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OPENING SERMON
of the
37th Annual Convention
of the
CONCORDIA LUTHERAN CONFERENCE

Preached by the Rev. M. L. Natterer, President

TEXT: "For our conversation is in heaven; from whence also we look for the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ." Phil. 3:20

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Beloved Brothers and Sisters in Christ:

The theme which has been chosen for this 37th Convention of our Concordia Lutheran Conference is indeed a most appropriate one. *"The end of all things is at hand"* (I Pet. 4:7). Certainly no wide awake Christian can deny that we are living in the last evil days of the world. The signs which the Lord has revealed to us in His holy Word are well known to us: wars, famines, pestilences, earthquakes in various places, the love of many waxing cold, the bitter and deriding hatred which all faithful confessors of God's Word experience, the multiplication of the false prophets, the materialism with which people are obsessed, etc. As the budding of the flowers and trees serve as a reminder to us that summer is nigh at hand, so also the fulfilment of all of these signs should serve to remind us Christians that we should lift up our heads and know that our redemption draweth nigh, that the Final Day is even at the door. Ah, what a magnificent sight that will be when the Lord Jesus bursts forth in the clouds of heaven accompanied by all of His holy angels to lead the Church Militant as the Church Triumphant into the eternal mansions of heaven.

"And when within that lovely Paradise
At last I safely dwell,
What songs of bliss shall from my lips arise,
What joy my tongue shall tell,
While all the saints are singing
Hosannas o'er and o'er,
Pure hallelujahs ringing
Around me evermore!" (Hymn 619)

But, my dear brothers and sisters in the Lord, we are not there yet. We are still in this vale of tears surrounded by those who seek to hinder us from being partakers of that eternal joy. The devil, the world, and our own sinful flesh, give us no peace or rest day or night in their attempt to lead us through that wide and broad gate which leads to destruction. It is, therefore, imperative that we Christians watch and pray lest we enter into temptation, that we fight the good fight by using the Sword of the Spirit, the Word of God, so that when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with His mighty angels, it shall be a day of joy for us. Let us then in this opening service of our Convention direct our attention to the question:

Do We Strive To Live Every Day in the Light of Judgment Day?

First of all, the Apostle points out that we are really citizens of heaven. Here we have no continuing and abiding city, but we look forward to our heavenly city, the house of many mansions, where we shall behold the Lamb for sinners slain. The fact that we are citizens of that heavenly country is due to the miraculous change which God the Holy Spirit brought about in us at the time of our conversion. When God the Holy Ghost quickened us from our spiritual death, right then and there we became new creatures in Christ. Our attitude became the same as that of the Apostle Paul, "*I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus*" (Phil. 3:14). Being Christians does NOT mean that with our conversion we thereby attained unto the state of perfection in our lives! Far from it! The old evil foe, together with the world and our flesh, seeks to hinder us at every turn from bringing forth the fruits of our faith as we should. Hence it is a constant struggle to do the good and avoid the evil. Daily we must implore our dear heavenly Father to grant us the aid of His Holy Spirit that the fruits of our faith might be brought forth in ever richer abundance. And the fact that our dear Savior is returning should not deter us in the least from being diligent in good works; on the contrary, it should encourage us! Jesus says, "*Therefore be ye also ready: For in such an hour as ye think not the Son of Man cometh. Who then is a faithful and wise servant, whom his lord hath made ruler over his household, to give them meat in due season? Blessed is that servant, whom his lord when he cometh shall find so doing. Verily I say unto you, That he shall make him ruler over all his goods...*" (Matt. 24:24ff).

Secondly, just as it is the very nature of a good tree to bear fruit, so it is the very nature of faith to bear the fruits of good works. The Savior declares, "*Every good tree bringeth forth good fruit*" (Matt. 7:17). A tree bears fruit not for its own benefit but for the good of others! And in speaking of good works, let us not think that only those who perform outstanding works which are praiseworthy in the eyes of men are necessarily the works which are well-pleasing in the sight of God! Only those works are acceptable in the sight of God which proceed forth from a heart that has been melted by the grace of God in Christ! Thus Martin Luther correctly emphasized the Scriptural truth that a Christian who is diligent in his calling as a husband and father, as a wife and mother, as a son or daughter, as an employer or employee, as a government official or a citizen, doing the work allotted to him according to the ability which God has given him out of love to God and the mercy which he has received in Christ - that individual is doing works which are well-pleasing in the sight of God! And when the Savior comes the Christians will be rewarded by Him (Matt. 25:31ff) according to God's own promise. A Christian, on the other hand, does not perform works because of the reward, but out of love of God; the reward is one of pure grace and mercy. Just as a son should serve his parents willingly and without reward, so also we Christians should serve God willingly. The son who serves his parents merely for the sake of the inheritance would indeed be a wicked child and deserve to be cast off by his father.

Thirdly, striving to live every day in the light of Judgment Day means that we are also to be diligent in preaching the Gospel in all of its purity and sweetness. When the heart has been smitten by the Law of God and the heart cries out,

"Alas, my God, my sins are great,
My conscience doth upbraid me;
And now I find that in my strait
No man hath pow'r to aid me.

"And fled I hence in my despair
In some lone sport to hide me,
My griefs would still be with me there
And peace still be denied me." (Hymn 317)

In the Gospel alone do we find the forgiveness of sins, peace of heart and conscience, and the assurance of an everlasting life with Jesus in the joys of heaven. Through the Gospel the Lord of lords announces to us, "*Son, be of good cheer; thy sins be forgiven thee*" (Matt. 9:2). The Lord of the Church has given us the commission to go into all the world, and preach the Gospel to every creature (Mark 16:15). This is an obligation of which we as individuals in the local congregations forming our Conference should never tire. For "*it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth*" (Rom. 1:16). The Day of Judgment will not come until the last of the elect has been brought into the Holy Christian Church. Jesus says, "*And this Gospel of the Kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations; and then shall the end come*" (Matt. 24:14).

Furthermore, preaching the Gospel also means that we are to conform our whole lives in accord with that Gospel of Christ. We are to adorn the preaching of the Gospel with a holy life and conduct. The Apostles says in our text, "*Our conversation (our behavior, conduct) is in heaven.*" Of course we are still in the world, but we are to use this world, as not abusing it: For the fashion of this world passeth away (I Cor. 7:31). In his Epistle to Titus the Apostle reminds us, "*Teaching us that denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in the present world*" (Titus 2:12). After all, we are passing through this world only as strangers and pilgrims. And the Apostle Peter writes, "*Dearly beloved, I beseech you as strangers and pilgrims, abstain from fleshly lusts, which war against the soul*" (I Pet. 2:11). If our dreams, expectations, and hopes are built upon this life and the things of this world - then surely we are not strangers and pilgrims here but act as though we were going to live on this earth for eternity. Remember, that one of the signs of the last days will be the accent upon the things of this world, even as it characterized the days before the Flood (Matt. 24:37ff). And since the things of this world are so appealing to our sinful flesh, let us strive to live every day in the light of Judgment Day.

A word of warning is certainly in place. Let no one think that his faith is so strong that he does not have to concern himself about temptation! Very clearly and unmistakably the Apostle warns, "*Wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth, take heed, lest he fall*" (I Cor. 10:12). To keep our faith strong we must use the means which God has given to us to keep our faith strong - the Word of God! O how careless and indifferent many become! They see to it that their bodies are kept nourished and well-supplied with food and drink; they see to it that they are surrounded with the comforts of this life, but alas, they fail to heed the admonition of the Lord Jesus, "*Labor not for the meat which perisheth, but for that meat which endureth unto everlasting life*" (John 6:27). Bibles are not opened and read regularly, church attendance is often "hit and miss;" the Lord's Supper is not received frequently, etc. Is it any wonder that the faith which such careless individuals possessed at one time gradually fades until it no longer exists! He who refuses to eat nourishing food soon becomes so emaciated in his body that his health soon fails and death results. This is not conjecture; this is a fact which every reasonable person knows. And so it is with the soul. Take away the nourishment and the inevitable result is spiritual death! Would we strive to live everyday in the light of Judgment Day, then let us see to it that the Word of God dwells in us richly!

Even though we are strangers and pilgrims here, nonetheless, we still have our sinful flesh. Hence we often rebel when we experience the bitter enmity from those who are not of the household of faith. But we are not to allow ourselves to be conquered by the evil that the enemy may show us so that we are incited to thoughts of hatred and revenge, but rather we should seek to subdue the enemy by kindness. Listen to what the Apostle says, "*Recompense to no man evil for evil...avenge not yourselves, but rather give place unto wrath: For it is written, Vengeance is Mine; I will repay, saith the Lord.*"

Therefore if thine enemy hunger, feed him; if he thirst, give him drink; for in so doing thou shalt heap coals of fire on his head. Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good" (Rom. 12:17-21). We are not to allow our wrath to gain its object, for the wrath of man worketh not the righteousness of God. (Cp. James 1:19,20). The Day of Judgment is coming and the Scriptures assure us that it is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God (Heb. 10:30,31).

The lot of every faithful Christian in this life is by no means an easy one. The Lord says, *"Many are the afflictions of the righteous" (II Tim. 3:12)*. Now we are not to allow ourselves to be dragged down into despair because of these afflictions, trials and tribulations, but rather *"rejoice, inasmuch as ye are partakers of Christ's sufferings; that, when His glory shall be revealed, ye may be glad also with exceeding joy" (I Pet. 4:13)*. If we look to the Lord who has created the true faith within our hearts He has promised to uphold and sustain us and will finally deliver us out of all our troubles by a blessed death when we enter our true Home. May we, then, as we open our 37th Convention, place all matters in the light of Judgment Day and walking in the light of that Day our lives will shape themselves aright! *"For our conversation is in heaven; from whence also we look for the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ."* Amen.

SUNDAY SERMON
for the
37th Annual Convention
of the
CONCORDIA LUTHERAN CONFERENCE
June 26, 1988

Preached by the Rev. Mark W. Dierking

SERMON TEXT: "But now [God] commandeth all men every where to repent: Because He hath appointed a day, in the which He will judge the world in righteousness by that man whom He hath ordained." Acts 17:31b,32a

SERMON THEME: "God Hath Appointed A Day In Which He Will Judge the World In Righteousness"

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Dearest brothers and sisters in Christ Jesus,

The theme for this, the 37th Annual Convention of our Conference, is apt and timely - because it is true - "The End of All Things Is At Hand." That the Last Day is a fact is testified to by the Scriptures. Indeed, the Savior Himself states that He will come again in judgment when He says, "*The Son of man shall come in His glory, and all the holy angels with Him, then shall He sit upon the throne of His glory: And before Him shall be gathered all nations: and He shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats: And He shall set the sheep on His right hand, but the goats on His left,*" (Matt. 25:31-33). This world is ripe for judgment. The writer to the Hebrews expresses it well when he says: "*Now that which decayeth and waxeth old is ready to vanish away,*" (Heb. 8:13).

Over the past three days, we have heard in our Convention Essay about some of the false ideas regarding the Second Coming of Christ, specifically, of the baseless notion that Christ is going to come and establish an earthly kingdom in which He will rule for one thousand years. There will be no earthly kingdom, nor will there be two judgments, but only one judgment, for God hath appointed a Day of judgment, not days. In the sermon with which our Convention was opened, the Apostle Paul urged us through the text to live every day of our lives as if this day were our last day on earth, as if today were Judgment Day. Permit me to take you down the same path, but with a somewhat different perspective, yet, with the same goal in mind, namely, that we live each day as though today were Judgment Day. In our sermon this morning, I want to remind you of that which the Lord so graciously reminds us all so frequently in the Scriptures, the plain fact of Judgment Day, that it will take place, and that on that Day, God will judge this world. Thus, under our text and with the help of God's Holy Spirit, I ask you to consider with me the fact that

"God Hath Appointed A Day In Which He Will Judge the World in Righteousness."

Our theme also constitutes the two divisions of our sermon this morning, namely:

1. That God Hath Appointed A Day Of Judgment, and,
2. That on that day He will judge the world in righteousness.

May our prayer be as we hear God's precious Word this morning that He would renew in us watchfulness as well as joyful anticipation of that day in which all the sons of God shall be delivered from this vale of tears. Amen.

I.
God Hath Appointed a Day of Judgment

That God hath appointed a Day of Judgment, a day on which Christ will come in all His glory to judge both the quick and the dead, is a fact taught so clearly and so frequently in the Scriptures that it seems inconceivable that anyone could forget it, much less doubt it. The God-appointed Day of Judgment is not a doctrine which arose with the New Testament Church or even with the first Advent of Christ. From Moses to Malachi, the Old Testament Scriptures joyously testify to the fact, and the Old Testament saints looked with anticipation to the fact that God would Judge this world in righteousness.

David testifies in Psalm 96: *"Say among the heathen that the Lord reigneth: the world also shall be established that it shall not be moved: He shall judge the people righteously. Let the heavens rejoice, and let the earth be glad; let the sea roar, and the fulness thereof. Let the field be joyful, and all that is therein: Then shall all the trees of the wood rejoice before the Lord: For He cometh, for He cometh to judge the earth: He shall judge the world with righteousness, and the people with His truth."* David understood what Paul expressed so beautifully over a thousand years later in his Epistle to the Romans (8:19-23), that *"the earnest expectation of the creature waiteth for the manifestation of the sons of God. For the creature was made subject to vanity, not willingly, but by reason of Him that hath subjected the same in hope. Because the creature also shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God. For we know that the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now. And not only they, but ourselves also, which have the firstfruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body,"* a redemption which will take place on that Day.

In Ecclesiastes it is written that *"God shall judge the righteous and the wicked: for there is a time for every purpose and for every work,"* (Ec. 3:7). Daniel, that sainted hero of the faith, dedicates nearly the entire last half of his book to foretelling the events of the Last Day and those things which lead up to that day. And he testifies of the Judgment Day, a day which he saw by the Spirit of God, saying, *"A fiery stream issued and came forth from before Him: thousand thousands ministered unto Him, and ten thousand times ten thousand stood before Him: the judgment was set, and the books were opened,"* (Dan. 7:10). And Malachi, the last of the Old Testament prophets, speaks of that Day appointed by God when he says, *"Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord,"* (Mal. 4:5).

Jesus often spoke of the Last Day, words of encouragement and caution to His disciples and other followers, and words of warning to the scribes, Pharisees and other self-righteous of that time and all time. Especially in the last days of Jesus' earthly life did He speak of the great and terrible Day. To the self-righteous Jesus said, *"But I say unto you, It shall be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon at the Day of judgment than for you,"* (Matt. 11:22). But to the faithful, to those who knew that He was the Word of Life, Jesus gave gracious promises and urged all those who longed for that Day to live their lives accordingly; for example, *"Ye have not chosen Me, but I have chosen you, and ordained*

you, that ye should go and bring forth fruit, and that your fruit should remain," (John 15:16). To all His disciples of all time, Jesus graciously promises: *"In My Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto Myself: that where I am, there ye may be also,"* (John 14:2,3). And in Matthew, Jesus exhorts all of us with these words: *Watch therefore; for ye know neither the day nor the hour wherein the Son of man cometh,"* (Matt. 25:13).

Even the angels of God brought the message of the Last Day when two of them appeared unto the disciples as Jesus ascended into heaven and said: *"Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven? this same Jesus which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen Him go into heaven,"* (Acts 1:11).

All the followers of Christ took this message of their Lord and Savior to heart. Over and over again the writers of the New Testament testify not only of the Day of Judgment, but also of its imminence. Paul says to the congregation at Philippi: *"Let your moderation be known unto all men. The Lord is at hand,"* (Phil. 4:5). James exhorts all his readers *"be ye also patient; stablish your hearts: for the coming of the Lord draweth nigh,"* (James 5:8).

Thus, the Scriptures clearly testify to the fact that God has appointed a Day in which to judge the world. As to when that Day will come, that information remains in the secret counsels of God. Even Jesus, according to His State of Humiliation, did not know the Day of Judgment. He says, *"But of that Day and hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels in heaven, but My Father only,"* (Matt. 24:36). This means that Christians must always be prepared, expecting the Second Advent of their Lord at any moment. But the Lord, who above all is gracious, knows our frame, knows the weakness of our sinful flesh, and to help us overcome our inherent weakness and regrettable forgetfulness, even as Christians, our gracious God has set up various signposts on the highway of time, signs on the earth, and in the sky, and signs in the Church, signs which are to be indicative to us Christians that the end of time is upon us.

These signs are numerous, some very specific, some more general; some already past, some taking place even now, and some yet to come. These signs, which, again, are to remind us of the imminent return of Christ, can generally be divided into two groups: Those taking place in the physical universe, including the world of men, and those taking place within the visible Church on earth.

Signs in the physical world that the Last Day is quickly approaching are those which are in the universe itself, signs in the sun, in the moon, and the stars, in the planets and constellations. The point that God would have each of you draw from all these signs is that each earthquake, each eclipse, each event in the heavens (such as the recent discovery of a supernova), each flood, each drought, each epidemic, each famine, each plague and disease, each war or rumour of war, each one of these - each time it happens - is a warning and a sign that the great and dreadful day of the Lord is near.

There is at least one sign having to do with the world of men that Christians must not only watch for, but be on guard against, and that is the materialism that the Lord warns us will be a precursor of the end. In Luke 17, Jesus says, *"And as it was in the days of Noe, so shall it also be in the days of the Son of man. They did eat, they drank, they married wives, they were given in marriage, until the day that Noe entered into the ark, and the flood came, and destroyed them all. Likewise also as it was in the days of Lot; they did eat, they drank, they bought, they sold, they planted, they builded; but the same day that Lot went out of Sodom it rained fire and brimstone from heaven, and de-*

stroyed them all. Even thus shall it be in the day when the Son of man is revealed," (vs. 26-30. Materialism is the god of the world today. Spiritual complacency and personal gratification are literally the "buy" - "b-u-y" - words in today's world - a situation much like that at the time of Noah and again at Lot's time. The children of this world go merrily along their way, seeking their pleasures, eating, drinking, marrying and giving in marriage. Their attitude is the same as that of the man in the Parable of the Rich Man who said, *"I will say to my soul, Soul, thou hast much goods laid up for many years; take thine ease, eat, drink, and be merry,"* (Luke 12:19). But as with that man, whose soul was taken from him that very night by God, so also will it be for most men when Christ comes again. People today are not asking, *"What must I do to be saved?"* but rather, *"What can I do to save, to save a penny, a dime, a dollar?"* Good and careful stewardship of the Lord's blessings is not wrong; indeed, it is required by Scripture itself. However, Jesus warns us: *"Where your treasure is, there will your heart be also,"* (Matt. 6:21). We Christians, too, can fall into the trap of materialism so easily. Simply worrying over things is a form of materialism; and tragically, it can go beyond worry. The possession of things can become so all-consuming that one can even jeopardize his soul's salvation for the sake of obtaining those things. Materialism is idolatry, making earthly possessions and concern's one's God. Christians should remember, therefore, the words of Paul to Timothy: *"For we brought nothing into this world, and it is certain we can carry nothing out. And having food and raiment let us be therewith content. But they that will be rich (in other words, they that want to be rich) fall into temptation and a snare, and into many foolish and hurtful lusts, which drown men in destruction and perdition. For the love of money is the root of all evil: which while some coveted after, they have erred from the faith, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows,"* (I Tim. 6:7-10). God guard us against such thinking and keep us ever mindful of the Savior's words of warning: *"For what shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? Or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?"* (Mark 8:36,37).

There is yet one other sign of the imminence of the Last Day which no Christian should ever let stray far from his heart and mind, and that is the great apostacy or falling away from the faith. Jesus Himself asks the question, *"When the Son of man cometh, shall He find faith on the earth?"* (Luke 18:8). The Apostle Paul warns of this great falling away, this great apostacy, in II Thessalonians 2:3 when he says: *"Let no man deceive you by any means: for that Day shall not come, except there come a falling away first."* In our day and time, these words of Paul have certainly come to pass. In all of visible Christendom, we know of only one orthodox church body in which the Word of God is still taught in all its truth and purity, and that church body is ours - five small congregations - less than four hundred souls. We pray there are others out there of which we do not know. We do believe and teach that by God's limitless grace and a fortunate inconsistency there may well be believers in the heterodox church bodies, but, oh, how great is the risk to their souls. For the leaven of false doctrine can finally destroy saving faith itself, and Satan has sown the seed of that leaven everywhere. Indeed, look at the attacks he has leveled at our own Conference through former pastors, whom for decades we called brethren. As Paul warned Timothy, *"The time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears; and they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables,"* (II Tim. 4:3). It is not without reason, then, that the Lord Jesus admonishes all of us in His Revelation to St. John: *"Behold, I come quickly: Hold that fast which Thou hast, that no man take thy crown,"* (Rev. 3:11).

My dear brethren, these and the other signs of Christ's coming are given us by our gracious God that we might ever be conscious of the fact that Christ will come again, and to recognize that the time of His coming is imminent. Therefore, we must be prepared, we must be ready to face our God, for The End of All Things Is At Hand; and, as

we shall see in the second part of our sermon, when Jesus comes again, He will not come in lowliness to redeem a lost and sinful world, He will not be found in the straw of a manger in a little village in Palestine, He will not come in submission to anything, but rather in all the glory, honor, and power of the Almighty God Himself; *"And then shall they see the Son of man coming in a cloud with power and great glory,"* (Luke 21:27); for this time,

II.

He Will Come to Judge the World in Righteousness.

Yes, God has not only appointed the Day and hour of Judgment, He has also appointed the Judge. The Scriptures testify also to this fact over and over again. Our text itself states clearly that God will judge this world in righteousness *"by that man whom He hath ordained,"* His only-begotten Son. Jesus Himself says that *"the Father judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgment unto the Son,"* (John 5:22). And Peter testified to Cornelius and his household: *"And He commanded us to preach unto the people, and to testify that it is He which was ordained of God to be the Judge of quick and dead,"* (Acts 10:42). So when Christ comes again, He will come as the God-ordained Judge of the living and the dead, the Final Judge of all men.

And as our text says, *"He will judge the world in righteousness."* Let us make no mistake about this, dear friends: The Last Judgment will be made on the basis of the Law of God, on the basis of works. Heresy you cry? Listen to the testimony of both the Old and New Testament Scriptures: In Psalm 62:12, David writes: *"Also unto Thee, O Lord, belongeth mercy: for Thou renderest to every man according to his work."* The Lord says through the prophet Jeremiah: *"I the Lord search the heart, I try the reins, even to give every man according to his way, and according to the fruits of his doings,"* (Jer. 17:10). Jesus Himself says, *"For the Son of man shall come in the glory of His Father with His angels: And then He shall reward every man according to His works,"* (Matt. 17:27). The Apostles also testify to the truth that the Judgment shall be on the basis of our works. Paul tells us that *"we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad,"* (II Cor. 5:10). And Peter warns all that God is no respecter of persons, *"but judgeth according to every man's work,"* (I Pet. 1:17). Thus, Scripture clearly teaches that, when Christ judges this world in righteousness, it will be on the basis of man's works, on the basis of God's Law.

Now, you think, "If the judgment is to be made on the basis of my works, on the basis of the Law, I have no chance. Indeed, how can any man be saved? I know the judgment of God, *"The wages of sin is death,"* (Rom. 6:23) and I know I have sinned, and *"the soul that sinneth, it shall die!"* Indeed, I know that God's Word says that *"they are all gone aside, they are all together become filthy; there is none that doeth good, no, not one,"* (Ps. 14:3) and that *"there is not a just man upon earth that doeth good and sinneth not,"* (Eccl. 7:20)."

Knowing all of these things, and knowing that Christ will judge the world in righteousness, on the basis of the Law, we would all have to cry out with Isaiah, *"Woe is me! for I am undone; because I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips,"* (Is. 6:5). But, my dear Christian friend, all is not lost, even though the Righteous Judge shall make His judgment of you on the basis of the Law. Why do you think that in nearly every sermon Sunday after Sunday your pastor tells you of the Active and Passive Obedience of your Lord Jesus Christ; that this Jesus, as your Substitute, came into this world, made of a woman, made under the Law, in order to fulfill that Law in your stead; that this same Christ took upon Himself all your sins and suffered and died

for them, enduring the wrath of God against your sins, removing the guilt and suffering the punishment you deserve because of those sins? Why else but that you might joyfully anticipate the Day of Judgment in which Christ will judge the world in righteousness. For by faith in the substitutionary redemptive work of Jesus, faith worked in you by God at your Baptism, faith preserved in you by the Holy Ghost through the Means of Grace (the Word and the Lord's Supper) the righteousness of Christ, that is, His perfect keeping of the Law, is imputed or charged to you. You wear the garment of Christ's righteousness. As Paul testifies, *"For ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus. For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ,"* (Gal. 3:26,27). Thus, even though you will be judged on the basis of the Law, you will be found righteous; and that judgment will be righteous despite your many sins, for you have been declared righteous, without sin, perfect and holy; the righteousness of Christ has been imputed to you by God for Jesus' sake, and you, by the grace of God, have put on that righteousness by faith.

A new man has been created in you, a new man which is righteous, whose will is in perfect harmony with the will of God, whose delight it is to do the will of God. This new man knows all that God has done for you, and in thankful love, that new man wants to bring your Old Man, your sinful flesh which is still with you, into subjection to it, in subjection to Christ, to do His will. Knowing that the righteousness of Christ has been imputed to you already, it is not from fear of judgment that you obey God and His commands, for Christ has redeemed you from that fear; but as Paul testifies, *"the love of Christ constraineth us,"* (II Cor. 5:14). Therefore, even though your flesh remains with you, even though, despite your best efforts with the help of the Holy Ghost, you fall into sin, even though most times you find yourself so guilty before God that you cry out with Paul, *"O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?"* (Rom. 7:24), nevertheless, you can joyfully anticipate the Day of Christ's righteous judgment; for you can answer with Paul, I thank God through Christ my Lord, *"who was delivered for [my] offenses and raised again for [my] justification,"* (Rom. 4:25).

The Last Day will be a day of deliverance for you, a day of joy and fulfilled anticipation. The dead will be raised and the bodies and souls of all saints, living and dead, yours included, will be made perfect, wanting for nothing, received into perfect bliss in the presence of their God and Savior for all eternity! However, for those who must stand upon their own merits because they have rejected the redemptive work of Christ Jesus, it will be a fearful day of reckoning. The unbelieving dead also will be raised from their graves and will, together with the unbelievers still living upon the earth, realize in an instant, in the blink of eye, not only their sins and the righteous judgment of God that they be condemned to eternal torments where *"their worm shall not die, neither shall their fire be quenched"* (Is. 66:24); where *"there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth"* (Matt. 8:12), but they will also know instantly to their everlasting regret and despair their folly in rejecting the only Savior of all mankind, the Lord Jesus Christ; for they, too, shall see Him, and they will be forced to confess, not with joy but with terror, *"that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father,"* (Phil. 2:11).

These are the facts of the Day of Judgment, the Day appointed by God on the which He will judge the world in righteousness by the Lord Jesus Christ. Knowing these facts should move us to cling to Christ through His Word all the more firmly for life and salvation, doing the work He has given us to do while it is day, before the night cometh, when no man can work; to be watchful and aware of the signs of our Lord's return lest that day come upon us unawares; and to anticipate joyfully the end or ultimate consummation of our faith in the eternal glories of heaven. *"Being found in Him not having our own righteousness of the Law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith,"* (Phil. 3:9). The End of All Things Is At Hand! *"He*

which testifieth these things saith, Surely I come quickly. Amen. Even so, come, Lord Jesus," (Rev. 22:20) Amen.

THE FALSE CLAIMS OF THE MILLENNIALISTS
The Rev. E. R. Stallings, Jr.

Introduction

The theme of our convention is, "The end of all things is at hand." (I Peter 4:7) Hence, our focus is upon the last times, the end of the world, and Judgment Day.

The verse of Scripture which forms our convention theme concludes with this statement: "*Be ye therefore sober, and watch unto prayer.*" This means that in view of the last times we are to be especially serious about our faith, and prayerfully vigilant about the spiritual dangers which Satan and the world seek to thrust upon our souls. In particular, we Christians of the last days are to be on guard against false doctrine. Just as true doctrine is able to save our souls, so also false doctrine is able to destroy our souls. Even a little false doctrine is dangerous. "*A little leaven leaveneth the whole lump,*" Gal. 5:9.

The dangers of false doctrine are now all the more prevalent since according to Scripture false Christs and false prophets will abound in the last times. In fact, false prophets and false doctrine constitute the chief sign of the end. We do well to hear just a few texts which make this clear. Our Lord Jesus says, "*For there shall arise false Christs, and false prophets, and shall shew great signs and wonders; insomuch that, if it were possible, they shall deceive the very elect,*" Matt. 24:24. The Apostle John says, "*Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God: Because many false prophets are gone out into the world,*" I John 4:1.

That people will fall prey to these false prophets and be influenced by them is expressed in I Timothy 4:1 where Paul says, "*Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils.*" Likewise, 2 Timothy 3:1-5 says, "*This know also, that in the last days perilous times shall come. For men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, without natural affection, trucebreakers, false accusers, incontinent, fierce, despisers of those that are good, traitors, heady, high minded, lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God; having the form of godliness, but denying the power thereof: From such turn away.*" Such conditions among men will be due to the increase of false doctrine and/or the lack of true doctrine. God's Word will have less and less influence over people in general. As Paul says in 2 Timothy 4:3-4, "*For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears; and they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables.*"

In view of these warnings from Scripture, it is important for every Christian to equip and to arm himself with an increasing knowledge of Scripture, and to acquaint himself with an awareness of the specific false doctrines which are currently being propagated. Yes, a Christian should not be ignorant about the false doctrines which are being blown about in his own generation. In fact, this is why one of the responsibilities of a pastor is to educate his people against every wind of false doctrine. Ephesians 4:11-12,14 says, "*And He gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ...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."*

To aid us in being on guard against the false doctrines which are presently being bantered about, our essay will be devoted to the false doctrine called, the Millenium, that old fable which alleges that when Christ returns He will set up an earthly kingdom of one thousand years duration. It is significant that the false doctrine of the Millenium is not just a false doctrine which is being taught in many denominations in these last times, but is also a false doctrine about or concerning the last times and the end of the world. The Millenium is a false doctrine which specifically contradicts what the Word of God says about the Second Coming of Christ and the end of the world.

In this essay we shall consider THE FALSE CLAIMS OF THE MILLENIALISTS, and we shall do so under three parts: 1) An explanation of the Millenium, and which groups hold to this teaching; 2) How the false doctrine of the Millenium contradicts the true doctrine of the end of the world, and how other important doctrines of the Bible are undermined by Millenialism; and 3) What practical lessons are to be learned from our study of Millenialism, and the comfort which the true doctrine affords us.

Part I: An Explanation and Description of Millenialism

The word, millenium, is composed of two Latin words, *mille* (meaning, a thousand), and, *annus* (meaning, year). Sometimes Millenialism is called, Chiliasm, from the Greek word, *chilioi*, meaning a thousand. Thus the false doctrine of Millenialism concerns a period of time consisting of a thousand years. According to the Millenialists, when Christ returns in the clouds He will not raise up all the dead and judge the world, and thereby bring this world to its fiery destruction as Scripture teaches, but that when Christ returns He will come down to earth to reign on earth in an earthly kingdom for a period of one thousand calendar years. During this thousand year period Christ is supposed to sit on an actual, physical throne of David in a rebuilt temple in Jerusalem. At the onset of this thousand year reign of Christ, all Jews in the world will return to a restored nation of Israel, and undergo a mass or national conversion to Christ. Moreover, since the temple in Jerusalem will have been rebuilt, the Old Testament sacrificial system will be re-established. The converted Jewish nation, under the rule of Christ, will rule the world in perfect temporal peace. At the conclusion of the thousand years, Christ will disappear briefly, and then come in glory to raise the remaining dead, and judge the world in the "Great White Throne Judgment."

Here it must be made clear that even among millenialists there is not agreement, but a great variation of opinions and interpretations. There are, in fact, two basic versions of Millenialism, and even these two vary greatly in details. The most widely held version is called, Pre-millenialism, which is basically what has just been described. It is the more elaborate and fanciful of the millenial theories. Pre-millenialism consists of an appearance of Christ in the clouds (His second Advent) to rapture (take up and out) His Church (the New Testament believers, both the living and the dead) into heaven before the thousand year reign of Christ begins. Hence, pre-millenialism. Most millenialists of today accept this version.

However, even the pre-millenialists are divided into two camps. While all pre-millenialists agree that there will be a period of seven years of tribulation before the Millenium begins, they disagree as to when the rapture (the taking out) of the Church will take place. Some believe that the rapture of the Church will occur before the seven years of tribulation whereby the Church is spared this tribulation, while others believe the rapture of the Church will take place after the seven years of tribulation so that the Church must endure much tribulation. Those pre-millenialists who accept the view that the Church will be raptured before the tribulation are called, "Pre-tribulationists," while the other camp is called, "Post-tribulationists." Thus, Pre-millenialists are either "Pre"

or "Post" "Tribulationists." Both of these camps believe that the raptured-out saints will come back to earth in glorified bodies and will sit on thrones with Christ to judge the twelve tribes of Israel. This return of the saints to earth will occur at the beginning of the Millenium.

The Pre-millennialists, whether "Pre-trib" or "Post-trib," all espouse the notion that all Jews in the world at the beginning of the Millenium will return to Israel and there experience a national conversion. Upon the Jews' conversion, the Old Testament priesthood will be re-established along with the Old Testament sacrifices. Because of this supposed glorious future of the Jews, most millennialists consider present-day Jews, even though they be Christ-rejectors, as being a holy people of God and still a chosen nation. Today's millennialists believe that the present state of Israel which began in 1948 is a fulfillment of Biblical prophecy, and that the very existence of the present state of Israel is a harbinger of the Millenium to come.

A second version of Millennialism is called, Post-millennialism. According to this view also, the Millenium will be a period of time on earth of literally one thousand years wherein there will be perfect peace and harmony among nations due to the success of the kingdom of God on earth. However, Post-millennialists believe that Christ will not appear in a second Advent before the Millenium to rapture out the Church, but rather He will simply come at the end of the Millenium to raise up the dead and judge the world. Hence, Christ comes back after (post) the Millenium. The Post-millennialists therefore do not believe in two bodily resurrections (one before the Millenium and one at the end of the Millenium) as do Pre-millennialists. Post-millennialism is simply a "Golden Age" of a thousand years of peace and of great success of the Church on earth. Like Pre-millennialism, Post-millennialism has its varied versions, but it is unnecessary to elaborate on them.

At this point the obvious question is, what Bible texts do the millennialists refer to? In particular, where do the millennialists get their "thousand years"? They find their "thousand years" in Revelation 20:1-7. We shall quote the opening verses of this passage, but in doing so we must point out that like most of the Book of Revelation this twentieth chapter is written in figurative, symbolic language such that numbers are used not literally, but figuratively. This figurative, symbolic language is quite evident as Revelation 20 begins this way: *"And I saw an angel come down from heaven, having the key to the bottomless pit and a great chain in his hand. And he laid hold on the dragon, that old serpent, which is the Devil, and Satan, and bound him a thousand years, and cast him into the bottomless pit, and shut him up, and set a seal upon him, that he should deceive the nations no more, till the thousand years should be fulfilled: And after that he must be loosed a little season,"* Rev. 20:1-3. The chain which the angel had in his hand is not literally a metal-linked chain, but the power and hold which the Lord placed over Satan during the thousand years (the New Testament era) so that the Gospel could not be prevented from being taken to all nations. As the chain is figurative, so also the thousand years according to the context of the chapter and of the entire Book of Revelation is the New Testament era from the time of Christ up to the Last Day. We are now living in the thousand years. During this New Testament era Satan has not been able to prevent the Gospel from going to all nations. Even today souls are still being won for the Savior.

And what of the alleged period of perfect peace and no wars? Where do the Millennialists find this in Scripture? Once again, they literalize passages of Scripture which by their context are shown to be figurative. For example, they cite Isaiah 2:4 which says, *"And He shall judge among the nations, and shall rebuke many people: And they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruninghooks: Nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war anymore."* Likewise, Micah

4:3 says, "And He shall judge among many people, and rebuke strong nations afar off; and they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruninghooks: Nation shall not lift up a sword against nation, neither shall they learn war anymore." However, both of these passages set forth in beautiful figurative language the spiritual peace produced in the hearts of men by the spreading of the Gospel throughout the New Testament era. What Isaiah and Micah foretold of peace was the same thing which the angels sang at Jesus' birth: "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men," Luke 2:14. The peace of which Isaiah and Micah prophesied is the Gospel peace of which Jesus spoke when He said: "Peace I leave with you, My peace I give unto you: Not as the world giveth give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid," John 14:27.

And what about the supposed restoration of the nation of Israel and a rebuilt temple in Jerusalem? Where do the Millenialists get this? They say, Amos 9:11. What does this text say? "In that day will I raise up the tabernacle of David that is fallen, and close up the breaches thereof; and I will build it as in the days of old." Then, verses 14-15 of the same chapter say, "And I will bring again the captivity of My people of Israel, and they shall build the waste cities, and inhabit them; and they shall plant vineyards, and drink the wine thereof; they shall also make gardens, and eat the fruit of them. And I will plant them upon their land, and they shall no more be pulled up out of their land which I have given them, saith the Lord God." At first blush these verses seem to describe a restoration of the nation of Israel and the building of a tabernacle of David. However, in the New Testament in Acts 15 where we read of the Apostles being gathered at Jerusalem to discuss the matter of circumcision, the ceremonial law, and the relationship between Christian Jews and Christian Gentiles, James stands up to speak. In speaking, James refers specifically to Amos 9:11ff. and gives this inspired interpretation: "Men and brethren, hearken unto me: Simeon (Simon Peter) hath declared how God at the first did visit the Gentiles, to take out of them a people for His name. And to this agree the words of the prophets; as it is written, After this I will return, and will build again the tabernacle of David, which is fallen down; and I will build again the ruins thereof, and I will set it up: That the residue of men might seek after the Lord, and all the Gentiles, upon whom My name is called, saith the Lord, who doeth all these things. Known unto God are all His works from the beginning of the world," Acts 15:13-18. Here we see that James specifically refers to the bringing in of the Gentiles into God's Church as being the rebuilding of the tabernacle of David and the filling out of His people for to make a name for Himself. Thus, the Old Testament prophecies which the Millenialists quote which foretold of a tabernacle (or temple) and of a re-establishing of the people of Israel are all figurative passages which are fulfilled in the Gospel Church of the New Testament. In fact, when Paul says in Romans 11:26, "and so all Israel shall be saved," this refers not to a physical, temporal nation of Israel, Israel after the flesh, but to the sum total of all believing Jews, the true remnant, and also those Gentiles who will believe, and who together with the believing Jews make up the Israel of God, true spiritual Israel.

Now the question which quite naturally arises is this: When did millenialistic ideas get started, and who are the present-day proponents or advocates of millenialism? From Scripture, and as re-affirmed in our Augsburg Confession, we learn that dreams of a kingdom of God on earth began with the elders, scribes, and Pharisees, that is, the unbelieving Jewish leaders in the days of Christ. In fact, these ideas began even in the inter-testamental period after the last of the prophets died. In Luke 17:20-21 we find that the Pharisees demanded of Christ when the kingdom of God should come. That they had an earthly kingdom in mind is evident from the reply of Christ. Jesus said, "The kingdom of God cometh not with observation: Neither shall they say, Lo here!, or Lo there! for, behold, the kingdom of God is within you." Indeed, it is because Christ did not come as an

earthly king and did not set up an earthly kingdom that the Jewish leaders and many lay people under their influence rejected Christ as the promised Messiah. So widespread was the earthly perception of the kingdom of God among the Jews at that time that even Jesus' own disciples were slow to resist such carnal ideas. Just prior to Jesus' Ascension the disciples asked, "*Lord, wilt Thou at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel?*" Acts 1:6. Therefore the Augsburg Confession, Article XVII says, "They condemn also others, who are now spreading certain Jewish opinions, that before the resurrection of the dead the godly shall take possession of the kingdom of the world, the ungodly being everywhere suppressed."

However, even in the post-Apostolic period, or the Early Church period (100 - 500 A.D.), there were individuals and sects which believed in a future kingdom of God on earth. For example, the following Early Church Fathers believed in some form of millennialism: Justin Martyr, Papias, Irenaeus, Apollinarius, and Tertullian. This is not surprising in that even the best of the Church Fathers such as Augustine were not straight on some doctrines. However, most of the Church Fathers did not accept millennialism or chiliasm. Augustine clearly denounced millennialism.

Further on in Church history in the days of the Reformation the radical sects such as the Anabaptists and the infamous Zwickau prophets all espoused some form of millennialistic ideas. These radical groups, because of their carnal notions of the kingdom of God, often resorted to taking up the sword on their own, or sought the aid of the government to wage holy wars to secure their dreams.

Here in the United States millennialism has always found fertile soil in the decidedly Reformed bodies which interpret Scripture with reason and on the basis of a forced or false literalism. In our country many Baptists, Presbyterians, Churches of Christ, the Seventh Day Adventists, the Assemblies of God, the Church of the Nazarene, the so-called Fundamentalistic Bible Churches, and the so-called "Evangelicals" of the Billy Graham camp, Campus Crusade for Christ, Intervarsity Christian Fellowship, all espouse to some degree, either officially or un-officially, Millennialism. Perhaps the singlemost influential millennialist in America was a man named, Dr. C. I. Scofield (1843-1921), who originated the well-known Scofield Reference Bible. It is a King James version Bible, but contains at the bottom of each page often lengthy notes by Scofield which arbitrarily divide the Bible into dispensations or rigidly marked periods. The last of the dispensations would be, of course, the Millennium, the "thousand" year reign of Christ on earth. To this day the Scofield Reference Bible is one of the most used Bibles among Reformed groups.

In addition, one of the most influential millennialistic seminaries in all of Protestantism is the Dallas Theological Seminary in Dallas, Texas. This seminary is recognized as a very polished, scholarly, and perhaps most academically strict seminary of all the Reformed seminaries. Its chief mark of distinction is that its entire curriculum and theological position is centered upon Pre-millennialism. In fact, one of its most prominent graduates, Charles C. Ryrie, wrote a book entitled, The Basis of the Pre-millennial Faith. This book, as its title indicates, asserts that the entire body of Christian doctrine revolves around the teaching of Pre-millennialism.

Finally, there are even Lutheran millennialists such as the group, the Lutheran Brethren, and more recently, the Association of Free Lutheran Congregations. Also, there was a noted Lutheran pulpit orator and author, Joseph Seiss (1823-1904), who was a millennialist. He was a member of the old General Council.

As was stated above, one of the reasons millennialism has found fertile soil among the Reformed churches is that they often resort to a forced and therefore false literal-

izing of Scripture. While the fundamentalistic Bible churches proudly hold high their banner of believing in the literal interpretation of the Bible (and so do we Lutherans), their literal interpretation is extreme in that even where Scripture employs figurative, symbolic language, such passages are interpreted by the Reformed in a literal fashion. However, the proper literal interpretation of the Bible does not mean that even figurative, symbolic passages are to be interpreted literally. For example, on one occasion Jesus told the Pharisees to convey a message to Herod. He said, "*Go ye, and tell that fox, Behold, I cast out devils...*", Luke 13:32). Jesus did not mean that Herod had a bushy tail! Likewise, if we were to say of a young lady, she has cheeks like roses, we do not mean her cheeks were made of red rose petals. Yet, millennialists, in order to support their literal, one thousand year earthly reign of Christ must force a false, wooden, literal interpretation upon many passages of Scripture which are clearly figurative and/or symbolic. As mentioned earlier, even the "thousand" years in Revelation 20 is a symbolic number. Also, all the prophetic statements of the Old Testament which are interpreted as being millennialistic are figurative, and often highly symbolic texts.

Moreover, with respect to proper rules of Bible interpretation, hermeneutics, no text of the Bible may be interpreted such that the clear texts (*sedes doctrinae*) are violated. Yet, we shall see in the next section of this essay that the doctrine of the Millennium, because it violates the Analogy of Faith principle, is not a harmless doctrine, but one which endangers and undermines even fundamental doctrines of the Bible.

Part II: How the False Doctrine of the Millennium Contradicts the True Doctrines of the End of the World, and How Other Fundamental Doctrines Are Denied.

At the very outset of this section it is important to point out that the claims of a future earthly reign of Christ, which is what the Millennialists claim, contradict what Christ Himself plainly taught of His kingdom. Jesus says in John 18:36, "*My kingdom is not of this world: If My kingdom were of this world, then would My servants fight, that I should not be delivered to the Jews: But now is My kingdom not from hence.*" No words of Scripture can be any more clear! Christ explicitly states that His kingdom is not of this world, that is, not a worldly, earthly kingdom. He then goes so far as to tell us that if His kingdom were of this world, then His servants would fight, that is, they would resort to taking up arms to prevent the Jews from capturing Him. Jesus would not have told Peter on that Maundy Thursday evening outside of Gethsemane to put up his sword into its sheath. If Christ's kingdom were of this world, He would have championed the views of the chief priests and scribes to restore again the kingdom to Israel. Christ would have been hailed by the Jewish leaders as the Messiah they were looking for.

Yet in spite of this clear passage of John 18:36, millennialists attempt to use this very passage to support their false doctrine. They point to the last clause of this verse which reads: "*But now is My kingdom not from hence.*" The crucial word is, now. Millennialists say that it is true that Christ's first coming, His coming into the flesh at Bethlehem, was not for the purpose of setting up an earthly kingdom, but that at the end of this present age Christ will set up an earthly kingdom. Thus, the millennialists interpret Christ's words, "*but now is My kingdom not from hence,*" to mean, "not right now is My kingdom from hence, but later it will be." However, the word now (*nun* in Greek), is not in this verse an adverb of time, but an adverb of logic. The word, now, in this verse means, therefore [or, but, as it is]. Jesus says, "*therefore* [or, but as it is] *My kingdom is not from hence.*"

Thus the false doctrine of the Millennium causes people to look forward to some grand era of temporal peace and earthly glory. It diverts people's attention away from seeking Christ's spiritual kingdom now by faith, and the hope of glory in heaven above.

Indeed, Colossians 3:1-2 says in most clear and unmistakable words: *"If ye then be risen [spiritually] with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth."* Moreover, when speaking of His kingdom, Jesus clearly said to the Pharisees in a passage we quoted earlier, *"The kingdom of God cometh not with observation: Neither shall they say, Lo here! or, Lo there! for, behold, the kingdom of God is within you,"* Luke 17:20-21. Furthermore, just prior to His suffering and death as He was having a long discourse with His disciples as recorded in John 14-16, Jesus nowhere directs His disciples to look for a future, earthly kingdom, but to heaven above. In John 14:2-3 Jesus says, *"In My Father's house are many mansions: If it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto Myself; that where I am, there ye may be also."* Also significant is what the angels told the disciples who were watching Jesus ascend into heaven. The angels said, *"Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven? This same Jesus which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen Him go into heaven,"* Acts 1:11. The angels instructed the disciples to look forward to Jesus' return on the Last Day. Also, in his Second Epistle, Peter discusses at length the destruction of the world on the Last Day. In that context he urges us as Christians to look forward, not to an earthly kingdom, but to heaven itself. He says, *"Nevertheless we, according to His promise, look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness,"* 2 Peter 3:13. Nowhere in Scripture are we taught to look for a future kingdom of God on earth.

Another doctrine or teaching of Scripture which Millennialism contradicts is the fact of the unknown time of Christ's return on the Last Day. While this may seem to be a very simple point, its very simplicity makes Millennialism all the more astonishing. If there were such a thing as a literal one thousand year reign of Christ on earth which will end with Judgment Day, then all people could calculate the end of the world as soon as the Millennium would begin. However, our Savior Himself says, *"But of that day and hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels of heaven, but My Father only,"* Matt. 24:36. Paul says in I Thessalonians 5:2-3, *"For yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord so cometh as a thief in the night. For when they shall say, Peace and safety; then sudden destruction cometh upon them, as travail upon a woman with child; and they shall not escape."* Again 2 Peter 3:10 says, *"But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works therein shall be burned up."*

It is certainly gross error and a refusal to honor Scripture when men of all times have sought to calculate the end of the world. "Date-setters" have been found in sects of every generation. The Jehovah's Witnesses who have traditionally held to a "Post-millennial" view have had to change their dates so many times that one would think they would cease. Their founder, Charles Taze Russell, predicted that in 1914 the kingdom of God would be set up on earth. World War I quickly dashed this hope. Then, more recently, Hal Lindsey, the author of a best-selling book in the 1970's, *The Late Great Planet Earth*, virtually predicted that the rapture and the ensuing millennial reign of Christ would occur around 1984. Lindsey is a graduate of Dallas Theological Seminary.

The false doctrine of Millennialism also denies the Scripture doctrine of one bodily resurrection which is to take place on the Last Day. According to Pre-millennialists, those who say that Christ will come before the millennium to rapture the Church, there will be two bodily resurrections: One before the Millennium, and one at the end of the Millennium when Christ returns to judge the world. The favorite passage of Millennialists is I Thessalonians 4:16-17: *"For the Lord Himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: And the dead in Christ shall rise first: Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up with them in the*

clouds, to meet the Lord in the air; and so shall we ever be with the Lord." According to the Millennialists, this text proves a resurrection and rapture before the Millennium. However, this text simply describes how the believers on Judgment Day will be resurrected and taken up to meet the Lord. There is no indication of a Millennium to follow. In addition, Millennialists point to Rev. 20:5 which says, "*But the rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were finished. This is the first resurrection.*" However, the context of this chapter along with all other passages dealing with this resurrection shows the first resurrection to be not a bodily, but a spiritual resurrection of the heart. It is the rising from spiritual death to spiritual life at conversion. This is why the next verse, Rev. 20:6 says, "*Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection: On such the second death [damnation in hell] hath no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with Him a thousand years.*" The second death, damnation, will have no power over anyone who undergoes the spiritual resurrection of faith in Christ for the forgiveness of sins. That the first resurrection is a spiritual one is shown also in Colossians 3:1 which says, "*If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God.*" If this were a bodily resurrection, we would already be above and not need to seek things above!

Indeed, God's Word clearly teaches only one bodily resurrection, and that takes place on the Last Day, the Resurrection Day. In John 6:40 Jesus says, "*And this is the will of Him that sent Me, that everyone which seeth the Son, and believeth on Him, may have everlasting life: And I will raise him up at the Last Day!*" Likewise, when Jesus spoke with Martha at the tomb of Lazarus, He said, "*Thy brother shall rise again.*" Then Martha confessed the truth she had learned from her Savior, namely, "*I know that he shall rise again in the resurrection at the Last Day,*" John 11:24. Jesus did not correct Martha for she spoke the truth of the one bodily resurrection of the Last Day. Likewise, in John 5:28-29 our Savior says, "*Marvel not at this: For the hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear His voice, and shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation.*" In this text Jesus does not speak of one resurrection of believers before a Millennium and another resurrection at the end of the world. There is one Resurrection Day, the Last Day, when all the dead, both believers and unbelievers will rise. The only distinction will be that the believers will rise to eternal life in heaven, whereas the unbelievers will rise to be condemned to hell. In addition, in I Corinthians 15 the Apostle Paul devotes the entire chapter to the fact of the bodily resurrection of the Last Day and its direct connection with the resurrection of Christ. Paul says, "*Now if Christ be preached that He rose from the dead, how say some among you that there is no resurrection [singular] of the dead? But if there be no resurrection [singular] of the dead, then is Christ not risen,*" I Cor. 15:12-13. Many, many other texts can also be referred to.

Still another doctrine which Millennialism contradicts is the fact that the Church of believers on earth must live under a cross of suffering or trial and tribulation. The teaching of Millennialism asserts that the Church will be raptured out before any period of suffering, and that during an alleged Millennium there will be no suffering and persecution, but perfect peace on earth. Yet the Bible tells us that the Church of believers will not be exempt from suffering and persecution. Instead, the Bible promises us that we shall suffer as Christians. Our Lord Jesus says, "*Think not that I am come to send peace on earth: I came not to send peace, but a sword. For I am come to set a man at variance against his father, and the daughter against her mother, and the daughter in law against her mother in law. And a man's foes shall be they of his own household. He that loveth father and mother more than Me is not worthy of Me: And he that loveth son or daughter more than Me is not worthy of Me. And he that taketh not his cross, and followeth after Me, is not worthy of Me,*" Matt. 10:34-36. In Acts 14:22 we read, "*And that we must*

through much tribulation enter into the kingdom of God." Philippians 1:29 says, "*For unto you it is given in the behalf of Christ, not only to believe on Him, but also to suffer for His sake.*" In 2 Timothy 3:1 Paul says, "*This know also that in the last days perilous times shall come.*" In 2 Timothy 3:12-13 Paul says, "*Yea, and all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution. But evil men and seducers shall wax worse and worse, deceiving, and being deceived.*" Likewise, Christ lovingly forewarns us that the world will most assuredly hate us as Christians when He says in John 15:18-20, "*If the world hate you, ye know that it hated Me before it hated you. If ye were of the world, the world would love its own: But because ye are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you. Remember the word that I said unto you, The servant is not greater than his lord. If they have persecuted Me, they will also persecute you.*" Finally, the Book of Revelation presents in figurative, symbolic, and picture language an overview of the conditions of the entire New Testament period (the thousand years) wherein we find that the Church, especially in the very end times, will be severely afflicted and persecuted. For example, one of the elders standing before the throne of God asked, "*What are these which are arrayed in white robes? and whence came they? And I said unto him, Sir, thou knowest. And he said to me, These are they which came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb,*" Rev. 7:13-14. Likewise, Rev. 20 presents the final assault of Satan and the world upon the Church which shall take place just before the end. It says, "*And when the thousand years are expired, Satan shall be loosed out of his prison, and shall go out to deceive the nations which are in the four quarters of the earth, Gog and Magog, to gather them together to battle: The number of whom is as the sand of the sea. And they went up on the breadth of the earth, and compassed the camp of the saints [the Church] about, and the beloved city: And fire came down from God out of heaven, and devoured them.*"

As we shall bring out in the final section of this essay, we Christians, although we must through much tribulation enter into the kingdom of God, we shall do so with much hope, and with the certainty of overcoming through faith in Christ. As Christ says, "*In the world ye shall have tribulation: But be of good cheer; I have overcome the world,*" John 16:33.

The next doctrine which Millennialism contradicts, and terribly so, is the fundamental doctrine of the finished work of Christ on earth. If there were work for Christ to do on earth, He would not have ascended into heaven to sit exalted at the Right Hand of God. In His high priestly prayer in John 17, just before going off to suffer and die, Jesus said to the Father: "*I have glorified Thee on the earth: I have finished the work which Thou hast given Me to do,*" John 17:4. Also, according to millennialists, when Christ returns to earth to set up His millennial kingdom, the Old Testament sacrifices will be re-established. Such a re-activating of the Old Testament animal sacrifices which in their proper time pointed ahead to Christ's once-for-all sufficient sacrifice on the cross, denies this once-for-all completed sacrifice. It is a reverting back to types and shadows, and denies the substance and fulfillment of these types which Christ achieved in His first coming. It undermines the entire Book of Hebrews wherein the holy writer devotes chapter after chapter to assure us of the fact that Christ has fulfilled all that the Old Testament sacrifices stood for. Hebrews 9:28 says, "*So Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many; and unto them who look for Him shall He appear the second time without sin unto salvation.*" When Christ comes back, it will be without regard to sin and further work of saving souls, but unto salvation, that is, unto the fulness of our salvation in heaven. Again, Hebrews 10:12-14 says, "*But this Man, after that He had offered one sacrifice for sins for ever, sat down on the right hand of God; from henceforth expecting till His enemies be made His footstool. For by one offering He hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified.*" Indeed, for our Exalted Christ to leave His throne of glory at

God's Right Hand to come back to earth to sit on an earthly throne of David and there to behold the Jews offering animal sacrifices again would be an abomination to Christ, and constitute an utter blasphemy. It would amount to a complete reversal and undoing of all that Christ accomplished in His first coming as our humble, suffering Servant.

Next, the false doctrine called, the Millenium, contradicts and undermines the fact of Scripture that people have one opportunity of grace, namely, the time of life on earth that we have before we die, or before the Lord comes back to end the world. We are now living in the day or period of grace when people can still hear the Word, repent, and be saved by faith in Christ. The Bible says, "*And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment,*" Heb. 9:27. Also, 2 Corinthians 6:2 says, "*Behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation.*" If the doctrine of the Millenium were true, then there would be second chances for both Jews and Gentiles during the Millenium. All the unbelievers who were left after the so-called rapture would have the opportunity of getting saved sometime during the Millenium. Yet again, Scripture knows of no second chances! (It should be inserted here that if only unbelievers are left after the so-called rapture, how could there be perfect peace and harmony on earth during the Millenium? Perfect peace and harmony can exist only where there is no sin! Such will be the case only in heaven!)

This false hope of second chances which must be the case if there were a Millenium is especially damaging to the efforts of the Church to witness the Gospel to Jews who still reside in unbelief. According to Millenialists, as we stated earlier, Jews are treated even now as being God's chosen people, and that during the Millenium they will suddenly be converted. (Here one wonders how they are now God's people, but still need to be converted during the Millenium!) Be as it may according to this fiction, Jews are essentially saved before the Millenium simply by being Jews, and Jews are saved during the Millenium because all Jews will be converted in a national conversion. However, Paul the Apostle says, "*For they are not all Israel, which are of Israel: Neither, because they are of Abraham, are they all children: But, in Isaac shall thy seed be called. That is, They which are the children of the flesh, these are not the children of God,*" Rom. 9:6b-8.

Furthermore, by teaching that Jews are God's chosen people even as they reject the Christ of the Bible, undermines the clear teaching of Scripture that Christ is the only way to heaven! Christ says, "*I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life: No man cometh unto the Father, but by Me,*" John 14:6. Also, Acts 4:12 says, "*Neither is there salvation in any other: For there is none other name under heaven given among men whereby we must be saved.*" Yet Millenialists all over the country worship and pray with the Jews and call them brethren!

As we can see, the false claims of the teaching of Millenialism are not harmless, but hinder true mission work, and contradict and deny even fundamental doctrines of the Bible.

Part III: The Practical Lessons to Be Learned from the False Claims of Millenialism.

The first practical lesson to be learned from our study of the false claims of Millenialism is that we Christians must always evaluate all religious views, teachings, and claims with the Word of God. Just because millions of well-meaning and seemingly pious Christians believe a certain doctrine does not mean such a doctrine is correct. A doctrine is not determined by the outward piety of its adherents, nor by democracy or majority opinion, but solely by the foundation passages (*sedes doctrinae*) of the Scriptures.

Indeed, there would be no millennialists if the millennialists had first analyzed and evaluated the claims of millennialism with the clear Word of God. If the millennialists would only look at fundamental doctrines, the very ones which they claim to uphold with tenacity, they would see how spurious and unscriptural the Millennium is. This is what the Bible is talking about when it says, *"Beloved, believe not 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.

However, to be able to *"try the spirits"* requires at least a certain degree of indoctrination. If Christians are thoroughly indoctrinated they will be much less likely to be swept away into heresies as millennialism or the charismatic movement, or other religious trends and popular movements. Here is where both pastors and laymen have a serious responsibility. Our pastors must be committed to being teachers at all times. Yes, even when we preach we are to be teaching. Our sermons are to be instructional as well as exhortative. Nothing gives greater comfort and peace and godly confidence than understanding. Is it not significant that God Himself said through the prophet Hosea, *"My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge,"* Hosea 4:6? At the same time, however, our people must be willing to receive instruction and to be indoctrinated. All the classes and sermons in the world are in vain if they are not received. May God retain in us all a real hunger and thirst for knowledge; not head knowledge, but a knowledge in the heart. We all, both pastors and laymen, must never conclude that we have reached a certain plateau of learning that we may stop learning. We cannot become content and relaxed in our growth in grace and knowledge. In this regard it is good to hear again what the holy writer to the Hebrews said to Hebrew Christians, the Christians who lived right in the time of the Apostles. He said, *"For when for the time ye ought to be teachers, ye have need that one teach you again which be the first principles of the oracles of God; and are become such as have need of milk, and not of strong meat. For every one that useth milk is unskilful in the word of righteousness: for he is a babe. But strong meat belongeth to them that are of full age, even those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil. Therefore, leaving the principles of the doctrine of Christ, let us go on to perfection; not laying again the foundation of repentance from dead works, and of faith toward God, of the doctrine of baptisms, and of laying on of hands, and of resurrection of the dead, and of eternal judgment. And this will we do, if God permit,"* Hebrews 5:12-6:3.

The second practical lesson we learn from our study of the false claims of millennialism is that we be on guard against carnal-mindedness or earthly-mindedness. The Bible says, *"For they that are after the flesh do mind the things of the flesh; but they that are after the Spirit do mind the things of the Spirit. For to be carnally minded is death; but to be spiritually minded is life and peace,"* Romans 8:5-6. In this same light Scripture says, *"If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth,"* Col. 3:1-2. Thus, as we have seen from our study, millennialists, beginning with the Jews in the time of Christ as they looked for an earthly king, have their affection, not on things above, but on things on the earth. They are looking forward to some fictitious era of peace and glory on earth and practically put heaven "on the back burner."

Yet, we who reject millennialism can fall into the same kind of carnal trap by getting too wrapped up in other earthly issues and concerns. For example, many well-meaning and even fairly well indoctrinated Christians get too wrapped up in politics. They virtually equate saving our nation with saving souls. The zeal with which some Christians go out spreading "the word" (political literature) on this or that evil or conspiracy ought to be devoted to spreading the true Word of God to the saving, not of a nation for a few

more temporal years but, of souls for eternity. The Great Commission is still this: *"Go ye therefore and teach [make disciples] of all nations..."* Indeed, it is significant that the most patriotic Jews in Christ's time were those who rejected His spiritual, "other-worldly" kingdom! Restoring again the kingdom to Israel took precedence over being saved from sin, death, and hell. Likewise, it is significant that when the Apostle Paul came before kings and rulers his concern was not to set this or that ruler straight on his politics and policies, but to persuade him with the Word of God to become a Christian. As Agrippa said to Paul, *"Almost thou persuadest me to be a Christian,"* Acts 26:28. Indeed, we do even more for the temporal welfare of men when we as obedient Christians obey the law, pray for rulers and leaders, and be as Jesus says, *the salt of the earth*. We must remember that our calling as Christians is not to spare the Church from suffering and persecution, but to save souls by the Gospel and to help one another as Christians to be preserved in the true saving faith and to grow in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Christ says, *"But he that shall endure unto the end, the same shall be saved,"* Matt. 24:13. Paul says, *"But watch thou in all things, endure afflictions, do the work of an evangelist, make full proof of thy ministry,"* 2 Tim. 4:5. Because we live in the times of the end of all things and Satan will be, and perhaps has already been, loosed a little season, we must as Christians fight the good fight of faith, that is, uphold the Word of God in confession and practice at all costs, even the cost of our lives.

In the third place, there is no better way to prevent carnal-mindedness and to promote true spiritual-mindedness than to meditate upon and set our affection upon the blessed true doctrines of the end of all things. Let us rejoice and take comfort in the fact that our Lord Jesus Christ is a spiritual King whose kingdom is not of this world and which shall last forever. When our Savior came in His first coming, His coming into the flesh at His birth at Bethlehem, He came with the spiritual purpose of saving people from sin, death, and the power of the devil, and thus to prepare a place for us in heaven. I John 3:8 says, *"For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that He might destroy the works of the devil."* Hebrews 2:14-15 says, *Forasmuch as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, He also Himself took part of the same; that through death He might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil; and deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage."*

Now because Christ did accomplish this work of redemption, we are indeed delivered from sin, death, hell and the devil. We have and personally possess this deliverance through faith in Christ. Because Christ won the victory for us we now look forward, not to a future earthly kingdom, but to heaven above. As we joyously and properly sing: *"Heaven is my home."* Of our blessed heavenly home to which we shall go, the Bible says this, *"And I saw a new heaven and a new earth: For the first heaven and the first earth were passed away; and there was no more sea. And I John saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. And I heard a great voice out of heaven saying, Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and He will dwell with them, and they shall be His people, and God Himself shall be with them, and be their God. And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: For the former things are passed away,"* Rev. 21:1-4.

Thus, when Christ does return, it will be the Last Day, because this earth will have no more purpose. The last of God's elect will have been gathered in and the judgment of all men will take place. As Christ says, *"And this Gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations; and then shall the end come,"* Matt. 24:14. And since all believers in Christ shall be judged justified and righteous through Jesus' blood and righteousness, we shall with glorified bodies be resurrected unto

eternal life in heaven. The Bible says, *"For our conversation is in heaven; from whence also we look for the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ: Who shall change our vile body, that it might be fashioned like unto His glorious body, according to the working whereby he is able even to subdue all things unto Himself,"* Philippians 3:20-21.

In view of all this, the Bible teaches us that even though we now must through much tribulation enter into the kingdom of God, we are to focus our hope and comfort upon the completion of our salvation in heaven. Romans 8:18 says, *"For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us."* 2 Corinthians 4:16-18 says, *"For which cause we faint not; but though our outward man perish, yet the inward man is renewed day by day. For our light affliction which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory; while we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen: For the things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal."* Likewise, 1 Peter 1:6-9 says, *"Wherein ye greatly rejoice, though now for a season, if need by, ye are in heaviness through manifold temptations: That the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise and honor and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ: Whom having not seen, ye love; in whom, though now ye see Him not, yet believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory: Receiving the end of your faith, even the salvation of your souls."* 1 John 3:2-3 says, *"Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: But we know that, when He shall appear, we shall be like Him; for we shall see Him as He is. And every man that hath this hope in Him purifieth Himself, even as He is pure."*

O how utterly evil, devilish, and damning is every false doctrine, but O how holy, godly, and saving is the true doctrine, those blessed teachings of the Scriptures, God's fully inspired, inerrant, Word. Let us therefore renounce with all severity the false doctrine of the Millenium, and let us cling with faith and sure hope to the true doctrine of the end of all things. *"But ye, beloved, building up yourselves on your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Ghost, keep yourselves in the love of God, looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life. And of some have compassion, making a difference: And others save with fear, pulling them out of the fire; hating even the garment spotted by the flesh. Now unto Him that is able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before the presence of His glory with exceeding joy, to the only wise God our Savior, be glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and ever. Amen."* Jude 20-25. In Jesus' Name. Amen.

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

"God is our Refuge and Strength, a very present help in trouble. Therefore will not we fear, though the earth be removed, and though the mountains be carried into the midst of the sea; though the waters thereof roar and be troubled, though the mountains shake with the swelling thereof. There is a river, the streams whereof shall make glad the city of God, the holy place of the tabernacles of the most High. God is in the midst of her; she shall not be moved: God shall help her, and that right early. The heathen raged, the kingdoms were moved: He uttered His voice, the earth melted. The Lord of hosts is with us; the God of Jacob is our Refuge" (Ps. 46:1-7). "We know that all things work together for the good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to His purpose" (Rom. 8:28). And we sing in one of Paul Gerhardt's splendid hymns,

"Though all the powers of evil
The Will of God oppose,
His purpose will not falter,
His pleasure onward goes.
What'er God's Will resolveth,
Whatever He intends,
Will always be accomplished
True to His aims and ends."
(Hymn 520 v.5)

With these words the Lord impresses upon us, His dear children through faith in Christ, the proper perspective with which we are to view the events taking place about us. In these last evil days of the world it is especially comforting for us Christians to know that through all the various upheavels and disturbances occurring within the pale of Christendom and the world, the Lord God still rules all things according to His good and gracious Will for His honor and glory and the welfare of His dear children who stand dressed in the blood and righteousness of His dear Son.

Thirty-seven years have passed since our Conference was formally organized in Okabena, Minnesota. They have been years of joy and sorrow. Our ranks have been thinned so that many of those whom we held to be our dear brethren in the faith no longer walk with us--they have deserted our ranks. The battles which have been waged to uphold the Word of our God have often been severe and and all of us still feel in our hearts and minds the scars which they have inflicted. Yet, they have also been days of joy. *"Weeping may endure for a night, but joy cometh in the morning"* (Ps. 30:5). The refreshing dew of God's promises has continually invigorated us and provided us with renewed strength and vigor to fight the good fight of faith. Like Peter and John, we should rejoice that we, unworthy sinners, are privileged to suffer for the Word of our dear Savior, [Acts 5:41]. After all, we are not fighting for SELF-survival, we are not fighting to build an earthly and powerful organization, - we are fighting a spiritual battle against the enemies of our souls to uphold the Word of our Lord in these last evil days of the world. We do not have to give account to one another when that Final Day comes, but must all appear before the Judgment Seat of God and there give an account of our stewardship.

That Day is surely not far off. Therefore it behooves us to work while it is day before the night cometh when no man can work. Those of us to whom offices have been delegated by the brethren, besides the only divinely instituted pastoral office in our local congregations, have, of course, additional responsibilities. For example, the President of our Conference has certain duties specified in our Conference Constitution. And in order to refresh our memories let us hear what those duties are:

- A. Ordinarily to serve as chairman of all meetings of conventions and the Board of Directors, and, ex-officio, advisory member of all committees.
- B. To see to it, within the limitations of Article VI, that the Constitution and subsequent resolutions of the Conference are carried out, and, in particular, personally to lead the Conference in guarding its confessional position and in stemming public offense.
- C. To sign official papers and documents and make official notices of the Conference in its name.
- D. To lay before the member-congregations for their vote, as a referendum and before the congregations in fellowship for their information and brotherly cooperation, with the consent of the Board of Directors or by request of at least one-half of the member-congregations, all very important matters of the Conference which arise between conventions, which permit of no delay, and which, according to the constitution, are not to be disposed of but by a convention of the Conference.
- E. To arrange for the colloquy (examination) of pastors and parochial school teachers according to Article IV,B,2.
- F. Ordinarily to appoint convention committees, and also, by appointment, to fill vacancies in the Board of Directors or in the committees of the Conference until the next regular convention.
- G. To perform all additional, reasonable duties which the Conference may enjoin upon him.
- H. To report regularly to the Conference, especially at the regular conventions, the administration of his office.

In accord with Part F of the above duties, I appointed Mr. Phillip R. Martin to serve on the Committee on Theological Education and Mr. Victor Bloedel to serve on the Committee on Lutheran Union. This was announced in the Nov/Dec, 1987 issue of our "Concordia Lutheran."

Last month it was brought to my attention by one of the brethren that we may not have a full complement of lay-delegates due to the financial situation existing in some of our congregations. Heeding the brother's welcomed remarks I consulted with the Treasurer of our Conference on May 22nd who agreed with me that our Conference should give financial assistance to those congregations in need of funds for travel expenses for their delegates. On May 29th I called the pastors and informed them that we stood ready to give such financial assistance. This action on the part of your President was not done capriciously but in the spirit of the resolution adopted by our Conference at our 1970 Convention in Tinley Park, Illinois. On page 57 of the 1970 Proceedings we read, "BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the convention direct the treasurer of the Conference to maintain a special fund for the purpose of making travel monies available to congregations financially unable to send a full complement of delegates to Conference conventions, that this fund be maintained by periodic special offerings received in the congregations of the Conference, and that congregations in need of such assistance advise the president of the amount requested at the time they file their credentials, so that the treasurer can make the necessary funds available to them in advance of their delegates' travel." I am happy to report that now, namely, at the time of this writing, it appears that we shall have a full complement not only of pastoral but also of lay delegates.

In August, 1987, we received the distressing news that our former missionary-at-large, the Rev. Erick E. Erickson, who was being considered for a call to the pastoral office of our sister congregation in Midland, Michigan [which he had been serving in a vacancy capacity] suddenly resigned from the congregation and membership in our Conference. As evident from the documentation received from the congregation, as well as from Rev. Erickson's own properly witnessed statements, he left our fellowship for purely carnal reasons, refusing to be reconciled with a fellow-member of the congregation without Scriptural cause and holding the congregation itself to be partaker of the sins which he had alleged against the brother. However, his allegations were proven completely groundless according to fact and Holy Scripture, and his severance was therefore unjustifiable according to the Word of God. The congregation arranged with its sister congregation in Tinley Park to be served temporarily by Pastor David T. Mensing and, finding itself unable to call and adequately support a pastor, officially dissolved at the beginning of October with its constituent membership received by transfer into the membership of Peace Congregation in Tinley Park. It should be noted that at the time of Rev. Erickson's severance the congregation requested our Conference assistance in the settlement of the controversy, but our efforts through Pastor Bloedel, chairman of the Mission Committee, Pastor David T. Mensing, vice-president, Pastor E. R. Stallings, and Pastor Natterer, president, met with stubborn resistance and obstinate rejection by Rev. E. Erickson. He is presently a member of a liberal Missouri Synod congregation. Let us take this defection earnestly to heart and always remember, *"Wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall"* (I Cor. 10:12).

Let us now, dear brethren, direct our attention and prayerful consideration to the work which faces this Convention not in the spirit of defeatism because of the "Red Sea" of obstacles, but rather in the spirit of joyful optimism knowing and believing that nothing is too hard for the Lord who can do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask and think for Jesus' sake.

Respectfully submitted,

Rev. M. L. Natterer, President

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THE REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE TO REVIEW THE PRESIDENT'S REPORT

We, the Committee assigned to review the President's Report, have thoroughly examined it and have found it to be comprehensive and informative. We therefore recommend that the Conference in convention assembled adopt this Report of the President with thanks to him for his faithful service during the past year.

Respectfully submitted,

Mr. John M. Steinke
The Rev. Paul R. Bloedel

INITIAL REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE ON REGISTRATION AND EXCUSES

<u>CONGREGATION</u>	<u>PASTORAL DELEGATE</u>	<u>LAY DELEGATE</u>	<u>ALTERNATE</u>	<u># OF VOTES</u>
Peace	David F. Mensing	Lloyd D. Martin Philip R. Martin	John Mensing Tim Mensing	3
St. Luke's	Paul R. Bloedel	Victor K. Bloedel Raymond S. Kusumi	Stephen Bloedel Daniel Bloedel	3
Holy Scripture	E. R. Stallings, Jr.	Gary L. Neely John M. Steinke	None	3
St. John's	M. L. Natterer	Jeff Ellis Francis Williams	Henry Fischer Ted Fitzwater	3
St. Stephen's	Mark W. Dierking	Raymond Litzkow None	None	3
# OF DELEGATES	5	9	4	15

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These named delegates are to be seated at this convention of the Concordia Lutheran Conference and represent a total of 15 VOTES.

There are approximately 45 registered visitors. It is apparent that not everyone has registered at this time. Our committee encourages all visitors please to register so all will be accounted for in our final report on Sunday afternoon.

Respectfully submitted,

Rev. E. R. Stallings, Jr.
Mr. John Steinke
Mr. Gary Neely

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FINAL REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE ON REGISTRATIONS AND EXCUSES

Registered Delegates at the 36th Annual Convention of the Concordia Lutheran Conference:

- 5 Congregations
- 5 Pastoral Delegates
- 9 Lay Delegates
- 4 Alternate Delegates
- 15 TOTAL VOTES

Approximately 80 souls were present for the Service of Convocation on Friday. There were in attendance at the Sunday Divine Service approximately 130 souls, 69 of which communed at the Lord's Table, 33 as guests of St. Luke's Lutheran Church. Total visitors to our 37th Annual Convention numbered approximately 78 over the three days of meetings.

The Treasurer reported to this Committee that offerings for the Friday Opening Service was \$290.00, for the Sunday Divine Service, \$1339.00.

Respectfully submitted,

Rev. E. R. Stallings, Jr.
Mr. John Steinke
Mr. Gary Neely

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REPORT OF SCRIPTURAL PUBLICATIONS BOARD OF CONTROL

Dear Brethren:

Once again our Publishing House has attempted to produce the materials expected of it during the past year. Four out of the six regular issues of the "Concordia Lutheran" have been published during the past year--all the material for the fifth issue not yet having been received. The September/October issue was 4 pages larger than a normal issue simply because it was impossible to shorten any of the articles.

During the coming year we are expecting to catch up with the delinquent issues as well as continue to bring to our subscribers the full compliment of issues regularly planned for the coming year. We hope also to be able to print a revised Constitution of the Concordia Lutheran Conference, the Catechism on Church and Ministry, and materials for our Pre-Seminary Program, and we ask the Lord's blessing to this end.

Respectfully submitted,

Rev. Paul R. Bloedel, Chairman
Scriptural Publications Board of Control

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SCRIPTURAL PUBLICATIONS
(Concordia Lutheran Conference)

FINANCIAL REPORT
6/1/87 - 5/31/88

Cash Balance, June 1, 1987		\$ 51.12
<u>Add Cash Receipts:</u>		
Sunday School Lessons	\$ 541.14	
Concordia Lutheran Subscriptions	322.00	
Conference Subsidy	1000.00	
Books and Tracts	.00	
Total Receipts		1863.14
Total Cash Available		\$1914.56
<u>Less Disbursements:</u>		
Electricity (P. F. Luedtke Building)	45.00	
Rent (P. F. Luedtke Building)	600.00	
<u>Material and Labor Costs:</u>		
Sunday School Lessons (Material Only)	152.36	
Concordia Lutheran (Material and Labor)	905.03	
<u>Mailing Costs:</u>		
Sunday School Lessons	.00	
Concordia Lutheran	155.95	
Supplies	.00	
Property Tax	.00	
Total Expenditures		1657.94
Cash Balance, May 31, 1988		\$ 56.22

V. K. Bloedel, Business Manager

REPORT OF THE EDITORIAL COMMITTEE

Over the past Conference year the work of your Editorial Committee has focused primarily on the soliciting and editing of articles for our "*Concordia Lutheran*." To date we have been able to put out only four issues of the "*C.L.*" They were the July/August, September/October, November/December, and the January/February issues. It is our hope to be able to hold good to our commitment to get out all remaining issues which our subscription holders are due. Since there may have arisen among our readers a wonderment as to why some of our issues have been unusually late, we believe it good to bring to your attention what was written in our November/December issue on this matter. It says:

You are probably wondering why your November/December issue of the *Concordia Lutheran* is coming to you so late. It is not because we do not want it to come out on time or do not make an earnest effort to do so. The fact that our periodical comes out late once in a while (or perhaps even more often than not) is simply going to happen as long as our Conference is small and has, according to Scripture, a congregational polity. Our congregations, NOT our Concordia Lutheran Conference, are of chief importance to us because our congregations are instituted by God Himself while our Conference is not a divine institution. Furthermore, the offices of our pastors in their respective congregations are also instituted by God whereas these same men hold offices in our Conference which are simply of human origin and arrangement. Even though they are responsible to carry out the duties of their offices in our Conference to the very best of their abilities, nevertheless, it is well understood among us that their work as pastors in their respective congregations must always come first and take precedence over their Conference work. This also pertains to the work of the Editor of our Conference periodical as well as those whom he calls upon to submit articles for publication. Sometimes it happens that because of sickness, family or congregational responsibilities our pastors have not been able to produce sufficient material early enough for the publication of our Concordia Lutheran Conference on the proper date. On such occasions we do not wish to incur your ill will or upset you in any way but urge you to offer a special earnest prayer in our behalf. We are sure, since our articles are carefully written and are based firmly on the Word of God, that they will be timely and edifying for you whether the publication is late or early.

We hope that this explanation helps you to understand why and under what circumstances the publication of our *Concordia Lutheran* may be delayed, and also helps you to praise God that the reasons for such delays are thoroughly Scriptural. Our pastors are all engaged in the thorough instruction of their respective congregations in the Word of God (which is indeed a full-time work) and they simply will not sacrifice their congregation's welfare and growth in the Word by placing Conference work above the chief responsibility of preserving for us and for generations after us in our congregations a thoroughly and well-instructed laity. May God bless us to this end.

With regard to your subscription to our *Concordia Lutheran*, we re-affirm our pledge that you will indeed receive the full value of your subscription cost and will see to it that all of the issues for which you have paid will reach you.

Although other assignments were suggested to our Committee such as revising our Sunday School curriculum, we were simply not able to begin such a project. We were also given a copy of a document drawn up by our Committee on Missions called, "*A Sketch of the Doctrinal Position of the Concordia Lutheran Conference,*" but we were able only to begin our editing of this document. Fortunately at our Pastoral Conference this week, the pastors were able to go through this document very carefully and have approved it for submission to our Conference congregations for approval. We are very grateful for the patience and understanding of everyone toward our humble efforts to serve our Conference in the duties to which we have been elected. May the Lord continue to bless our labors to His glory and honor. We also wish to express to all our Conference pastors our appreciation for the fine articles submitted to date and which will be published in subsequent issues.

Respectfully submitted,

Rev. E. R. Stallings, Jr., Editor
Rev. M. L. Natterer, Assistant Editor

REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE ON LUTHERAN UNION

Dear Brethren:

The third object of our Conference as stated in Article III of our Constitution is "joint effort toward God-pleasing union with other Lutherans, namely, such union as is based upon the unity of the Spirit -- full agreement in doctrine and practice on the basis of God's Word." Accordingly, our Conference maintains this standing committee, chaired by the Vice President. Its duties are carefully specified in the Constitution, Article IX: 1) To keep informed regarding the doctrine and practice and the intersynodical relations of other Lutheran church bodies; 2) To meet with similar committees of other Lutheran church bodies as occasion arises, with the view to establishing a more far-reaching union, provided such meetings can be arranged...without violation of our Scriptural Confessional Standard; and 3) To keep the Conference as such currently informed regarding the matter of Lutheran Union, and to report annually to the regular conventions of the Conference.

This past year, your committee has kept itself informed chiefly through current publications and official organs concerning those Lutheran bodies which have been regarded in the past as "close to us in doctrine and practice." The more we study the available literature, however, and examine the positions of other bodies in the light of Holy Writ, the more we are compelled sadly to recognize that the number of groups even "close to us" anymore is fast shrinking -- due not to any change on OUR part, thanks to the grace of God, but because of further departures from true Scripture doctrine on the part of others. We were particularly mandated this past year to explore further the respective positions of the Fellowship of Lutheran Congregations (F.L.C.), formerly part of the Lutheran Churches of the Reformation, and the Faith-Life group, officially known as the Protes'tant Conference.

As most of our informed people are aware, the F.L.C. tenaciously holds to an erroneous position regarding Christian church discipline, namely, that Matthew 18:17 requires a face-to-face confrontation with the congregation in the third stage of admonition and that, barring such face-to-face confrontation, a congregation may not regard a manifest and impenitent sinner "a heathen man and a publican" according to Christ's command. To the best of our knowledge, the F.L.C. has not retreated from this position in the slightest degree.

The Faith-Life group or Protes'tant Conference has existed since 1927 and was born of a series of controversies that erupted in the Wisconsin Synod, resulting in that synod's expulsion of its protesting pastors and professors. Hence the name "Protes'tant". Central to the position of the Faith-Life group is the so-called "Wauwatosa Theology" championed by Professor J. P. Koehler and others, in which apparently the dogmatic theology practiced by the then orthodox Synodical Conference was rejected in favor of a historical and free exegetical approach to Holy Scripture with a strong emphasis on self-analysis and self-criticism. We are at present trying to secure written documentation of the Protes'tant Conference's present position in doctrine and practice, with the view toward studying it more thoroughly. Until more is definitely known, however, we are unable adequately to assess their position relative to our Scriptural position and to provide information in greater detail. Nevertheless, your committee will continue to study this group and will report further at our next convention.

Lacking any tangible evidence that either the F.L.C. (mentioned earlier in this report) or the L.C.R. (with whom we met extensively in November, 1986) has in any substantive way changed its unscriptural position or even opened itself to the possibility of

doing so on the basis of Holy Writ, the committee determined that an overture on our part now, at this point, to meet with either of these groups OFFICIALLY is not warranted, and that good stewardship of our people's sanctified gifts for the Lord's work among us would not be served by the expense of the time and money necessary for formal meetings. Should conditions in the future indicate the reasonable likelihood of progress at such official meetings, we would of course be open and even eager to arrange them, with the provision that these could be held without compromising or violating our Scriptural Confessional Standard. While the Committee on Lutheran Union is constitutionally empowered to meet with church bodies as such--officially, for the Conference--, our pastors individually are encouraged, as opportunities present themselves, by personal contact, to discover open doors which may in the future lead to official meetings.

Brethren, we are, contrary to the false impression sometimes given by others, very interested in the establishment of God-pleasing union with other Lutherans; however, with the resources at our disposal--the precious time of our pastors needed preeminently for the feeding of their own flocks over which the Holy Ghost has made them overseers, and the funds available for the total program of our Conference--we must act prudently, responsibly and carefully so as not to waste the blessings which the Lord has given us by meeting simply for the sake of meeting.

Respectfully submitted,

Rev. David T. Mensing, Chairman
Rev. Mark W. Dierking
Rev. E. R. Stallings, Jr.
Mr. Victor K. Bloedel

REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE ON MISSIONS

Our mission committee did not undertake or accomplish much this past year. The subsidy which our Conference had resolved to send Concordia Lutheran Church of Midland, Michigan, to enable them to re-establish the office of the ministry in their midst, was not needed because of the defection of E. Erickson from our fellowship. The congregation at Midland subsequently was dissolved and became part of Peace Ev. Lutheran Church of Tinley Park, Illinois. We rejoice over the fact that our Conference has been able to help our sister congregation in San Antonio, Texas, Holy Scripture Ev. Lutheran Church, with a subsidy during this past year to enable them to continue adequately to support the pastoral office in their midst according to God's Word. This subsidy was authorized in the amount of \$350.00 per month. In February, by request of the congregation, the amount of subsidy was reduced to \$250.00 per month. In a recent letter to your Committee on Missions, the San Antonio congregation requested their subsidy be reduced to \$150.00 per month which your committee heartily recommends to be authorized by our Conference in convention assembled. May the Lord continue to bless these fellow Christians in their earnest endeavor to preserve for themselves and for their children the pure teachings of God's Word.

Lest some readers of our Proceedings receive the impression that our Conference is not mission-minded because of the lack of activity on the part of our Committee on Missions during the past year, let us remind ourselves as to what the Bible teaches concerning the work of missions. Most so-called Christians have only a partial notion about what real mission work is. They think primarily about missionaries who are commissioned to bring the Word of God to the far-flung and remote areas of the world--special laborers whom we should support with our prayers and with our offerings; or they think of a missionary-at-large whose responsibility it is to reach out on a larger scale to those who may be one in faith with us; or they think of mission work as when a Christian talks about God's Word to unbelievers or to the unchurched. Such thoughts are not incorrect, but they are rather incomplete.

Every Christian in the congregations of our Conference ought to be just as much a missionary as one who is paid a salary or works without a salary in the so-called home or foreign missions fields. But a person might say, "I have no special calling," or "I have no special gifts or talents," or "I have no commission." The only calling you need is to be called to faith in the Lord Jesus Christ as your personal Savior from sin, death, Satan, and hell. (It takes a special call from a Christian congregation to be a pastor--it does not take such a special call to be a missionary.) Moreover, the only gifts and talents you need are those which the Lord Jesus has given to any normal human being. (It requires special qualifications to be a pastor or deacon--but no special qualifications to be a missionary.) The only commission which you need is the Great Commission (Matthew 28:18-20) which is given to ALL Christians--not to pastors only. Christian mission work begins in the Home (between husband and wife, between parents and children, between children and children); it continues on the part of each Christian in the LOCAL CONGREGATION (between men and men; men and women; women and women; children and adults; children and children, of varying gifts, talents and abilities); and it goes out into the WORLD, into the workplace among the unbelievers and heterodox. This is the fundamental basis and moving influence for more specific endeavors in the area of missions on the part of congregations or groups of congregations joined together in Conferences such as ours. Every member (man or woman, boy or girl, young or old) in our fellowship should therefore regard his own personal mission work just as important in the building up of the Kingdom of Christ as the work of a special missionary who is commissioned by our Conference to reach far-flung areas. In order to be more effective missionaries, every member in our Conference congregations should be encouraged and given abundant opportunities to grow

in his knowledge of God's Word in all its truth and purity, to express what he believes, to recognize that which is contrary to Scripture in doctrine and life, to live his Christianity by word and deed with his family at home, among his fellow Christians in the congregation, and with friends and acquaintances whether professing Christians or unbelievers. May God grant this especially and above everything else in the area of mission work.

Respectfully submitted,

Rev. Paul R. Bloedel, Chairman

REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE ON THEOLOGICAL EDUCATION

Dear Brethren,

Preparing for a future ministry should be one of the most important projects of our Conference. We have five pastors serving five congregations. Two of our pastors are over 62 years of age. If only one pastor is incapacitated or taken from us by death, we are already incapable of providing a man to take his place and one of our congregations will be without the pastoral office in their midst. How easily this could happen to two or three of our congregations! It is therefore imperative that we do everything possible to provide for a future ministry--and this future ministry must be the very best we are able, by God's grace, to produce.

The young men who want to attend our Seminary must be committed to the work for which they are preparing. The student should be discouraged from having any notion of glamour with regard to the ministry and should be filled with the earnest desire of teaching God's Word in all its truth and purity to others for their eternal salvation. The student should not decide to become a pastor in the hope of living a life of ease and worldly security, but should be ready and willing to spend himself and be spent for the sake of the Gospel. To this end the following Pre-Seminary guidelines and courses are being recommended for discussion and approval at this convention.

I. Every year (September), our pastors will announce Pre-Sem and Seminary Courses to run concurrently with the regular college year on the quarter system.

II. Eligibility. Any male communicant member of any of our congregations is eligible for the Pre-Sem course. To be eligible for Seminary courses, the recommendation of the prospective student's pastor will be needed, a transcript of his academic record from High School (and College?), and a summary of his performance in his Pre-Sem work. The prospective seminary student will then be required to pass a written entrance examination and also be examined orally by the Committee on Theological Education prior to his enrollment in our Seminary Program.

III. Pre-Sem Courses.

A. Catechism: The Pre-Seminary student must know by memory the Enchiridion and all of the Bible Passages in the Catechism.

B. Questions on Catechism Bible Passages: Three questions answered by each Bible passage in the Catechism must be composed. The first question must take into consideration the Bible passage in its context in the Bible; the second question must take into consideration the use of the Bible passage in the Catechism; the third question must be answered simply by the words of the Bible passage itself. (At 10 Bible Passages per week this exercise will be completed in less than two years.)

C. Outline of Bible Chapters: The Pre-Sem student will be required to outline every chapter of the Bible. The outline may be as complete or as simple as the student may choose but should be sufficiently detailed to assure the pastor that the student has read the chapter. (Several topic sentences may suffice for an acceptable outline.)

D. Bible History: Worksheets for 70 Bible Stories from the Old Testament and 70 Bible Stories from the New Testament to be completed with the use

of the Bible. Every answer, unless otherwise indicated, is to be substantiated with the proper Scripture text.

E. Pre-Isagogics Course: Text and Worksheets based on Klinck's Old Testament Bible History and Arndt's New Testament Bible History in the old Concordia Teacher's Training Series.

F. Speech: Reading aloud from the lectern (in the presence of the pastor) every Gospel and Epistle Lesson for the Church Year.

G. General Composition: The student is asked to write ten 5-paragraph essays on some religious subject of his choosing.

A more complete digest or synopsis of these courses will be provided for each pastor involved in the Pre-Sem Program. The courses are designed to involve a minimum of outside classroom preparation for the pastor so that he may concentrate more effort on his preparation for teaching regular Seminary subjects. A regular time of meeting for the various courses listed above should be scheduled so that the commitment of the student will be encouraged and responsibility maintained.

(The Committee on Theological Education will endeavor to have ample materials ready by September, 1988, to make it possible for any of our pastor's to begin a Pre-Sem Course.)

Respectfully submitted,

Rev. Paul R. Bloedel, Chairman

Concordia Lutheran Conference
Statistical Report
(by Congregations)

Fiscal Year: 1987-1988

Respectfully submitted, Mr. Raymond Kusumi	Holy Scripture Ev. Luth Church	Peace Ev. Lutheran Church	Saint John's Lutheran Church	Saint Luke's Lutheran Church	Saint Stephen's Lutheran Church	Totals
Membership						
Baptized Members	41	76	75	93	34	319
Communicant Members	27	50	47	42	29	195
Voting Members	11	10	16	12	13	62
Children in Sunday School	12	20	22	31	15	100
Adults in the Bible Class	22	39	28	38	14	141
Received by Transfer	9	17	0	0	2	28
Received by Confirmation/ Profession of Faith	1	3	0	0	0	4
Lost by Transfer	0	0	0	7	0	7
Lost by other circumstanc	0	3	11	0	0	14

Official Acts

Infant Baptisms	0	3	2	3	1	9
Adult Baptisms	0	0	1	0	0	1
Confirmations of Children	0	1	1	0	0	2
Confirmations of Adults	1	2	1	0	0	4
Marriages Solemnized	1	2	0	1	0	4
Funerals and/or Burials	0	1	3	0	0	4

Auxillary Staff

Sunday School Teachers	2	6	3	6	3	20
Elected Church Officers	8	13	9	15	8	53
Organists	1	1	2	1	1	6
Choir Members	0	8	6	12	0	26

Property

Church Facilities Owned?	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	
Church Facilities Rented?	Yes	No	No	No	No	
Acreage (with or without Buildings)	N/A	7.63	0.355	0.667	2.25	
Value		\$775,000	\$100,000	\$200,000	\$250,000	

Concordia Lutheran Conference Statistical Report

Number of Congregations	5
Ordained Pastors	5
Available Candidates	0
Baptized Members	319
Communicant Members	195
Voting Members	62
Children in Sunday Schools	100
Adults Regularly Attending Bible Classes	141
Communicants Received:	
-By Transfer	28
-By Confirmation or Profession	4
Total:	32
Baptisms	10
Confirmations (Adults and Children)	6
Marriages	4
Burials	4
Sunday School Teachers	20
Elected Church Officers	53
Organists	6
Choir Members	26
Congregations Owning Church Property	4
Total Acreage	10.902
Total Value of Real Estate (approximate)	\$1,325,000

Respectfully submitted,

Raymond Kusumi

Concordia Lutheran Conference
FINANCIAL REPORT
5/31/88

	-----General Fund-----			Student Aid
	<u>Current</u> 5/1/88	<u>Year-to-Date</u> 6/1/87	<u>Budgeted</u> 1987-88	<u>Fund</u> 5/1/88
Beginning Cash Balance	\$30449.73	\$26192.72		\$3396.02
<u>Add Cash Receipts:</u>				
Concordia, Midland	.00	14.92		
Holy Scripture, San Antonio	.00	105.00		
Peace, Tinley Park	210.00	2450.00		
St. John, Lebanon	280.00	3267.00		
St. Luke, Seattle	400.00	4800.00		100.00
St. Stephen, Wilmot	.00	100.00		
Interest Income	122.86	1324.29		12.46
Other	72.00	214.50		
Convention Collection	.00	292.30		
Total Receipts	1084.86	12568.01		112.46
Total Cash Available	\$31534.59	\$38760.73		\$3508.48
<u>Less Disbursements:</u>				
Scriptural Publications Subsidy	.00	1000.00	2000.00	
Telephone	43.07	1246.58	3000.00	
Convention	.00	300.00	300.00	
Travel	.00	50.00	2500.00	
Miscellaneous	1.62	224.25	500.00	
Rev. Erickson Honorarium	.00	1000.00	2000.00	
Holy Scripture Subsidy	250.00	3700.00	4200.00	
Total Expenditures	294.69	7520.83		.00
Cash Balance, May 31, 1988	\$31239.90			\$3508.48

V. K. Blcedal, Treasurer

INITIAL AUDIT OF THE CONFERENCE TREASURER'S BOOKS

To Whom It May Concern:

We the undersigned constitute the committee which was given the responsibility by Saint Luke's Lutheran Church, in behalf of the Concordia Lutheran Conference, to conduct the initial audit of the Conference Treasurer's books.

A thorough check of the source records in reconciliation with the Cash Journal, Ledger, deposit slips and bank statements, reveals the books to be in good order and the ending cash figure to be accurate.

(Signed:)

Dale E. Ellis

Hermann Mayrhofer

* * * * *

THE REPORT OF THE AUDITING COMMITTEE

This is to certify that we, having been appointed by our Concordia Lutheran Conference in convention assembled, have examined the books of our Conference Treasurer, Mr. Victor K. Bloedel, namely, the Cash Journal, the Original Source Records and Bank Statements, and the records of Scriptural Publications, and have found them to be in good order. We commend our Conference Treasurer and Business Manager of Scriptural Publications for his accuracy and the diligent and faithful use of his God-given talents in this work of our Lord's kingdom.

Respectfully submitted,

Rev. Mark W. Dierking, Chairman
Mr. Phillip R. Martin
Mr. Jeff Ellis
Mr. Mark Natterer

* * * * *

BUDGET FOR THE CONCORDIA LUTHERAN CONFERENCE
FISCAL 1988-1989

CASH BALANCE: June 1, 1988.....\$31,239.90

PLEDGES

Holy Scripture, San Antonio.....	\$ 0000.00
Peace, Tinley Park.....	\$ 2400.00
St. John's, Lebanon.....	\$ 3200.00
St. Luke's, Seattle.....	\$ 4800.00
St. Stephen's, Wilmot.....	\$ 600.00
Interest Income.....	\$ 1500.00
TOTAL PLEDGES AND ESTIMATED RECEIPTS.....	\$12,500.00
TOTAL CASH AND PLEDGES AVAILABLE.....	\$43,739.90

EXPENSES

Scriptural Publications.....	\$ 3000.00
Telephone Expense.....	\$ 2000.00
Convention Expense.....	\$ 1000.00
Travel Expense.....	\$ 4000.00
Miscellaneous Expense.....	\$ 1000.00
Holy Scripture Subsidy.....	\$ 1800.00
TOTAL BUDGET:.....	\$12,800.00

THE MINUTES OF THE 37TH ANNUAL CONVENTION
OF THE
CONCORDIA LUTHERAN CONFERENCE

June 24, 25, 26, 1988

held at

St. Luke's Lutheran Church
Seattle, Washington

The Convention was opened with a Divine Service. The sermon, based upon Philippians 3:20, was preached by the Conference President, the Rev. M. L. Natterer, and was based upon the theme "Do We Strive To Live Everyday in the Light of Judgment Day?" was instructional and edifying, urging all of us to "walk in the Spirit" that we might ever be prepared for the Second Coming of our Lord.

The opening session was gavelled into order by President Natterer at 11:20 a.m. with prayer.

The first order of business was to appoint Convention Committees. Those appointments were as follows:

AUDITING COMMITTEE: Pastor Mark W. Dierking, Phillip R. Martin, Jeff Ellis.

COMMITTEE ON REGISTRATION AND EXCUSES: Pastor E. R. Stallings, Jr., John Steinke, Gary Neely.

NOMINATING AND ELECTIONS COMMITTEE: Pastor Paul R. Bloedel, Ray Kusumi, Francis Williams

RESOLUTIONS COMMITTEE: Pastor David T. Mensing, Victor Bloedel, Lloyd D. Martin.

The Committee on Registration and Excuses made its report through its chairman, the Rev. E. R. Stallings. It was noted that there were five pastoral delegates, nine lay delegates and a total of fifteen official votes (the single lay delegate from St. Stephen's having two votes). It was moved and seconded to adopt the initial report of the Committee on Registration and Excuses. Motion carried unanimously.

The President then turned over the Chair to the Vice-president in order that he could deliver his report. In his report he related how God has blessed us over the years since the formation of our Conference in 1951 in Okabena, Minnesota, and urged us not to faint at the trials the Lord has and may yet permit us to endure.

Following the President's Report, the acting Chairman, the Rev. David T. Mensing, appointed the Rev. Paul R. Bloedel and Mr. John Steinke to serve as the Committee to Review the President's Report. The motion was made and seconded to receive the report of the President subject to the normal Committee review. The motion carried unanimously.

The presentation of the Agenda was next. It was moved and seconded that the Agenda be adopted with the addition of the Statistical Report on Sunday at 4:30 p.m. Motion carried unanimously.

The Chair adjourned the morning session at 11:47 a.m. for Lunch.

LUNCH

The afternoon session was opened by the Rev. David T. Mensing in the name of the Triune God and by singing the first eight verses of hymn #292, "Lord Jesus Christ, with Us Abide." The Word of God as found in II Peter 3:1-14 was read and then we joined in asking the Lord's blessings upon our convention session and especially that the essay would be received by each of us to our edification. Our opening devotion was closed by singing the last verse of hymn #292 and the Apostolic Blessing.

The Chair then reminded all delegates and visitors to sign the sheets provided so that an accurate count of attendance could be made by the Committee on Registration and Excuses.

The Rev. E. R. Stallings, Holy Scripture congregation, San Antonio, Texas, then began his essay entitled "The False Claims of the Millennialists." In this part of the essay, Pastor Stallings explained the false doctrine of the millenium itself and also mentioned some of the groups who espouse this false doctrine. There was a brief discussion following the essay.

The next order of business was the recommendations of the Board of Directors. Those recommendations and the actions taken were as follows:

RECOMMENDATION #1: "The Board of Directors recommends that our congregations be urged to provide their pastors with a sufficient block of time each two month period for work on the "Concordia Lutheran" and that they do all in their power to aid their pastors in scheduling this time regularly." It was moved and seconded to adopt. However, a motion and second to table was made, holding this recommendation until after the reports of the Editorial and Scriptural Publications committees. Motion to table carried.

RECOMMENDATION #2: "The Board of Directors recommends to the Convention assembled that, in order to facilitate By-law #1b of the Conference Constitution, the expenses for travel incurred by the congregations for the Fall 1988 Pastoral Conference be reimbursed from the general fund of the Conference treasury." Motion was made and seconded to adopt. Motion carried unanimously.

The Chair declared a brief recess at 2:37 p.m.

The Chair called the session back to order at 3:02 p.m. The first item of business was the election of officers and committees.

NOMINATED FOR PRESIDENT: Rev. M. L. Natterer and Rev. E. R. Stallings -
ELECTED: REV. M. L. NATTERER

NOMINATED FOR VICE-PRESIDENT: Rev. E. R. Stallings and Rev. David T. Mensing -
ELECTED: REV. E. R. STALLINGS, JR.

NOMINATED FOR SECRETARY: Rev. Mark W. Dierking, Rev. David T. Mensing, Rev. Paul R. Bloedel - **ELECTED:** REV. MARK W. DIERKING

NOMINATED FOR TREASURER: Lloyd D. Martin, Phillip Martin, Victor Bloedel, Robert Bloedel - **ELECTED:** VICTOR BLOEDEL

NOMINATED FOR BOARD MEMBER-AT-LARGE/MIDWEST: Lloyd E. Martin, Lloyd D. Martin, Al Lambert, Phillip Martin, Ray Litzkow - **ELECTED: LLOYD D. MARTIN**

BOARD MEMBER-AT-LARGE/FAR WEST: Robert G. Bloedel, Stephen Bloedel, Henry Fischer, Ray Kusumi - **ELECTED: RAY KUSUMI**

EDITORIAL COMMITTEE:

SLATE A	SLATE B	SLATE C
Rev. E. R. Stallings, Jr.	Rev. M. L. Natterer	Rev. Mark W. Dierking
Rev. M. L. Natterer	Rev. David T. Mensing	Rev. E. R. Stallings
Mr. Lloyd E. Martin	Mr. John Steinke	Mr. Lloyd D. Martin

ELECTED: SLATE A

COMMITTEE ON THEOLOGICAL EDUCATION:

SLATE A	SLATE B	SLATE C
Rev. Paul R. Bloedel	Rev. M. L. Natterer	Rev. Paul R. Bloedel
Rev. E. R. Stallings, Jr.	Rev. David T. Mensing	Rev. David T. Mensing
Mr. Phillip Martin	Mr. Henry Fischer	Mr. John Steinke
Mr. Stephen Bloedel	Mr. Ray Litzkow	Mr. Henry Fischer

SLATE D
 Rev. Mark W. Dierking
 Rev. Paul R. Bloedel
 Mr. John Steinke
 Mr. Lloyd E. Martin

ELECTED: SLATE D

COMMITTEE ON MISSIONS:

SLATE A	SLATE B	SLATE C
Rev. Paul R. Bloedel	Rev. Mark W. Dierking	Rev. David T. Mensing
Rev. Mark W. Dierking	Rev. E. R. Stallings	Rev. M. L. Natterer
Mr. Lloyd D. Martin	Mr. Herman Mayrhofer	Mr. John Steinke
Mr. Henry Fischer	Mr. Lloyd D. Martin	Mr. Ray Litzkow
Mr. John Steinke	Mr. Jeff Ellis	Mr. Herman Mayrhofer

ELECTED: SLATE A

COMMITTEE ON LUTHERAN UNION:

SLATE A	SLATE B	SLATE C
Rev. E. R. Stallings, Jr.	Rev. E. R. Stallings	Rev. E. R. Stallings
Rev. Mark W. Dierking	Rev. Mark W. Dierking	Rev. Mark W. Dierking
Rev. David T. Mensing	Rev. David T. Mensing	Rev. David T. Mensing
Mr. Victor Bloedel	Mr. Lloyd D. Martin	Mr. Henry Fischer

SLATE D
 Rev. E. R. Stallings
 Rev. Mark W. Dierking
 Rev. David T. Mensing
 Mr. Ray Litzkow

ELECTED: SLATE A

FINANCE COMMITTEE:

SLATE A	SLATE B	SLATE C
Mr. Victor Bloedel	Mr. Victor Bloedel	Mr. Victor Bloedel
Mr. Lloyd E. Martin	Mr. