

The Concordia Lutheran



“The Scripture cannot be broken.” John 10:35
“Thy Word is a lamp unto my feet and a light unto my path.” Psalm 119:105

Vol. LXIV

July-August 2020

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“Mark them...
and avoid them.”

— Romans 16:17-18



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STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Looking Back Seventy Years in Our History

to the Missouri Synod's Adoption of the *Common Confession* in 1950

“... that the generation to come might know...” —Psalm 78:6

With this article, we want to remind our readers, most of whom were not yet alive when the events took place which caused us to separate from the Missouri Synod, that it was the action of the Synod itself (or in some cases the protracted *inaction* of the Synod) that **caused** the separation, and that we were not and are not a bunch of fanatic “separatists.” It is vitally important that all of us **remember** what took place in 1950, and that the documents (*A Statement* of 1945 and the *Common Confession* of 1950) are still **a matter of record** as the first time the once-orthodox Missouri Synod (*Brief Statement* of 1932) actually officially adopted (or permitted to stand unretracted in the case of *A Statement*) **false doctrine** in its midst and became a *heterodox* church body. Inasmuch as it refused to heed (and in some cases even to *hear*) Christian admonition, as our fathers “*marked*” the errors and the errorists, we were compelled by Scripture to “*avoid*” it (Romans 16:17 and Titus 3:10) and to “*come out from among them and [to] be separate*” (II Corinthians 6:17) from them.

Given the climate of religious skepticism, theological liberalism and doctrinal indifferentism that characterized the latter half of the Twentieth Century and permeated even traditionally “conservative” bastions of Lutheranism, it is without doubt a miracle of God’s grace that our beloved Concordia Lutheran Conference survived in such a hostile environment and that it even exists today. For, although we are admittedly a small church body by anyone’s standards, yea, statistically insignificant with our five little congregations located in only three states, we are still here after a seventy-year-long survival trek through the ecclesiastical wasteland round about us! Our existence surprises those who never heard of us, irritates those who wish they hadn’t, disgusts those who mock our unwavering stand upon the truth of God’s Word, and frustrates former members who long ago “*went out from us*” (I John 2:19) and returned to the “*flesh-pots [of Egypt]*” (Exodus 16:3), looking for a more palatable diet, and actually convinced themselves that spiritual garbage tastes good (Luke 15:16)! Yet, in a sad twist of irony, it has been the spiritually *malnourished* church bodies that seem to have grown by leaps and bounds and “outperformed” us in all the categories viewed by the world as barometers of viability and vitality: Growth in numbers, prestige, and power; a booming financial outlook; and a substantial “market share” as measured by reputation and popularity among similar denominations. Such prosperity might bother us Christians, as “*the prosperity of the wicked*” plagued Asaph (Psalm 73), were it not for the transparency of all those factors and of the glitz that accompanies them, and the sobering fact that not one of them is regarded by Jesus Christ, the Lord of the Church, as being of significance to *Him*. Like Asaph, we need to understand “*their end*” whose faith stands in the wisdom of men rather than in the power of God (I Corinthians 2:5), whose spiritual food is like chaff compared to wheat (Jeremiah 23:28), whose growth is tabulated in shallow numbers rather than in depth of faith, and whose *intolerance of sound doctrine* and eagerness for *teachers who will tickle their itching ears* (II Timothy 4:3) is a recipe for spiritual disaster!

We of the Concordia Lutheran Conference, on the other hand, have now for almost seventy years enjoyed the singular gracious blessings of our Lord and God for Jesus’ our Savior’s sake, whereof we are glad (Psalm 126:3); and we have survived, nay, we have *flourished* in this spiritual wasteland like palm trees in a desert oasis, our sin-parched throats quenched by the well of living water springing up unto everlasting life, our souls nurtured by the Manna of His precious Word, our treasure reckoned as purity of doctrine and faithful pastors at whose feet we have continued to “*grow in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ*” (II Peter 3:18). This precious heritage of grace is not of *our own* making, as though we (and our founding fathers) deserved to be so blessed; “for we daily sin much and indeed deserve nothing but punishment” (Luther); but we gratefully ascribe all glory to God for having preserved unto us poor unworthy sinners in their purity His saving Word and the sacred ordinances of His House as the means whereby He has strengthened us in the one

true and saving faith once delivered to the saints (Jude 3) and is able to keep us therein even unto the end (II Timothy 1:12).

As we contemplate our blessings over the past seventy years, it behooves us to remind particularly our *younger members* of the reasons for our existence as a church body, “*that the generation to come might know them, even the children which should be born, who should arise and declare them to their children*” (Psalm 78:6). Therefore every twenty years or so, we find it meet and right to go back in contemporary church history to **1950** and to examine the liberalizing influences, the lax attitudes, the crass politics, and the scandalous events that converged in the city of **Milwaukee, Wisconsin** in **June** of that infamous year—seventy years ago—which caused the “fathers” of our beloved Conference to “*mark*” the Lutheran Church–Missouri Synod as a *heterodox* church body and made it essential for them, in obedience to the Word of God, to “*avoid*” it and to go it on their own (Romans 16:17; cf. II Corinthians 6:17-18).

It was not the fathers’ desire from the outset to *leave* the Missouri Synod and to form another church body (as was the cavil spread about them in those days). On the contrary, it was their fervent hope and prayer, as it was Luther’s in the early days of the Reformation, that their earnest protests would be heeded and that their brethren at the time would be more zealous in guarding the confessional position of the Synod in doctrine and practice by rooting out error and by disciplining errorists (“*doctrinal discipline*” – cf. *Brief Statement of 1932*, §29). When this outcome was thwarted by the synodical hierarchy, which viewed their Godpleasing efforts with suspicion and even disdain, when they were bullied, booed, and shouted down on the floor of conventions and pastoral conferences, and when they were threatened by synodical officials with *physical* consequences because of their *spiritual* endeavors and were dealt with in a most unbrotherly manner in what can only be described as “goon squad” tactics, our faithful fathers knew that the end was near.

The synod had embarked upon a precipitous slide into heterodoxy when it failed to demand that *A Statement* (1945), its accompanying letter, and the cunning propaganda piece written in defense of it (“*Speaking the Truth in Love*”) be not only “*withdrawn*” but also “*retracted*” as false and pernicious doctrine. President John W. Behnken’s deliberate and flagrant refusal to exercise doctrinal discipline by his *Agreement* (1947) with the errorists was the “*handwriting on the wall*” (cf. Daniel 5:25) that all should have recognized for the telling symptom of creeping heterodoxy that it was; but the *status quo* of inaction on the part of the synodical president continued for years, so that the matter still was not resolved at the time of the 1950 convention in Milwaukee. Moreover, a NEW DOCUMENT was about to be introduced to the synod, another attempt at unscriptural compromise with the American Lutheran Church, a document which drew on *A Statement* as a kind of springboard. And when eventually that “*Common Confession of Faith*” was ADOPTED by the synod in convention assembled—in June of 1950—the gradual slide into creeping heterodoxy had become a virtual plummet into established heterodoxy: The formal **adoption** of **FALSE DOCTRINE**, despite fervent pleas and urgent warnings to the contrary.

