great Lutheran heritage for the pottage of earthly power and prestige in the church world of today.

There have also been those, and are to this day, who have looked upon our small size as a sign that we have not been blessed by the Lord and, consequently, they turned away from us. Many such have simply found themselves back in the clutches of the heterodox Missouri Synod where they continue to sit by the fleshpots and serve not the Lord Christ but their own bellies. They fulfill the words of Christ, namely, that as dogs they have returned to their own vomit, and as sows which have been washed to their wallowing again in the mud. That such bellyservers have hindered the work of the Holy Ghost in our Conference down through the years is undoubtedly true.

But oh, how it rejoices our hearts to see the great things which we, through the power of God's Holy Spirit, have been able to accomplish in our individual congregations and in the areas for which our Conference was established. Indeed, many are no longer with us who were with us 50 years ago when our Conference was first formed as the Orthodox Lutheran Conference in Okabena, Minnesota, and again, many more left our fellowship in 1956 when for a very brief period of time there were two groups known as the Orthodox Lutheran Conference—causing our Conference to become known as the Concordia Lutheran Conference. The members of our Conference are the only bona fide members of the original Orthodox Lutheran Conference. Many, who are no longer with us and, for a short time retained the name Orthodox Lutheran Conference, went back into the Missouri Synod, some into the Wisconsin Synod and some were involved in founding the LCR—the Lutheran Churches of the Reformation. Few, if any, of those who, with us, were among the original founders of the Orthodox Lutheran Conference, are still living—but of those pastors whose congregations were invaded by the hierarchical behavior of the Missouri Synod and were ejected from their offices as pastors of Christian congregations without any Scriptural reasons and were among the original founders of the Orthodox Lutheran Conference, two pastors, by God's grace, still remain alive and active in their respective congregations and in our Conference.

Numerically, our congregations have never been very impressive. Nor has our Conference ever been able to boast of a large number of member congregations. But, in our congregations, the Word of God *upon which alone* the Church is built and *through which alone* the Holy Ghost makes people Christians and *by which alone* the Lord adds to the Church such as should be saved—that Word alone, through the power of the Holy Ghost, reigned supreme and produced Christians who were well-versed in the Word of God; who were neither ashamed nor afraid to strive earnestly to put the Word of God first in their hearts and lives; who sacrificed of their earthly goods so that little congregations would be able to support the office of the ministry in their midst; who did not want to lose their precious Lutheran heritage through compromise with error or by joining in religious work and worship with false prophets and heterodox Lutherans. And the Holy Ghost blessed our congregations with true spiritual growth, knowledge and understanding which had been diminishing, gradually at first and then devastatingly, in the

Missouri Synod since the early 1940s. Here was the growth through the pure teachings of God's Word which we so earnestly desired and which, by the power of the Holy Ghost, sustained our congregations and strengthened them mightily in the true faith in Jesus their Savior and in lives pleasing to God. How the people in our congregations and Conference were filled with joy in being rid of the yoke of unionism and heterodoxy in the Missouri Synod and rejoiced in having the Full Truth of God's Word for themselves and for their children. And this they demonstrated by opening their homes and extending brotherly hospitality to pastors, delegates and visitors whenever a convention of our Conference was sponsored by their own congregation.

Yes, through His Word, the Holy Ghost blessed us, not with great outward growth (which, of course, is not to be expected in these last evil days of the world) but with true spiritual growth in our individual congregations so that the members of our congregations grew in grace and in the knowledge of their Lord and Savior Jesus Christ and in their lives as true children of God. This growth was even stimulated, wherever and whenever necessary, by Church discipline and excommunication, in accordance with the words of Christ—so that the blessing of the Lord was not thwarted by the toleration of error or evil in any form and that the members were strengthened in their holy faith and blessed with God-pleasing unity in their confession, in their life, and in their working together as Christians in our Conference. Many families also left our congregations because they thought their children would have more opportunities to make friends in a larger church body—where there would be more children the same ages as their children—instead of leaving this matter entirely up to the Lord. Many returned to congregations in the Missouri Synod to which many of their relatives still belonged. Some went into the Wisconsin Synod for much the same reasons, thinking, however, that they were at least becoming members of a more conservative church body than the Missouri Synod and that their children would also have the advantage of attending a Christian day school.

Besides healthy spiritual growth in our individual congregations, we have also experienced growth in working together as a Conference of congregations and as pastors so that there is, by God's grace, no more backbiting, no suspicion, and no jealousy among pastors and people—also no politics or vying for power or office. Synodical discipline has been maintained so that we all have continued to speak the same thing,

that there are no divisions among us, and that, by God's grace alone, we continue to be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment. Down through the years there have been false brethren who needed to be exposed and dealt with in a proper, Scriptural way. In accordance with God's Word, the autonomy of member congregations was always respected as well as the exclusive position of the pastors as the God-given overseers in their respective congregations. Congregations were not invaded by the officers of our Conference but, where brotherly admonition and exhortation were unfruitful, a severance in fellowship had to be recognized—that purity in doctrine and practice would be preserved.

Within the last ten years, the Holy Ghost has blessed us with a Theological Seminary so thoroughly dedicated to the instruction of future pastors in the pure teachings of God's Word that, as far as we know, there is no theological institution in the whole world which compares with our seminary. The Lord has granted us five professors who are well equipped to teach students the theological subjects for each year's curriculum for which each professor is responsible. Together with the standard theological subjects, an invaluable five-year course in practical theology is offered by our Seminary in five different congregational settings and environments so that our students may widen their scope in the practical application of God's Word to the care of souls in observation and participation in regular pastoral work. Our congregations have been remembering our need for future pastors in their prayers and, so far, the Lord has blessed us with one student who has now completed his third year and has, by God's grace, been doing well in the requirements of our Seminary curriculum.

The Holy Ghost has also blessed us down through the years with the eager desire to reach out to other conservative Lutheran pastors and church bodies. From the moment of the birth of our Conference, we have bent over backwards, as it were, to find others who may be one in faith with us and we have been dismayed to find little eagerness on the part of other so-called conservative Lutherans to reciprocate in like manner. We recognized that, wherever there were those in the Missouri Synod or elsewhere who were, with great sadness, deploring the Scriptural indifference of their church body but saw no alternative to remaining in a heterodox organization in spite of antagonism and persecution, it was our duty, under God and His Word, to hold out to them the possi-

bility of fellowship with us who, by God's grace, still held to the teachings of "Old Missouri." We knew that the Lord does not want us to be ashamed of, or simply to ignore, those who are independent or in a state of protest within their own church body; who may be one in faith with us but who have no knowledge of our Conference and its Scriptural position in doctrine and practice. The Holy Ghost has preserved us from a spirit of separatism into which so many independent Lutheran congregations or small church bodies have fallen under the leadership of unwise pastors—which has led many, inadvertently perhaps, into the unionistic practice of selective fellowship. Many congregations, having left our Conference and having become independent, floundered and, at the death of their respective pastors, were absorbed again into a heterodox church body.

The Holy Ghost, through His Word, has also preserved us, as a Conference, from lording it over our constituent congregations and their pastors. All resolutions of our Conference, in convention assembled, were approved and many were ratified by referendum by every congregation and pastor and, in no case, was the autonomy of an individual local congregation nor the authority of a pastor in his congregation, "*over the which the Holy Ghost [had made him] overseer,*" violated. We were also richly blessed by the Lord who enabled us, in accordance with His Word, to see to it that all of our congregations were able fully to support the pastoral office in their midst so that our pastors would be able to make full proof of their ministry and not to be tied down to some secular employment. All praise to the Holy Ghost who guided us in the proper application of His Word of Truth!

During the past half-century our Conference has experienced outstanding growth in getting the Word of God out through our official organ, *The Concordia Lutheran*, through our Sunday School worksheets and leaflets, through the publication of *The Sketch* of our doctrinal position and other confessional writings on the doctrine of the Church and its Ministry, as well as pamphlets and tracts on various Scriptural subjects. Our Conference periodical has always been more than merely a Conference bulletin but, through the work of our recent editorial staff, it has become a very well planned doctrinal publication designed to help others grow in their knowledge of God's Word. In the past few years our Conference publishing house, Scriptural Publications, has grown into a fine facility through which good Christian literature is being

made available to our congregations and others. All these are accomplishments of brethren, in whom the Holy Ghost has worked a saving knowledge of Jesus and the pure teachings of His Word, working with brethren with whom they are, by God's grace alone, perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment.

One more great accomplishment of our Conference in spreading the pure teachings of God's Word to others, toward the close of our first fifty years, was the setting up of our Conference Webpage ([www.concordialutheranconf.com](http://www.concordialutheranconf.com)) which has the following features: An Introduction to our Conference, namely, *Who we are, Our Doctrinal Position, Our Constitution, Our Early History, Our Directory, Our Seminary, Our Publishing House, Our Archives, News and Events, Our Guest Book* with over 5,600 hits, and a comparatively new feature: *The Concordia Lutheran Online* in which the contents of all our Conference periodicals, down through the years, are gradually being made available. Oh, the Lord hath done great things for us and through us, whereof we are glad!