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." Ps. 119:105.

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"Holding fast
the faithful word
as he hath been taught,
that he may be able
by sound doctrine
both to exhort and to
convince the gainsayers."

Titus 1:9

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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

"Skeletons in the closet." This has been the case in the Missouri Synod for a number of years. And recently one of those "skeletons" has emerged. It is a document which had appeared in that Synod back in September of 1945, called "**A Statement**" with the initial signatures of some 44 Missouri Synod pastors and professors. It contained slanderous charges against the Missouri Synod. It rejected the fundamental proof-texts against the sin of unionism and sought to reverse the Scriptural position which the Synod had previously upheld throughout the days of its orthodoxy. The issuance of this "**A Statement**", or as it was also known, "**Chicago STATEMENT of the 44**", created quite a furor within that Synod. The President, Dr. John Behnken, attempted to deal with the situation by appointing the **Ten-Ten Committee** which met for about 11 days in 1946. At first Dr. Behnken acknowledged that "**A Statement**" contained false doctrine and demanded that the signers retract the document. But, unfortunately, they refused and Dr. Behnken compromised by allowing them simply to withdraw "**A Statement**" as a basis for discussion. Thus instead of resolving the entire matter on the basis of Scripture it was resolved according to human expediency.

Although that document was withdrawn its doctrinal aberrations have been practiced for many years by various Missouri Synod pastors and professors. Now the skeleton has been brought out to **public** view after having been in the closet some 50 years! "Now, copies of the February 1996 Lutheran Forum, which contain articles about the impact of "**A Statement**" and its relevance for today, have been sent to all 5,200 LCMS parish pastors. Leonard Klein, Forum editor, said,

'Some gracious friends' of the quarterly's publisher, American Lutheran Publicity Bureau, had provided funds for the mailing because of 'the particular relevance' the publication has for the LCMS. One of the issue's articles is by Ralph A. Bohlmann, president of Missouri Synod from 1981 to 1992, when he was defeated by the current president, Alvin Barry, and given the title 'president emeritus.' Bohlmann says the major issues addressed by the 1945 document 'cry out for the attention and concern of fellow Lutherans in every age, including our own.'" (From the Metro-Lutheran quoted in the Christian News, April 15, 1996)

When the Missouri Synod refused to remove the leaven of false teaching in 1945 according to Biblical principles, it no longer fit the description of an orthodox church body given by Dr. F. Pieper, one of its foremost orthodox teachers and president of the Synod from 1899-1911, "We Missourians consider a church-body, as a body, orthodox only when the pure doctrine is proclaimed from all pulpits and professors' chairs and in all writings that become public within the communion, and when, on the other hand, every erroneous teaching is stopped in the manner prescribed by God as soon as it makes its appearance" (Lehre und Wehre, XXXVI, 261ff, official professional periodical of the Missouri Synod). The doctrinal aberrations of "**A Statement**" were never stopped in the manner prescribed by God. Consequently, as one old conservative Missouri Synod pastor so aptly put it, "The Missouri Synod's downfall began with '**A Statement**'!"

We dare not forget that false teaching is an abomination in the sight of God. "Behold, I am against the prophets, saith the Lord, that use their tongues and say, He saith" (Jer. 23:31). False teaching is a leaven which eventually leavens the whole lump of Christian doctrine (Gal. 5:9). It deceives and subverts the souls of those whom the Lord Jesus purchased and won with His holy precious blood, "and this I say, lest any man should beguile you with enticing words" (Col. 2:4). God demands that we stand fast against false teaching "that we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive" (Eph. 4:14). Thus we are not to "believe every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of

God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world" (1 John 4:1). Especially in these last evil days of the world as we observe the rise of many false prophets (Matt. 24:11), we must heed the warning of the Apostle Peter, "Ye therefore, beloved, seeing ye know these things before, beware lest ye also, being led away with the error of the wicked, fall from your own stedfastness" (2 Pet. 3:17).

By God's grace, the pure teachings of God's holy Word still sound forth from the pulpits of the congregations comprising our Conference. Do we really appreciate this? If so, then we shall receive that Word of Truth with humble and believing hearts, always striving to be faithful hearers and doers of that Word (James 1:21,22).

Your servant in Christ,
Pastor M.L. Natterer, President

THE OSIANDRIAN CONTROVERSY

"Now that the lion is dead, I shall easily dispose of the foxes and hares." This arrogant boast is reported to have been made by **Andreas Osiander** (1498-1552) shortly after the death of Luther in 1546. His reference to "the lion" evidently pictures Luther, the king of beasts, zealously guarding the "kill" from those who would resurrect Rome by reintroducing the Pope's soul-destroying doctrines. The "foxes and hares" are the other Lutheran theologians, predators of lesser and varying strengths and appetites for the carrion of the Papacy, who, without Luther's spiritual vigilance and God-given theological prowess, might be more easily deceived and vanquished by a cunning interloper.

Particularly concerning the doctrine of **justification**, Luther had a gnawing feeling that, after his death, efforts would be made to water it down, to dilute it, and to pervert it, and thus to undo the monumental work which the Lord had achieved through him and others to return the church to this central teaching of the Christian faith, the doctrine upon which the believer's confidence must rest for forgiveness of sins, life and salvation. Luther's fear was not unlike our own concerning this and the other pure doctrines of God's Word, not indeed an unrealistic one, but a concern that should make every one of us zealous for the quality training of faithful pastors for the future, who, with Luther's vigilance and the ability that God Himself gives through His Word, will guard our confessional position against any and all intrusions of error.

Osiander's boast finally betrayed and brought to the light of day his long-held views on justification which had apparently simmered like a lake of sub-surface molten lava ever since 1522 when, as a priest in the city of Nürnberg, he outwardly at least, joined the ranks of the reformers and championed their cause. Nevertheless, it became evident after Luther's death that this proud, overbearing and domineering theologian, who had been given a political appointment as professor at the University of Königsberg in 1548, would father a violent controversy by his Romish view of justification. As Dr. Bente

evaluates Osiander in his *Historical Introduction* to the ***Book of Concord***, either he "relapsed" into Romanism OR he never really had understood and embraced the true doctrine of justification as taught in Holy Scripture.

Briefly stated, Osiander forsook the doctrine of God's *forensic* justification of poor sinners for Christ's sake, His unilateral *declaration* that they are righteous in His sight because of the *imputation* of Christ's perfect merits to the *ungodly*, and substituted for it a kind of *medical* justification in which the sinner is *made* righteous by the *indwelling* of Christ in his heart, so that the *essential righteousness* of Christ's *divine nature* is "infused" into him to "dilute" his sins and thus to make him acceptable to God. To Osiander's way of thinking, therefore, justification is not ***acquittal** from sin* (as would be declared by a **judge** upon a defendant already indicted, convicted and sentenced to die for crimes committed), but it is an *internal **healing***, a *physical **cleansing** from sin* (as might be accomplished by a **physician** in a surgical procedure or in the injection of antibodies). Thus Osiander thought of justification as a **gradual process *within man***, rather than an **accomplished act *outside of man***. It is the Christ ***in** us*, not the Christ ***for** us*. It is Christ's ***essential*** righteousness which He had from all eternity as the Son of God, rather than His ***merited*** righteousness which He earned for us by His perfect active and passive obedience.

Thus, when Osiander spoke of "justification by faith," he meant that man by faith receives the *divine nature* of Christ into his very being, which then creates an essential *change* in man, a righteous *quality*, a basic *holiness*, according to which man becomes *inherently just* and *enabled to do what is right* (as Adam and Eve were righteous and holy according to God's indwelling image before the Fall). This "justification" was viewed by Osiander as a **gradual process** rather than a completed act, and that necessarily leaves the sinner **unsure** of his salvation as he examines his life and finds it still full of imperfections and the *"filth of the flesh"* (Romans 7:18; I Peter 3:21), not ever quite *"perfect"* (Philippians 3:12) in his sanctification. Note how pitifully **defective** is that "confidence" compared to the sure comfort of one who places his trust solely in the merits of **Christ**, in

His perfect obedience, and in the complete forgiveness which God pronounces upon the ungodly for His sake!

Osiander's concept of justification is not based upon Christ's *vicarious atonement*, upon His perfect *substitutionary* satisfaction of God's justice, both *actively* and *passively*, in the sinner's place, because of which God justifies the *ungodly* (Romans 4:5). In fact, Osiander's "justification" does not require the atonement at all. Jesus' suffering and death, said Osiander, merely made it possible for God to dwell within us and to become the fountainhead of our righteousness, so that our sinfulness is "diluted" to the extent that God does not **notice** our sins anymore. Our sinfulness is then as injurious to salvation as a single drop of poison in an ocean of pure water.

For the Lutherans, the **Osiandrian Controversy** was finally settled by the unmistakable wording of **Article III** of the ***Formula of Concord*** (*Triglot*, p. 917 ff.), which the reader is encouraged to read over in full. The article states in part:

> "Christ is our righteousness, not according to His divine nature alone, nor according to His human nature alone, but **according to both natures**; for He has redeemed, justified, and saved us from our sins as God and man, **through His complete obedience**; that therefore the righteousness of faith is the forgiveness of sins, reconciliation with God, and our adoption as God's children **only on account of the obedience of Christ**, which through faith alone, out of pure grace, is **imputed for righteousness to all true believers**, and **on account of it** they are **absolved** from all their unrighteousness. ...**Faith justifies**, not for this cause and reason that it is so good a work and so fair a virtue, but **because it lays hold of and accepts the merit of Christ** in the promise of the holy Gospel; for this must be **applied and appropriated to us by faith**, if we are to be justified thereby. ...[On the other hand], since renewal in us is **incomplete and impure in this life**

> because of the flesh, the person cannot stand with and by **it** before God's tribunal; but before God's tribunal **only the righteousness of the obedience, suffering, and death of Christ**, which is **imputed** to faith, can stand, so that **only for the sake of this obedience** is the person...pleasing and acceptable to God." (Highlighting added by the author for emphasis.)

Osiander's concept of ***infused righteousness*** was, of course, completely acceptable to the Romanists inasmuch as it was then and still is at the heart of the *semi-pelagian* doctrine of justification taught by the Papacy: Infused grace imparts infused righteousness, which in turn produces meritorious works from the free will of man (including the "obedience of faith"), whereby the sinner propitiates God and earns His favor. But Osiander's error is also evident in many of the sects. Wherever the *vicarious atonement* of Christ is denied or minimized as the cause of man's justification; wherever God's *forensic act* of Objective Justification is rejected; wherever the "Christ **in** us" is substituted for (or stressed above) the "Christ **FOR** us;" wherever Christians are taught to place their confidence and look for the assurance of forgiveness in their "personal experience with Jesus Christ" and their mystical relationship with the indwelling Savior; and wherever poor sinners are directed to their own works of sanctification for favor with God, as if they in any way merit His goodness --there the error of Osiander still lurks in the bushes. There the Pharisee in the Temple still speaks, seemingly crediting **God** for his righteousness: *"God, I thank Thee that I am not as other men are!"* We see it rampant in Methodism, in the "holiness" bodies, in the "Salvation Army", in Alcoholics Anonymous, in the 7th Day Adventists, in Calvinism, yea, in all sects where justification is confused with or in any way mingled with sanctification. Sadly, it even pervades much of Lutheranism today, where the Christian's "track-record" of faithfulness is emphasized over the obedience of Christ imputed as righteousness to every true believer, and is made a cause of God's good will toward sinful men. May God graciously preserve us from being drawn back into this vicious error, which, while it strokes the "ego" with good words and fair speeches, it robs the soul of the assurance of salvation!

Defend Thy truth, O God, and stay
this evil generation;
and from the evil of its way
keep Thine own congregation.
The wicked everywhere abound
and would Thy little flock confound;
but Thou art our salvation!

(T.L.H. 260,6)

--D.T.M.

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THE STANCARIAN CONTROVERSY

Francesco Stancaro, the man responsible for the Stancarian Controversy, was born in Mantua, Italy, in 1501. He was about 45 years old at the death of Dr. Martin Luther and was evidently unknown to the great Lutheran reformer. Francesco studied for the priesthood in Italy where he was exposed to scholastic theology. His first accession to prominence was in 1543 at Chiavenna, and later, in 1546, he published a Hebrew grammar at Basel. Having adopted certain protestant views, and having been seized as an heretic, Francesco escaped and fled to Germany. In Koenigsberg he taught in the high school where, after 3 months, he was dismissed because of strife between himself and Osiander (see **Osiandrian Controversy**, treated elsewhere in this issue). At Frankfort-on-the-Oder, Stancaro continued to defend his position in **his "Defense against Osiander"--Apologia contra Osiandrum**. In 1553, Melanchthon also became involved in opposing the false teachings of Stancarius which threatened the doctrine of the Trinity and of the personal union of the two natures in Christ. Stancaro then moved to Poland, Hungary, and Transylvania, but returned to Poland in 1558 where, in Pinczcow, he associated with such men as Blandrata and **contended that Christ is a mediator with God only in his human nature**. (Blandrata openly embraced unitarianism and taught that the doctrine of the Trinity endangered the doctrine of the unity of God.) In Poland, Stancaro was accused of Nestorianism. (The Nestorians were a peculiar sect in the early church, around the 5th century, which divided the person of Christ into two entities. They taught that it is wrong to call Mary the "mother of God"--making her, in effect, the mother merely of a nature without personality. We teach that Mary is indeed the mother of God according to His human nature for in that human nature all the fullness of the Godhead dwells--as St. Paul says in Col. 2:9.)

The false teaching of Francesco Stancaro was therefore in the area of the doctrine of Christ--specifically affecting the doctrine of the Personal Union of the two natures in Christ. Where Osiander taught that Christ is our Righteousness **according to His divine nature alone**, Stancaro, on the other hand, taught that Christ is our

Righteousness **only according to His human nature**. These two teachings are obviously opposed to each other--yet they are similar in this that both teachings separate the two natures in Christ. This is why our orthodox Lutheran fathers, in setting forth the true teachings of Scripture, mention both of these divergent false doctrines of Osiander and Stancaro at the beginning of the same article, namely **Article III** of the **Formula of Concord** (Triglotta, p. 791, Epitome; p. 917, FC).

As Almighty God from all eternity, the Son of God is above the Law and not subject to humiliation or exaltation. As such He could not be our Savior and Redeemer. But, according to God's plan of salvation, the eternal Son of God **took into His divine person** a truly human nature in order that He, the Son of God, might take our place under God's Holy Law (Gal. 4:4,5), keeping it perfectly as the Substitute for every man, woman and child ever to be born into this sin-cursed world, for the Bible plainly says, "**As by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of One shall many be made righteous**," Rom. 5:19. (This we refer to as Christ's **active obedience**.) So also, the eternal Son of God **was made man** in order that He, the Son of God, might **be able** to suffer everything that we and all sinners from Adam to the last person ever to be born **deserve** to suffer because of our sins, namely, everlasting torment in hell, in **our** place on the accursed tree of the cross, for the Bible plainly says, **"Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us: for it is written, Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree**" Gal. 3:13. (This we refer to as Christ's **passive obedience**.) He, the eternal Son of God, could do this for us ONLY IF HE WERE ALSO TRUE MAN. So it is the **complete** Christ, not only the divine nature (Osiander) or only the human nature (Stancaro), but God and man in One Person who redeemed us lost and condemned creatures, purchased and won us "from all sin, from death and from the power of the devil, not with gold or silver but with His holy precious blood and with his innocent suffering and death" (Luther). It is His righteousness, the righteousness of the Son of God, true God and man, which is imputed to us and which is ours by faith in Him as our only Savior and Redeemer.

Therefore, according to His divine nature **alone**, Christ could **not** have been our Savior for, **in that case**, He would not have been under the Law nor would he have been able to suffer and die on the cross. Likewise, according to His human nature alone, Christ could not have been our Savior because, in that case, His fulfilling of the Law could not have been imputed to all people and His suffering and death would not have been a sufficient ransom for our redemption. He could not have removed the guilt from the shoulders of all people, nor could He have suffered the punishment of hell in the stead of all mankind, nor could He have freed us from the slavery of sin and Satan. It is because it is **the eternal Son of God** who kept the Law in our place and suffered the torments of hell as our Substitute that our Redemption has been effected. Stancaro takes away from Christ's redemptive work the very thing that makes it so precious, namely, that **it is God** who kept the Law in our place and **it is God's blood** which was shed on Calvary for the sins of the whole world.

People are oftentimes offended by all of the controversies with which external Christendom has been plagued down through the ages even from the days of the Apostles to this present time. Yet, in reality, it has been through controversy that the pure Word of God has been permitted to shine forth in all its pristine beauty and splendor without the admixture of human reason. Thus in the controversy before us, brought about by Osiander and Stancarus, our Lutheran fathers have been enabled, by God's grace, to set forth what the Word of God plainly teaches about the personal union of the two natures in Christ and the communication of the attributes of the divine and human natures so that **wherever Christ is** as true God He is also there as true man and **whatever He does** as true man He also does as true God. Since His incarnation in the womb of the Virgin Mary, the eternal Son of God is true God and true man in ONE **undivided** and **indivisible** Person, (see Catechism, Ques. 128). Scripture passages are therefore allowed to mean exactly what they say without human interpretation, as when the Lord Jesus says to Nicodemus, "**No man hath ascended up to heaven, but He that came down from heaven, even the SON OF MAN which IS IN HEAVEN**" John 3:13, or when the angel Gabriel declares to the Virgin Mary, "**Therefore also that**

Holy Thing which shall BE BORN of thee shall be called THE SON OF GOD" Luke 1:35, or when Peter admonishes the Jews with the words, **"Ye killed the Prince of Life**" Acts 3:15, or when St. John states in the prolog of his Gospel, "**The Word was made flesh and dwelt among us**," and, in his first epistle ascribes blood to God's Son which "**cleanseth us from all sin**," or when the Apostle Paul writes to Timothy, **"God was manifest in the flesh**" I Tim. 3:16, and to the Colossians (2:9) that "**In Him** (Christ) **dwelleth all the fullness of the Godhead bodily.**" Yes, if only God, and He alone, would be allowed to speak in the plain words of Scripture in all the churches throughout the world which call themselves Christian, people would be led to a perfect Savior in Christ, the Son of God, true God and Man, in whom **alone "we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins according to the riches of His grace**" Eph. 1:7, and who alone is the "**Author and Finisher of our faith**" Heb 12:2, and not to rely in the least on their own good works or merits for "**by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: not of works, lest any man should boast**" Eph. 2:8,9.

--PRB

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[EDITOR'S NOTE: The following article was written originally for a local church member for his private use. However, since it coincides very nicely with the "President's Column", this article is being included in this issue.]

A BRIEF SUMMARY OF THE DOCTRINAL ERRORS OF THE LUTHERAN CHURCH MISSOURI SYNOD

For almost one hundred years the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod was a truly orthodox (doctrinally sound) Lutheran synod. The Synod

was founded in 1847 under the able leadership of Dr. C.F. W. Walther who became the first President of what was eventually called The Lutheran Synod of Missouri, Ohio, and Other States. The Missouri Synod was blessed with a goodly number of truly gifted theologians, pastors and teachers. Their chief strength, however, was their unwavering and uncompromising adherence to the pure teachings of God's Word.

In the early decades of the Synod's history, there were genuine efforts on the part of Walther to have the Synod reach out to other Lutheran synods. Walther sought to have doctrinal discussions with those synods which were reputedly confessional, that is, which held, at least in principle, to the historic Lutheran Confessions. Time does not permit elaboration on the success or lack of success these efforts had. At no time did Walther seek unity at the expense of the truth.

Such reaching out continued into the next century under the leadership of men who succeeded Walther. For example, in the 1930's, there were doctrinal discussions with the old American Lutheran Church, but such discussions concluded with the recognition that the American Lutheran Church was in error on the doctrine of Election. The error was labeled with the Latin phrase, in tuitu fidei, which means "in view of faith." The error consisted of the false notion that in eternity God looked ahead into time and saw who would believe and thereby elected or chose them unto eternal life. Hence, it was in view of faith that God chose and elected. This is an error in that God in eternity and out of His grace alone in Christ chose and elected those who are saved, and this election was therefore not contingent upon any merit or worthiness or even faith which God foresaw in man. God's election is an election of grace, and not of works. Even prior to this, errors concerning election had been encountered by the Missouri men, but always rejected as error.

However, the most serious erosion in the orthodox position of the Missouri Synod came in 1945 when 44 men signed a document which came to be known as "The Statement of the 44." This document contained statements which weakened and essentially denied the Scriptural fellowship principle based on Romans 16:17. Romans 16:17

says, "Now I beseech you, brethren, mark them which cause divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned; and avoid them." Always the Missouri men applied this principle to any and all errorists, even if they be Lutheran errorists. However the signers of "A Statement" came to a common agreement that Romans 16:17 need not and therefore should not be applied to other Lutheran synods since they were already Lutheran. As such they were to be recognized as brethren in the faith. Dr. Behnken, the President of the Synod at the time, recognized this as false doctrine and knew it must be retracted and renounced. However, the synod was soon to meet in convention and the celebration of the synod's 100th anniversary was to be inaugurated. It was felt that the synod would split if the signers of the statement were required to retract and renounce this statement. However, the signers were allowed simply to withdraw their statement, but not retract it as error. In short, error was for the first time publicly tolerated, and the breach in the Synod had begun. This little leaven then spread and mushroomed to the point that in 1950 the Synod jointly signed a document with the American Lutheran Church, a document called, "The Common Confession." The signing of this joint document with the old ALC marked publicly and officially that the Synod had ceased to be orthodox and had become heterodox.

Subsequently the Synod's oldest, largest, and most prestigious seminary, Concordia Seminary in St. Louis, Missouri, was rapidly tolerating false doctrine. Some of its "shining lights," such as Dr. Martin Scharlemann, began to teach that we cannot say that the Holy Scriptures are inerrant. His case was brought before the 1959 and 1962 Synodical Conventions. (Shortly thereafter Scharlemann withdrew his erroneous view, but was not required to retract and repent of it!) During the decade of the 1950's and 1960's, more and more professors at St. Louis were beginning to espouse the Historical Critical Method of Bible Interpretation. The Historical Critical Method approached the Holy Scriptures as being no different than any human writing to which must be applied the same rules of literary criticism. In short, the divine, infallible authority of Scripture was being denied. Indeed, the word, inerrancy, became a "dirty" word in St. Louis.

Since the dike had been broken, Missouri was soon flooded with all sorts of false doctrine and practice. Though not an exhaustive list, the errors currently entrenched in the Synod are as follows:

1. Continued toleration of professors who privately or publicly deny the inerrancy of Scripture;
2. Continued acceptance of the Historical Critical Method of Bible interpretation;
3. In league with the above, toleration of individual professors, teachers, and pastors who deny the historicity or factuality of
   a) The Creation account and the entire first eleven chapters of Genesis, including the universal Flood;
   b) The parting of the Red Sea;
   c) Jonah and the Whale;
   d) Direct Messianic prophecies of the Old Testament;
   e) Some of the miracles of Christ;
4. Denial of specific doctrines of the Bible such as
   a) The Creation account; (Note: Many synodical parochial schools permit the teaching of Evolution.)
   b) The Virgin Birth of Christ; **
   c) The bodily resurrection of Christ;**
   d) The Divinity of Christ; **

** Perhaps not as openly and blatantly as in the present-day Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA).

5. Permitting false practice, that is, practice which is contrary to sound doctrine such as
   a) Open Communion where visitors of different faiths are permitted to take the Lord's Supper;
   b) Unionism or uniting for worship, prayer, and joint church work with those who teach false doctrine; for example, Missouri Synod pastors conducting joint worship services with Roman Catholic priests, Episcopal priests, and Reformed Church ministers;
   c) Charismatic congregations and pastors, that is, those who believe the miracles of the Apostolic Church are still being performed today---speaking in tongues, healing, visions, and dreams; (Reportedly some 25% of Missouri Synod congregations claim to be Charismatic.)

d) Women to be voters in the Voters Assembly and to hold congregational offices, which is the giving of women authority over the man which is contrary to I Timothy 2:11-15;

e) Permitting ungodly feminism to be promoted in synodical schools;

f) Having little or no doctrinal discipline in the Synod such that erring pastors, professors, and teachers are not required to repent or else be removed from office.

g) Synodical Conventions whose ecclesiastical politicking and "power-plays" and ugly campaigning for synodical offices rival that of the national Republican Party and Democratic Party Conventions!

h) At all levels of the Synod there is the three-fold division of conservatives, moderates, and liberals, with the conservatives being compromisers who talk strong but do nothing. Such "conservatives" are no longer truly orthodox. If they were, they would no longer continue to disobey God by staying in a heterodox synod to fight the fight of synodical politics which is not "fighting the good fight of faith." Here the words of Christ apply, "A house divided against a house falleth." (Luke 11:17)

As stated, the above list is by no means exhaustive, but comprehensive enough to reveal that the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod is a heterodox church body whose reputation as being a very conservative synod is most deceptive and misleading. Compared with the most liberal of synods, Missouri appears quite conservative, Compared to Scripture, the Missouri Synod is a permissive, liberal synod which is committed to preserving itself as an ecclesiastical organization rather preserving the purity of God's Word in its midst at all costs. The Synod has forgotten the words of Jesus Christ, "The Scripture cannot be broken." (John 10:35)

Around the World

with editorial comment

by M. L. Natterer

In a departure from centuries of Christian doctrine, the Episcopal Diocese of Newark has deemed suicide morally acceptable for the terminally ill and those living with persistent physical pain. A majority of the 200 delegates to the diocese's annual convention voted Saturday to adopt such a resolution. The delegates also agreed that assisting suicide was morally acceptable in such cases. "Nowhere in the Bible does it say that there is a value to suffering simply for the sake of suffering," said the Rev. Lawrence Falkowski of Holy Trinity Church in West Orange. Bishop John Shelby Spong, the leader of the 40,000-member diocese and an advocate of assisted suicide, said the time has come for religious faith to "redefine what life means." The suicide resolution will be brought to the floor of the national Episcopal Church convention in 18 months, Spong said.

(Albany Democrat-Herald, Jan. 29, 1996)

Our life is a precious gift of God, the Creator of heaven and earth. We must confess with pious Job, "Thine hands have made me and fashioned me together round about...Thou hast granted me life and favor"....(Job 10:8-12). To protect our life the Lord has given us the Commandment, "Thou shalt not kill." God forbids the sin of murder. This also means that we dare not take our own life! Simply because we are plagued with some physical infirmity which causes us persistent pain and, humanly speaking, may end in death, is no justifiable excuse to take our own life. Look at the example of Job. The poor man not only endured the loss of his loved ones but he also had to experience the most excruciating pain because of the sore boils with which he had been smitten from head to foot. Observe how he sat in the warm ashes of the fire in an attempt to alleviate his pain. If he lacked the strength to take his own life, he

could have requested the help of his "friends" to assist in terminating his life and thus end his earthly suffering. But such was not the case! Just as Job, when told of the death of his seven sons and three daughters, had declared, " The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord" (1:21), so also now he commits himself into the gracious hands of his Lord. We know that what Job experienced was a testing of his faith. He exclaimed, "when He hath tried me, I shall come forth as gold" (23:10). What an example for us! The Apostle James reminds us, "Take, my brethren, the prophets, who have spoken in the name of the Lord, for an example of suffering affliction, and of patience. Behold, we count them happy which endure. Ye have heard of the patience of Job, and have seen the end of the Lord; that the Lord is very pitiful, and of tender mercy" (James 5:10,11). The Lord exhorts us not to despise such sufferings but rather to look to Him for strength to endure. He assures us that He loves us and desires to draw us closer to Him. (Read Hebrews 12:5-11). It is the devil, the destroyer, who plants the seeds of self-destruction within the heart. When so-called Christian leaders advocate such self-destruction which they erroneously call "mercy killing" they are following the promptings of the father of all lies (John 8:44)!

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A landlady's right to freedom of religion did not entitle her to turn away an unmarried couple interested in renting one of her duplexes, the state Supreme Court has ruled. The high court ruled 4-3 Tuesday that enforcement of the state's ban on housing discrimination based on marital status did not create a "substantial burden" on a property owner's constitutional rights. Landlady Evelyn Smith of Chicago was not religiously compelled to stay in the rental business and could avoid the conflict by investing her money elsewhere, said the lead opinion by Justice Kathryn Mickle Werdegar. Despite the ruling, Smith vowed she would "never rent to fornicators." "I'm going to do it my way because it's the Lord's way," she said in a telephone interview. Smith's lawyer, Jordan Lorence, said he would ask the U.S. Supreme Court to

review the issue, which has divided state courts around the country. The high court refused in 1994 to review a similar ruling from Alaska.

(Albany Democrat-Herald, April 11, 1996)

We Christians know that we must obey the State and its laws on the basis of such passages as Romans 13:1-7. However, when one of its laws contradicts God's Word, then we Christians must exclaim with the Apostle Peter and the other apostles, "We ought to obey God rather than men" (Acts 5:29). Our first and foremost allegiance must always be to God and His Word. The fact that the State allows and even encourages sins against the Word of God does not give us Christians permission to do likewise. It is crystal clear in the Scriptures that God forbids fornication. The Commandment is plain: "Thou shalt not commit adultery." "Marriage is honorable in all, and the bed undefiled: but whoremongers and adulterers God will judge" (Heb. 13:4). While we can not forbid the unbelievers from committing adultery, we can and should speak out against it and warn them of God's wrath. Remember the example of King Herod who married his sister-in-law? John the Baptist minced no words with him. "It is not lawful for thee to have thy brother's wife" (Mark 6:18). The fact that unmarried couples will live together in fornication rests upon their consciences and they shall have to stand before the Judgment Seat of God. And God says that "adulterers shall not inherit the kingdom of God" (1 Cor. 6:9). We Christians are not to forget that we dare not knowingly aid such adulterers in their sin! "Neither be partaker of other men's sins" writes the Apostle Paul to his co-laborer, Timothy (1 Tim. 5:22). When it comes to <u>our</u> home and property we Christians certainly have the right and responsibility before God to refuse unmarried couples permission to live together as husband and wife under <u>our</u> roof contrary to God's Word. If we must suffer persecution because of our adherence to Scriptural principles, then so be it. Remember what happened to John the Baptist (Matt. 14:3-12)! The Lord Jesus reminds us "if ye were of the world, the world would love his own: but because ye are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you" (John 15:19). Would to God that there were

more courageous Christians who would refuse to be "partaker of other men's sins!"

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Carl Sagan, an evolutionist and agnostic, in his new book, **The Demon-Haunted World: Science as a Candle in the Dark,** argues for science over "superstition." Sagan's popular "Cosmos" TV series was seen by more than 150 million. He has been well received by many religious leaders. When Sagan spoke to 14,000 Roman Catholic educators in 1985, supporters of Sagan defended his appearance by saying that he had been well received by the Pope. The Pulitzer Prize winner who has been featured on the cover of **Time** says that evolution should be "shouted from the pulpits." Sagan says in the March 18th **U.S. News & World Report:** ...."If, as fundamentalists do, you take the Bible as the literal word of God...then you run into deep trouble because the Bible is demonstrably wrong in areas of science".... Sagan who has a rare bone disease, writes in the March 10th **Parade:** "I would love to believe that when I die I will live again, that some thinking, feeling, remembering part of me will continue. But as much as I want to believe that, and despite the ancient and worldwide cultural traditions that assert an after-life, I know of nothing to suggest that it is more than wishful thinking"..."Many of them have asked me how it is possible to face death without the certainty of an after-life. I can only say that it hasn't been a problem. With reservations about 'feeble souls,' I share the view of a hero of mine, Albert Einstein: 'I cannot conceive of a god who rewards and punishes his creatures or has a will of the kind that we experience in ourselves. Neither can I - nor would I want to - conceive of an individual that survives his physical death'"

(Christian News, March 18, 1996)

Sagan is to be pitied! He knows that God exists. He has the evidence of the whole realm of nature about him and the testimony of his own conscience confirming this indisputable truth. And if he is at all familiar with the Bible, which apparently he is, then he knows what God says concerning those things which he so

flippantly denies and ridicules. If he does not repent he will experience the fate of the unbelieving rich man who cried out for mercy because he was enduring such torment in the flames of hell (Luke 16:23-25). Now is the time of grace (2 Cor. 6:2). After death it is too late. "It is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment" (Heb. 9:27). He who does not avail himself of the time allotted to him by repenting and believing the Gospel (Mark 1:15), must suffer the consequences "when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with His mighty angels, in flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ: who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of His power; when He shall come to be glorified in His saints, and to be admired in all them that believe (because our testimony among you was believed) in that day" (2 Thess. 1: 7-10). Yes, Sagan and all those like him, are foolish and will berate themselves into all eternity for "denying the Lord that bought them, and bring upon themselves swift destruction" (2 Pet. 2:1).

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Telephones: Church Office and Pastor's Study: (708) 532-4288
Parsonage: (708) 532-9035

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483 Tangent Street
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Seattle, WA 98118
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Worship Service ..... 10:30 a.m.
REV. PAUL R. BLOEDEL, Pastor
9658 - 54th Avenue South
Seattle, WA 98118
Telephone: (206)723-7418

Note: Services are also held in Victoria, British Columbia on the 1st and 3rd Sundays. Please call the Pastor for current location.

Sunday School ..... 3:00 p.m.
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