As just noted, inaction on the part of President Behnken with regard to *A Statement* was still a major issue in the Missouri Synod in 1950. *The Agreement* which he had unilaterally reached with the principal signers and their supporters in January of 1947 simply stated that “*A Statement*” had been “**withdrawn** as a basis of discussion.” Then an additional paragraph was added to explain exactly what was meant by the so-called “*withdrawal*.” To satisfy the Statementarians’ concern that this could be regarded as a “*retraction*” under pressure from the Synodical President, Behnken added the sentence which stated: “The withdrawal of *A Statement* as a basis of discussion shall **not** be interpreted as a **retraction**....” And immediately thereafter, to satisfy those who were expected to cry “Foul!” and “Whitewash!”, Behnken continued: “...nor shall it mean that the issues involved shall now be *glossed over* or *ignored*.” What then was the President’s plan whereby he could continue to sit on both sides of the fence? “They shall become the topics of special study and prayerful consideration which will lead us, with the help of God’s Holy Spirit, to an ever more consecrated adherence to the Word and will of God.” And in the meantime?? *The Agreement* states simply: “Nothing has developed, however, which is divisive of church fellowship.” —A firestorm had roared through the Synod, but nothing and no one was burned! A grisly murder had been committed, but no one was dead! A child had been conceived out of wedlock, but the woman’s virginity was still intact! This was a shocking betrayal of the orthodox men who had encouraged Behnken (and who expected Behnken) to “do the right thing.”

Was the synod satisfied with the President's *Agreement*? Hardly! Dr. E. W. A. Koehler wrote: "It is simply impossible to discuss the real issue raised by *A Statement* without making *A Statement* and its letter the basis of discussion. Does anyone honestly think that this can be done??" The tactic of "withdrawing" *A Statement* "as a basis of discussion" effectively stifled every effort even to talk about it! The next year, in 1947, eighteen congregations and several regional pastoral conferences submitted **memorials of protest** to the Centennial Convention of the Missouri Synod; but the President **refused to publish them** —which made it impossible for the delegates even to evaluate them. The convention was also prevented from defining its position regarding the errors in *A Statement* because the President ruled "out of order" a resolution containing five doctrinal statements which presented the Scriptural position in opposition to *A Statement's* position. Finally the concerned delegates passed a resolution reaffirming the *Brief Statement of 1932*, sharply defining the doctrines in controversy and rejecting the errors in *A Statement*. It was felt that the Synod at least took a "right stand" and sent a message to the officials in its leadership that it stood behind them with back-up support when they (hopefully) exercised doctrinal discipline. Did President Behnken thereupon institute appropriate disciplinary procedures against the signers of *A Statement* and their supporters? **No**. And his reason?? Because of *An Agreement*, *A Statement* no longer really "exists." Can a president discipline a member for signing a non-existent document?? —More "smoke-and-mirrors"! Nothing is done! And, in the meantime, the signers continued to make propaganda for their cause: Prof. W. G. Polack, a Statementarian, appeared at a laymen's meeting in Indianapolis to discuss the background of *A Statement*. On the floor of the 1947 Convention, Prof. Theodore Graebner declared that he was a signer and "stands by every word of it." In December, 1948, copies of "*Speaking the Truth in Love*" were sold on the campus of the St. Louis Seminary. In 1949, the signers were still drumming up supporters —openly and boldly— and the *Lutheran Witness*, the Synod's official organ, began regularly to lend support to *A Statement's* errors in article after article by printing them without disapproving comment. Moreover, in essays, articles, and speeches, Statementarians regularly offered opinions and established doctrinal positions fully in keeping with the errors they had signed onto four years earlier. Nothing had changed! The "withdrawn" document was still doing a lot of talking! Surprise?

In 1950, *A Statement* was still a "hot topic" of discussion, in spite of Behnken's "withdrawal" of it from discussion. Pastors and congregations were clearly dissatisfied with his inaction on clear-cut aberrations from the doctrine of God's Word and his express intention to continue indefinitely to submit "study papers" to them. The *Book of Reports and Memorials*, as well as the *Official Proceedings* of the Milwaukee convention, contain no fewer than eleven urgently-worded, printed Memorials petitioning the Synod officially to **reject *A Statement*** and to insist that it be **retracted**. In addition, there were eighteen memorials expressing dissatisfaction with the **lack of doctrinal discipline** in Synod, two protesting the appointment of Dr. E. J. Friedrich (the driving force behind *A Statement*) to the 4th Vice Presidency of Synod, three asking that Synod recognize that, according to Scripture, there is no essential difference between joint prayer and prayer fellowship (this issue having been prompted by *A Statement* and by a pamphlet entitled *Prayer Fellowship*, authored by Statementarian Theodore Graebner), four memorials demanding that the seminary faculty in St. Louis be corrected for its unscriptural "opinion" that engagement was NOT tantamount to Holy Marriage, and two specifically targeting error published in the *Lutheran Witness*, the official organ of the Synod. —Roughly THIRTY formal protests!

What was done by the Missouri Synod at its 1950 convention to see to it that false doctrine "actually taught in its pulpits, in its theological seminaries, and in its publications," as well as "the casual intrusion of errors" was "combated and eventually removed by means of doctrinal discipline" (*Brief Statement*, §29)? In other words, **what was done** to make sure that the Synod did not "forfeit its orthodox character" by **failing to take action**? In a word, **NOTHING!**

By its failure to act, particularly since that failure had been **deliberately orchestrated** to frustrate the injunctions of God's Word that error be removed and that errorists be **admonished** and, if no fruit is evident, be **rejected** (Jeremiah 23:28; John 8:31-32; Matthew 7:15; Romans 16:17; Titus 1:9, 13; 3:10; etc.), the Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod **officially established heterodoxy** in its midst as a consistent pattern and essential characteristic of its position in doctrine and practice, "in spite of much patient admonition to the contrary on the part of many pastors and congregations in its midst." (Preamble, *CONSTITUTION* of the Concordia Lutheran Conference).

At its 1950 convention in Milwaukee, seventy years ago this past June, the Synod's "**unionistic character**" which, up to that time, had been "evinced chiefly by the unretracted *A Statement*" (Preamble, *CONSTITUTION* of the Concordia Lutheran Conference), that is, by its consistent and deliberate omission of doctrinal discipline, was exacerbated or made much worse by the commission of a **sin**, *grievous* on the part of any individual Christian, and particularly *offensive* on the part of a church body to whose leadership its member congregations look for sound doctrine and practice. The Missouri Synod **officially ADOPTED** a document which it represented to its members as completely Scriptural and thoroughly orthodox, but which in reality was unscriptural and compromising in its *language* and cunningly deceptive as to its *purpose*, a document that *echoed* in its intent and even in its words the unretracted *A Statement*. This document was the so-called **Common Confession of Faith** between *The Lutheran Church–Missouri Synod* and the *American Lutheran Church*.

A desire to effect truly Godpleasing pulpit and altar fellowship with the American Lutheran Church on the basis of *real* unity had been a priority item in the Missouri Synod for many years, and it had become a source of confusion and controversy when proponents showed themselves willing to "cut corners" in order to arrive at mutually-suitable *compromises* in doctrine and practice, that is, in matters which permit of NO compromise and NO accommodation. Thus, for example, the *Brief Statement of 1932* was born some eighteen years earlier in order to set the record straight, as it were, on matters of doctrine and practice which were in dispute between the two bodies, and with regard to which the orthodox "fathers" of the Missouri Synod, led by Dr. Francis Pieper, would not bend.

There were always those, however, who saw a large "pan-Lutheran" federation as a "greater good" than even true orthodoxy (though they never admitted it); and the all-too-evident transparency of this hidden agenda in "brethren" was troubling to men like Dr. Pieper and other guardians of the Synod's doctrine and practice. Nevertheless they were "out there," and some, as it turned out, were "in" as well —in the hierarchy of official circles within the Synod, on the faculty of the seminary at St. Louis in particular, and at other sundry posts of *prestige*. It was these men who were ill-advisedly appointed to or elected to committees on doctrine and practice and, in the case of the present discussion, to the **Committee on Doctrinal Unity** of the Missouri Synod. This committee had been charged with setting up and holding meetings with counterparts in the American Lutheran Church, with the end in view of *crafting* a mutual confession that would be acceptable to both church bodies, even though their respective positions in the controverted doctrines were "miles apart" in some cases (Cf. Amos 3:3).

It must be remembered that the purpose of the *Common Confession* was intended from the outset to be a basis for *establishing fellowship* between the Lutheran Church–Missouri Synod, which subscribed to the *demonstrably orthodox position* of the *Brief Statement* of 1932, and the American Lutheran Church, a church body with a *demonstrably false position* both in doctrine and in practice. —The American Lutheran Church, at its 1948 convention, resolved "...that we continue a Committee on Fellowship...to negotiate with a Committee on Doctrinal Unity of The Lutheran Church–Missouri Synod, toward the establishment of pulpit and altar fellowship or fellowship commensurate with the existing degree of unity..." **NOTE** that there was NO "existing degree of unity!!" **UNITY** is being "*perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment*" (I Corinthians 1:10). There is no such thing as a "degree" of unity!! Therein lay the problem! Nevertheless, the A. L. C. resolved that, "in the interest of prompter and more effective work," a subcommittee consisting of Dr. Edward C. Fendt and Dr. Bernard J. Holm "work on a single statement of the faith of the church" with the Missouri Synod committee. —The Missouri Synod made this same agenda evident in 1947, resolving "...that Synod encourage its Committee on Doctrinal Unity to continue discussion on a soundly Scriptural basis, using the Brief Statement and such other documents as are already in existence OR AS IT MAY BE NECESSARY TO FORMULATE [our emphasis]; and that Synod's Committee on Doctrinal Unity be instructed to make every effort to arrive ultimately at ONE DOCUMENT [our emphasis] which is Scriptural, clear, concise, and unequivocal." Representing the Missouri Synod in this effort were Dr. John H. C. Fritz and Pastor W. H. Jurgen. The task was "simple": Make **something** out of **nothing**! The result was bound to be a sham!!

Note, therefore, that, *contrary* to the specific direction of the Synod's 1947 Convention, the members of its Committee on Doctrinal Unity "negotiated" and "crafted" a document that was **UNscriptural**, **UNClear**, **IMprecise**

and **EQUIVOCAL**, namely, the *Common Confession of Faith*, and presented it for adoption to the 1950 Convention of the Missouri Synod in Milwaukee. In its recommendation to the convention, the Committee on Doctrinal Unity grossly **MISREPRESENTED** that document as fulfilling the Scriptural and confessional requirements of the Synod. Nevertheless, both in *printed* memorials and in earnest warnings *made from the floor* of the convention, its delegates were amply informed of this misrepresentation by orthodox pastors and laymen — sadly few in number — and were urged to **reject** the *Common Confession* for the following reasons:

1. The *Common Confession* was **not** a faithful and correct presentation of what God’s Word teaches on a number of doctrines treated in it (including the doctrines of Inspiration, of Justification, of Conversion, of Election, of the Church, of the Antichrist, and of the Last Things).
2. The *Common Confession* **failed** to *exclude* and *reject* **false doctrines** which had been for years and still were officially being taught in the American Lutheran Church and thus **failed** to meet the *requirements* of Scripture and the Lutheran Confessions for union on the basis of true unity.
3. It was adopted *in violation of Christian consciences* bound in the Word of God (I Corinthians 1:10; II Corinthians 10:5) since protests of brethren made both before and during the convention were ignored, despised, and even ruled out of order!
4. It was adopted *by majority vote* instead of unanimously (See *Lutheran Witness*, July 25, 1950, p. 228). Thus it was adopted in violation of *Scripture’s* requirement of **unanimity** (I Corinthians 1:10) and in violation of the Missouri Synod’s own constitution, Article VIII, C, to wit: “[At synodical meetings] all matters of doctrine and of conscience shall be decided only by the Word of God. All other matters shall be decided by a majority vote.”

Indeed the 1950 Convention **resolved** *by majority vote*, notwithstanding St. Paul’s injunction in I Corinthians 1:10 that Christians “**all speak the same thing, that there be no divisions among [them], but that [they] be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment,**”

“...that we accept the ‘Common Confession’ as a statement of these doctrines *in harmony with Scriptures* [our emphasis];”

“...that, if the American Lutheran Church, in convention assembled accepts it, the ‘Common Confession’ shall be recognized as a *statement of agreement* on these doctrines between us and the American Lutheran Church...” [our emphasis];

“...that additional statements, originating in the same manner as the present ‘Common Confession,’ may be submitted [for *clarification or expansion*]...” — [again our emphasis of these words from the preceding *Whereas*].

(Cited from the *Proceedings of the Forty-first Regular Convention of the Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod*)

If indeed the *Common Confession* had been “in harmony with Scripture,” why would it need “clarification or expansion” (these words taken from the second *whereas* of an additional resolution)?? This proviso was **added** as a kind of “sop” to concerned delegates to make it appear as though the adopted version were still open for correction. The addition was therefore transparently deceptive and meaningless!

The *unthinkable* had happened! The Missouri Synod of C. F. W. Walther, August Graebner, Franz Pieper, Ludwig Fuerbringer, Theodore Engelder and other stalwart defenders of the truth and watchmen on Zion’s walls had sold its birthright of orthodoxy, of purity of doctrine, and of faithful Scriptural practice! It had forsaken both the standard and spirit of the *Brief Statement* in order to effect a sham fellowship with a patently heterodox church body, and it did so deliberately, deceptively, and wantonly! It’s slide into the abyss of heterodoxy was now complete! It had hit

bottom! It had *established heterodoxy* as its official stance, for the record! It no longer merely *tolerated* error (which in itself is a mark of heterodoxy), but it *sanctioned* and *embraced* error by laying its foundation upon a false confessional platform; and it left those who, by God's grace, were able to recognize, yea, to "*mark*" its unionistic character, those who desired still to continue in their Savior's Word and to be His disciples indeed, no legitimate choice but to leave it! (Romans 16:17). —But what would they do in the last analysis? The weeks and months to follow the convention would tell the tale, and the thoughts of many hearts would be revealed by their action or inaction!!

Thus in the summer of 1950, exactly seventy years ago, the *Common Confession* was officially adopted by majority vote of the delegates to the Milwaukee convention over the protests of many pastors, laymen and congregations who openly opposed it, publicly spoke against it, and had memorialized the Synod to reject it. For the first time in its long history of orthodoxy, the Missouri Synod *officially* espoused *false* doctrine and practice, renounced the need for *unanimity* in such matters, passed a union document of *compromise* deliberately worded in terms sufficiently vague to satisfy the heterodox American Lutheran Church, and systematically *opposed* any and all efforts to correct her. This same, now firmly established, *pattern of heterodoxy* continues to this day —seven decades later— with the absence of doctrinal discipline in her midst, the toleration of error side-by-side with the truth, union without unity, variance of doctrine and practice from church to church, pastor to pastor, and professor to professor, and the blatant persecution of those who still occasionally dare to admonish her.

—D. T. M.

(Adapted and updated from the author's convention essay in 2000.)

Why Christians Must Mark and Avoid Errorists

(and why we, seventy years ago, marked and avoided the Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod)

“Now I beseech you, brethren, mark them which cause divisions and offenses contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned; and avoid them. For they that are such serve not our Lord Jesus Christ but their own belly, and by good words and fair speeches deceive the hearts of the simple.”

— Romans 16:17-18

In obedience to the Word of God cited above, as well as Titus 3:10 and other passages of Holy Writ, a number of our original members withdrew from the Missouri Synod almost seventy years ago because of that Synod's progressive deterioration in doctrine and practice during the two preceding decades. The errors had been "*marked*," that is, identified, by many pastors and congregations in its midst by means of much patient admonition from the Word of God, but their words fell as it were on deaf ears, particularly on the part of the synod's controlling hierarchy; and its *unionistic character*, its willingness to engage in church work, worship and fellowship with errorists, became *officially entrenched* when it refused to discipline the signers of *A Statement* (Chicago, 1945), many of whom were influential leaders in the synod, and when it adopted in convention assembled the unscriptural, compromising *Common Confession* with the heterodox American Lutheran Church in 1950. In fact, *A Statement* specifically attacked our **title-text** in its effort to stifle admonition from the Word of God and to intimidate those who dared to criticize them. Note, for example, the following:

A Statement held that deviation in doctrine or practice from certain teachings of the Bible (what it called "details of doctrine") is not divisive of church fellowship (Cf. Acts 2:42; Amos 3:3; John 8:31-32; Jeremiah 23:28b; I Timothy 6:3; etc.). It held that not all acts of joint religious work and worship with persistent teachers of false doctrine or their adherents are to be regarded as religious unionism forbidden by God's Word (Cf. Amos 3:3;

Romans 16:17; I Timothy 6:5; II Corinthians 6:17). It held that any two or more Christians may meet and pray together if they do so for a good purpose (Cf. Amos 3:3; Acts 2:42). And it held that Romans 16:17-18 is not to be applied to all Christians who teach and support false doctrine, but that this passage is limited in its application to those who are not Christians — a distinction that is simply NOT in the text! Thus *A Statement* was the “gate-keeper” that attempted to silence orthodox pastors and congregations who protested against doctrinal compromise with the American Lutheran Church (now the E.L.C.A.).

The Apostle says of “*them*” who are to be marked that they disrupt the precious unity of Christ’s church by continuously *causing divisions and offenses* within it; that they *serve not our Lord Jesus Christ but their own self interests*; and that they are a clear and present danger to unwary, simple believers, whose faith they seek to destroy!

St. Paul speaks to **all Christians** —not just to the Christians in Rome; for all the Holy Scriptures “*were written for our learning*,” the Bible tells us (Romans 15:4) — and the cunning attacks of false teachers are worse now than ever before, and will continue to be more and more flagrant as the end-time draws near, Jesus warns us. —“**Brethren**,” Paul calls us who enjoy together the “*fellowship of the Gospel*” (Philippians 1:5), who endeavor to keep the “*unity of the Spirit*” (Ephesians 4:3), those who “*continue in (Christ’s) Word*” (John 8:31), who are “*perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment*” (I Corinthians 1:10). Only such are **true brethren** and can enjoy and practice **true Godpleasing fellowship** together (Amos 3:3)!

“*I beseech you*,” says Paul; “*I beg you!*” That’s how **important** a matter this is to you and to me as “*brethren*”! This is not so-called “apostolic advice” on Paul’s part, nor one of many “options” he offers us in an effort to guard our spiritual heritage of the truth! This is an **urgent injunction** or **command** which he begs us to observe: “**MARK them (identify them) which cause divisions and offenses contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned.**” False teachers of religion who disrupt the precious unity of Christ’s church by peddling their spiritual garbage are **identifiable**; and thank God that they are, or you and I would soon fall prey to them! How can we **mark** them?? How can we reliably **determine** who they are?? Oh, that’s **easy**, Paul says. They teach “*contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned.*” Needless to say, this “**mark[ing]**” will be difficult for those who don’t KNOW any doctrine, never LEARNED any in the first place, and constantly “blew off” opportunities to become spiritually educated. But those who “*learned*” their doctrine and “*exercised*” themselves (Hebrews 5:14) in applying it will be able to “*mark*” a false prophet with relative ease! Even KIDS can do it!

Why “**mark them**”?? And why “**AVOID them**,” that is, steer clear of them?? Because, by their false teaching “*contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned*,” they keep on [Gk.] “**causing divisions**” (that is, splits in the fellowship) by **disrupting** the unity of the brethren, driving wedges of error between them, and destroying their “orthodoxy,” their adherence to nothing but pure doctrine! (If anyone contaminated your child’s **food**, tampered with his **medicine**, introduced pollutants into his **water supply**, and released toxins into his **air**, you’d be mighty upset, wouldn’t you?? And if you could **identify** him, you’d report him to the police! AND, you’d “**avoid him**” like the plague and keep him away from your kids!! And nobody would have to “**beseech you**,” no one would have to **beg** you, to do it!!

Such false teachers also “[*continue to*] **caused offenses**,” that is, “*stumbling-blocks*” which, when laid in the path of unwary and unalert Christians trip them up along the pathway to heaven, derail their growth in the knowledge of Christian doctrine, cause them to stumble and detour them onto the path “*that leadeth to destruction*” (Matthew 7:13). False teachers cause people to **sin** against God and His precious Word, to **forsake** the only sure standard of faith, and ultimately to **lose their hold** on the crown of everlasting life purchased and won for them by their dear Savior!!—“**Mark them!**” Their purpose is to destroy the precious God-given unity of Christ’s church in His inerrant Word!!

Moreover, “*they that are such serve not our Lord Jesus Christ, but their own belly!*” Oh, they **claim** to serve Christ and His kingdom of grace; and they will have the **gall** to make that claim before His very judgment throne on the Last Day!! “*Many will say to Me in that day, ‘Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in Thy Name, and in Thy Name cast out devils, and in Thy Name done many wonderful works??’*”— even performed **miracles**?? —“*And then will I profess unto them, ‘I never knew you! Depart from Me, ye that work iniquity!’*” (Matthew 7:22-23). Jesus isn’t

taken in by their “*sheep’s clothing*,” and He enables **us as well** to locate the zipper in their flimsy costumes and to expose them as the “*ravening wolves*” they are (Matthew 7:15) — before they do **us** and **others** irreparable harm! Such spiritual wolves don’t “*spare the flock*,” Scripture tells us (Acts 20: 29), but they “*serve their own belly*” by devouring the very sheep they are **supposed** to be feeding!!

Those who continue, in spite of admonition, to tolerate, teach, espouse, foster, or propagate **false doctrine** (or **false practice**) “*contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned*”—regardless of how seemingly “insignificant” (in their estimation) the errors might be (mere “details of doctrine” – *A Statement*), and regardless of the praiseworthy motives that (they claim) drive them to do what they do “in the name of Jesus,” they’re not on **Jesus’** “team”! They’re not doing **His** bidding! They’re not “in **His** service” as they claim to be! They’re serving **themselves** and **their own** agendas; and they’re “*work[ing] iniquity*” instead of good (Matthew 7:23b)!

When you, “*brethren*,” spot such “belly-servers,” when you have “*mark[ed] them*” as errorists by comparing their teachings with those of Holy Scripture, when you know from the Lord Jesus’ own warning what they’re up to and the self-serving interests they have, don’t “snuggle up to them” by becoming their audience; don’t watch their presentations on TV; don’t purchase their poison and “snack” on it, as if it were a supplement to the wholesome food you partake of in the House of God! “**AVOID them!**” Your spiritual **health**, yea, your spiritual **life**, “*brethren*,” may depend on it!!

As St. Paul also points out with unmistakable clarity, errorists are not only hurting themselves by dealing “spiritual dope” on the streets, in the churches, on the airwaves, and in the printed word; but they are a **clear and present danger** to unwary, simple Christians in particular —those who in their spiritual weakness, often **self-imposed** by lack of *growth in grace and in the knowledge of their Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ* (II Peter 3:18) — become “sucker-bait” for their smooth pitches!!

Paul says that those who teach “*contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned*”—not just accidentally, unintentionally, or even carelessly, but **consistently**, in spite of correction—“*by good words and fair speeches deceive the hearts of the simple*.” Deceive means to “trick” someone, to lead him astray from the truth, to fool him into thinking that he is listening to a true prophet of God! This is a **deliberate tactic** on the part of errorists! Their deceit is subtly **couched** in Bible language and terminology; they carry Bibles in their hands and quote from them constantly; and thus they give the cleverly-crafted impression that they speak for Jesus as His ambassadors, when, in reality, **He** says: “*I never knew YOU!*” (Matthew 7:23). Much of what they say is actually the truth — “*good words*” which form the wooliest part of their “*sheep’s clothing*”! And other things just sound like the truth — “*fair speeches*” which entice the unwary listener to trust the message as well as the messenger.

And “*brethren*,” errorists target very deliberately, Paul says, “*the simple*”— **children** who are impressionable, **troubled youth** searching for answers to seemingly unsolvable problems, **poor souls** lost in the maze of spiritual ignorance, **novice Christians** who are still “*unskillful in the Word of righteousness*” (Hebrews 5), the **self-deluded** who, in their misdirected pride, **imagine** themselves able to do battle with these skilled con-artists, and those who are in some kind of physical or mental or spiritual distress! These are their victims, Paul says. They “*lie in wait*” (Ephesians 4:14b) specially for them!

But **you and I** dare not think that **we** are “immune” to their deceit! “*Let him that thinketh he standeth take heed, lest he fall!*” (I Corinthians 10:12). We’ve seen it happen to **pastors** in our own midst over the years, to theological **professors** even, as well as to countless **laymen** who let down their guard, imagined themselves to be well-informed and alert, and fell for the first smooth-talking spiritual “snake-oil” salesman that came along!!

“**MARK them... and AVOID them!**” warns the Lord’s Apostle; for they won’t rest until they have swept **you** off the sure foundation of the Apostles and Prophets (Ephesians 2:20), filled **you** with doubts and misgivings, made vain speculation and rationalism **your** standard of truth, confounded **your** faith with an improper distinction between Law and Gospel, confused **you** concerning the way to heaven by mixing justification and sanctification, and robbed **YOU**

of your crown! May the Lord strengthen all of us by ever more diligent study and growth in the Holy Scriptures, to be “*wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus*” our precious Savior, **and** make us “*thoroughly furnished unto all good works*”—equipped in particular to “**mark**” heterodoxy and heterodox teachers when we encounter them, and firmly resolved to “**avoid them**” with conviction and determination. To that end we pray with the hymnwriter:

“The haughty spirits, Lord, restrain
who o’er Thy church with might would reign
and always set forth something new
devised to change Thy doctrine true.” (TLH 292, 6)

—D. T. M.

Readiness to Give an Answer

Sanctify the Lord God in your hearts, and be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear.

— I Peter 3:15

We often hear Christian people, particularly laymen, express real frustration about their apparent inability to **talk** about the Lord Jesus to others, to **witness** boldly for Him and His blessed cause, and to **speak out** against error and in defense of His truth. And those who feel in themselves this inadequacy to stand up effectively for Jesus and His Word often retreat into what they imagine to be a sort of “justified silence,” leaving the matter of testifying to their **Pastor**, who, after all, they say, has been trained for that particular work.

Sadly, that is precisely what happened in **1950** when the Lutheran Church–Missouri Synod adopted the *Common Confession* and became a heterodox church body. Did the **pastors** of the Synod know what was going on, and did they have opportunity to protest? Indeed they did, as evidenced by the fact that quite a few officially filed memorials of objection with the Synod. Did the **laymen** know as well? In many cases, they were not kept abreast of the Synod’s slide into heterodoxy by their pastors who did not want to “rock the boat.” **But** many DID know what was going on and made no effort, together with their pastors, to “*give an answer*” to the question: “Are YOU willing to *go along* with the Synod’s creeping heterodoxy?” In some cases, the pastors bore witness; but their congregations did not join them in the fray; and ultimately some congregations actually **deposed** their confessing pastors, **choosing** to stay in the Synod rather than to “*mark*” it and “*avoid*” it (Romans 16:17). That, of course, was ultimately *their* testimony, *their* witness, *their* answer, for which they themselves must give account.

Such people forget, however, that the Lord Jesus Himself lays upon **every single Christian** the **duty**, yea, the high **privilege**, of confessing Him before men, of telling others about their Savior in personal missionwork, of defending their doctrinal position as Christians by citing pertinent Words of God as “prooftexts” of what they believe and confess, and of “*mark[ing]*,” that is, identifying and labeling those who, by their departure from the Holy Word of God, “*cause divisions and offenses*” in the church and thus lead others, particularly “*the simple*,” astray into the byways of error (Romans 16:17–18). This is not only the duty of Christian *pastors*, but is incumbent upon every believer in the Savior; for Jesus says in unmistakable words: “**Whosoever** therefore shall **confess** Me before men, him will I confess also before My Father which is in heaven; but **whosoever** shall **deny** Me before men, him will I also deny before My Father which is in heaven” (Matthew 10:32-33). This injunction of the Lord Jesus lays upon every Christian a solemn obligation—if he wishes to be His disciple; but it also shows or exhibits a common truth

here in this world, which even an *unbeliever* would no doubt accept, namely, that a person truly **convinced** and truly **dedicated to a cause** (whatever it is) will not hesitate to **speak about** it, to **defend** it, to **champion** it—even in the face of attack and ridicule on the part of bullies. And that a person truly **convinced** and truly **dedicated to the truth of God’s Word** as the **only source and standard of his faith** will not hesitate to **speak about** it, to **defend** it, and to **champion** it, even in the face of attack by *synodical* bullies!! And THAT’S why, when a person shrinks back from open confession of his cause, whatever that may be, he gives to those who observe his hesitancy *reasonable grounds* to doubt his commitment and conviction.

Now this very matter of unabashed confession and defense of our Savior’s Name, of His blessed cause, of the truth of His Word, and of the glorious peace and hope it offers to the contrite, penitent sinner—this the Apostle Peter addresses in particular in our title-text, as he brings us an exhortation to forthright Christian testimony.

Such testimony requires, first of all, conviction and confidence of the heart, wrought by the Savior’s gracious indwelling in His disciples; secondly, readiness and preparedness to come to the defense of our faith and hope in Him; and thirdly, meekness and Godly fear to deliver our testimony humbly, to His glory alone.

“*Sanctify the Lord God in your hearts,*” Peter exhorts us in the first words of our title-text. By God’s free grace and favor, having been brought to the knowledge of His Son through the working of the Holy Spirit in the Gospel, we Christians have the Lord Jesus, our Savior, actually “*dwell[ing] in [our] hearts by faith,*” as St. Paul writes to the Ephesians, chapter 3, verse 17. And, as Christ dwells there in our New Man, He causes us to bring forth “*much fruit*” in our lives of sanctification; for He says in John 15: “*He that abideth in Me and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit; for without Me, ye can do nothing*” (v. 5).

Now one of the foremost fruits of saving faith is firm **conviction** and **confidence** of the heart which is then increased in Christian sanctification (Luke 17:5); and, as this confidence is built up by the working of the Holy Spirit through the Means of Grace, the Gospel and the Sacraments, as Christians “*grow in grace and in the knowledge of [their] Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ*” (II Peter 3:18), their **gratitude** for God’s grace and mercy **moves them** to open their mouths and boldly to speak up for Jesus and His precious truth to others. Truly grateful Christians just can’t help talking about their Savior and all He has done for them, as the Apostles had to confess in Acts 4:20 when they had been commanded to keep quiet about Jesus: “*We cannot but speak the things which we have seen and heard!*” And the Apostle Paul quotes the Psalmist, when he says in II Corinthians 4:13, “*We believe and therefore speak.*” —“*The love of Christ constraineth [or forces] us*” (II Corinthians 5:14) to open our mouths in grateful testimony to others of what great things God has done for us poor miserable sinners! That love of Jesus is what **moves** or **motivates** us to testify **boldly** and **forthrightly** concerning our faith.

But forthright testimony requires not only conviction and the proper motivation which we have by “*sanctifying the Lord God in [our] hearts*” of faith. It also requires **readiness** and **preparedness** to come boldly to the **defense** of our faith and to give clear-cut and straightforward **answers** to everyone who asks or challenges us concerning what we believe in our hearts. For we read on in this verse: “*And be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you.*” This is indeed a “tall order” for the Christian. Note that the Apostle does NOT say: “TRY to be ready,” or “You really OUGHT to be ready,” as if we are permitted to come up with some excuse to release us legitimately from our sacred duty. No, the Apostle says: “**BE ready, ALWAYS**” in case anyone asks you at any time concerning your faith, **be** ready to “stand up for Jesus” (TLH 451), to defend His cause, and to confess Him before men.

But, in order for us to “*be ready,*” we must be **well prepared** and **thoroughly grounded** in the Word of God, the only source and standard of Christian doctrine. “*If any man speak,*” Peter writes in the very next chapter of this Epistle (v. 11), “*let him speak as the oracles of God,*” that is, in accordance with His Word. We must be ready at all times to **judge** what is preached and taught, what is said and done, what is questioned and challenged concerning our faith, concerning our “*hope*” in Christ for life everlasting by virtue of His *vicarious atonement!* And this **preparedness** includes not only the readiness to speak out foresquarely on the **principles** of God’s Word, but also the determination to apply the same in **practice**, lest we belie in our application what we confess with our mouths. Between **doctrine** and **practice** we dare never become guilty of duplicity (that is, of talking out of two sides of our mouths at the same time). For Jesus asks such two-faced people: “*Why call ye Me Lord, Lord, and do not the things which I say??*” (Luke 6:46). And the Apostle James instructs us that the Lord wants us to “*be doers of the Word and not hearers only, deceiving [our] own selves*” (James 1:22).

But now what if we **aren't** "ready" as Christians "to give an answer" concerning our faith? Are we then simply excused from doing so? No indeed! But then, just how do we **get** ready, how do we **get** prepared to confess our Savior before men? The Bible says: "Grow in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ" (II Peter 3:18). "Search the Scriptures," Jesus Himself tells us, for "they are they which testify of Me" (John 5:39); they provide the very words in which we should testify of Him to others. "Let the Word of Christ dwell in you **richly**," for then you will be well-equipped "in all wisdom [to] teach and admonish one another" (Colossians 3:16) and in fact to "be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you."

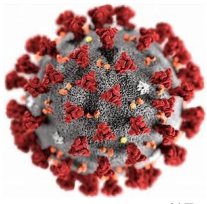
May we by God's grace never be found despising, that is thinking little of, His precious Word of Life, as if we have nothing more of it to learn, no growing in it to do, and no preparation to make for a ready testimony of our faith; for the Lord says through His prophet Jeremiah: "He that hath My Word," —and we by His grace and mercy still have it in its truth and purity—"let him speak My Word **faithfully**" (23:28). And in order to "speak" it "faithfully," we have to **read and study** it diligently so that we know what it says, **discuss it** often with our brethren (as we do in Bible Classes, Confirmation Classes and other venues of instruction), **hear it preached and taught** with all regularity as we have opportunity, and, with the gracious help of the Holy Spirit, let it be our **sole authority** for our faith and life. Moreover, we must continue in it as the **only source of reliable truth**, the truth that makes us free from sin, death and Satan, and free from the errors by which our adversaries "would deceive us and seduce us into misbelief, despair, and other great shame and vice" (Luther, 6th Petition), yea, the truth that assures us of our blessed adoption as the sons of God through faith in His Son (John 8:31-32).

But there is one other requirement for forthright Christian testimony, and that is a **spirit of meekness** and **Godly fear** to deliver our answer, our **defense of the hope that is in us**, humbly, to the glory of God. The very last words of our title-text point this out to us: "We should always to be ready to speak **a word of defense** (as the Greek of our text indicates) *concerning the Christian hope that is in us, but "in meekness and fear,"* Peter tells us. Our words must be devoid of our own human reason and powers of persuasion; for Christians are to "shun profane and vain babblings" which do not edify but only tear down. We must recognize, as **defenders** of our faith, that the wisdom of men is foolishness with God, and that we have no business trying to explain or to defend the teachings of God's Word with human reason, fair-sounding argumentation, and the philosophy of men. Instead, we **defend our faith** and show "a **reason of the hope that is in [us] with meekness and fear**" by citing **Scripture itself** as our foundation, and by bringing every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ and His Word of truth (II Corinthians 10:5). We testify as Christians "not with enticing words of **man's** wisdom, but in demonstration of the **Spirit and of power**," says Paul in I Corinthians 2:4.

And that "**power**," beloved witnesses of the Lord Jesus, that power, don't forget, is "the **Gospel of Christ**, ...the power of God unto salvation to everyone that believeth," the Bible tells us (Romans 1:16). The Gospel is the very means through which the Holy Spirit works, strengthens, and preserves saving faith in the hearts of men, and by which He makes our "answer" of testimony worth giving and worth hearing —**NOT** anything **in US** (like a gift for speaking, a fine powerful voice, a confident approach, a quick and flawless memory, or a smooth presentation). For we who testify concerning our wonderful "hope" in Christ are mere "earthen vessels" (II Corinthians 4:7), common clay pots in which these unspeakably wonderful words of the precious Gospel are delivered to men. It's not the container but the **contents** that possess the power of God Himself to convert a sinful, spiritually dead man into a newborn creature, a cleansed and adopted heir of everlasting life! —And so that many others besides ourselves are exposed to this precious Gospel of Jesus, this "power of God unto salvation," let us at all times be mindful of our duty and high privilege of making a **forthright testimony of our faith**, of "be[ing] ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh [us] a reason of the hope that is in [us], [but] with meekness and fear."

Then, having done by God's grace our Christian duty faithfully in testifying to the truth **in defense of our sure hope in Christ** —motivated only by **His** great love to us poor undeserving sinners, relying only upon **His** help and strength in making our testimony, being truly ready and well-prepared at all times by faithful study and growth in **His** Word, and finally, speaking boldly but humbly, so as to give all glory to **God**, to whom alone it is due— having done all that to the best of our feeble ability, we can say of our efforts: "We are **unprofitable** servants; we have [only] done that which was our **duty** to do" (Luke 17:10).

— D. T. M.



Help us, dear Lord!

“Be careful [anxious] for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God.”

—Philippians 4:6

Lord God, dear heavenly Father, may it please Thee according to Thy merciful providence to regard our beloved country in this time of peril as we experience a virtual pandemic of the virulent Coronavirus even now threatening each and every one of us with exposure and infection. Even as we exercise prudent measures to contain this virus and to protect ourselves, our loved ones, and our neighbors from contagion, keep us from anxiety, depression and despair, and cause us rather, by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving, to let our requests come before Thy throne of grace, commending ourselves to Thy special fatherly goodness for Jesus our Savior’s sake, that it may please Thee in Thine own best time and way to comfort us in this time of chastening and to relieve us from our various necessities, granting us meanwhile patience under our sufferings and a happy issue out of all our afflictions according to Thy promise that all things work together for good to them that love Thee, to them who are the called according to Thy gracious purpose. We ask this in the Name of Jesus Christ, our precious Redeemer, our only Mediator and Advocate at Thy throne. Amen.



If Thou But Suffer God to Guide Thee

If thou but suffer God to guide thee
and hope in Him through all thy ways,
He'll give thee strength, whate'er betide thee,
and bear thee through the evil days.
Who trusts in God's unchanging love
builds on the Rock that naught can move.

What can these anxious cares avail thee,
these never-ceasing moans and sighs?
What can it help if thou bewail thee
o'er each dark moment as it flies?
Our cross and trials do but press
the heavier for our bitterness.

Be patient and await His leisure
in cheerful hope, with heart content
to take whate'er thy Father's pleasure
and His discerning love hath sent,
nor doubt our inmost wants are known
to Him who chose us for His own.

God knows full well when times of gladness
shall be the needful thing for thee.
When He has tried thy soul with sadness
and from all guile has found thee free,
He comes to thee all unaware
and makes thee own His loving care.

Nor think amid the fiery trial
that God hath cast thee off unheard,
that he whose hopes meet no denial
must surely be of God preferred.
Time passes and much change doth bring
and sets a bound to everything.

All are alike before the Highest;
'tis easy for our God, we know,
to raise thee up, though low thou liest,
to make the rich man poor and low.
True wonders still by Him are wrought
who setteth up and brings to naught.

Sing, pray, and keep His ways unswerving,
perform thy duties faithfully,
and trust His Word. Though undeserving,
thou yet shalt find it true for thee:
God never will forsake in need
the soul that trusts in Him indeed.

(TLH 518, v. 7 adapted)

Churches in Fellowship

ORTHODOX LUTHERAN CHURCH OF EKATERINBURG

Ekaterinburg, Russia

The Rev. Roman G. Schurganoff, Pastor

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620039 Ekaterinburg, RUSSIA

E-mail: Schurganoff@mail.ru

CHRIST LUTHERAN CHURCH

Olu-Ama (Kula), Nigeria

(Pastoral Vacancy at present)

ST. PAUL'S LUTHERAN CHURCH

Abule Egba, Lagos, Nigeria

(Pastoral Vacancy at present)

HOLY TRINITY LUTHERAN CHURCH

Idama, Nigeria

The Rev. Innocent Karibo, Pastor

Holy Trinity Lutheran Church

Idama, Rivers State, NIGERIA

E-Mail: kanboinnocent@yahoo.com

SALEM LUTHERAN CHURCH

Abalama, Nigeria

The Rev. Bateinm Bestman, Pastor

Thompson Compound Abalama Abalama,

Rivers State, NIGERIA

ST. CLEMENT'S LUTHERAN CHURCH

Elem-Sangama, Nigeria

The Rev. Timothy Biobele Aaron, Pastor

St. Clement Lutheran Church,

Elem-Sangama Arch-Deaconry

Elem-Sangama, Rivers State, NIGERIA

E-Mail: tbaaron2@gmail.com

ST. MATTHEW'S LUTHERAN CHURCH

Port Harcourt, Nigeria

The Rev. Onimim Frank, Pastor

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Port Harcourt, Rivers State, NIGERIA

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ST. PAUL'S LUTHERAN CHURCH

Kula, Nigeria

(Pastoral Vacancy at present)

St. Paul's Lutheran Church

Kula, Rivers State, NIGERIA

ST. PAUL'S NYEMONI LUTHERAN CATHEDRAL

Abonnema, Nigeria

The Rev. Nimi B. Fyeface, Pastor

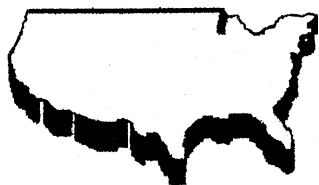
The Rev. Faith N. J. Asembo, Co-Pastor

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Worship Service 10:00 a.m.

The Rev. DAVID T. MENSING, Pastor

17151 South Central Avenue, Oak Forest, IL 60452-4913

E-mail: pastormensing@yahoo.com

On the Web at
PeaceEvLutheran.com

Office Telephone: (708) 532-4288

Pastor: (708) 532-9035
Pastor's Cell: (708) 601-3943

ST. JOHN'S LUTHERAN CHURCH

Sixth and Tangent Streets, Lebanon, OR 97355

Sunday School & Bible Class 10:00 a.m.

Worship Service 11:00 a.m.

The Rev. PAUL E. BLOEDEL, Pastor

483 Tangent Street, Lebanon, OR 97355

E-mail: revbloedel@gmail.com

Telephone: (541) 258-2941

Pastor: (541) 258-2941

ST. LUKE'S LUTHERAN CHURCH

5350 South Fountain Street, Seattle, WA 98178

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

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On the Web at
StLukes-CLC.com

Telephone: (206) 723-1078

(Pastoral Vacancy at present)

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

Worship Service 7:00 p.m.

Adult Bible Class 4:30 p.m.

Adult Catechism Class 8:30 p.m.

ST. MARK'S EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH

22012 Torrence Avenue, Sauk Village, IL 60411

Sunday School & Bible Class 10:00 a.m.

Worship Service 11:00 a.m.

The Rev. DAVID J. MENSING, Pastor

22012 Torrence Avenue, Sauk Village, IL 60411

E-mail: d_rnensing@hotmail.com

On the Web at
StMarksEvLutheran.com

Telephone: (708) 757-6859

Pastor: (708) 655-7549

TRINITY EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH

300 North Ridgeland Avenue, Oak Park, IL 60302

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

Worship Service 10:15 a.m.

The Rev. ROBERT J. LIETZ, Pastor

233 North Cuyler Avenue, Oak Park, IL 60302

E-mail: robertjlietz@gmail.com

On the Web at
TrinityEvLutheran.com

Telephone: (708) 386-6773

Pastor: (708) 386-4145

(During the current pandemic, please call the respective pastors regarding **assembled** or alternative **“virtual”** services.)

Here we stand!

where by God's grace we have stood for seventy years:

“We have no intention of yielding aught of the eternal, immutable truth of God for the sake of temporal peace, tranquility, and unity (which, moreover, is not in our power to do). Nor would such peace and unity, since it is devised against the truth and for its suppression, have any permanency. Still less are we inclined to adorn and conceal a corruption of the pure doctrine and manifest, condemned errors. But we entertain heartfelt pleasure and love for, and are on our part sincerely inclined and anxious to advance, that unity according to our utmost power, by which His glory remains to God uninjured, nothing of the divine truth of the Holy Gospel is surrendered, no room is given to the least error, poor sinners are brought to true, genuine repentance, raised up by faith, confirmed in new obedience, and thus justified and eternally saved alone through the sole merit of Christ.” (*Triglotta, Formula of Concord, Thorough Declaration XI, p. 1095.*)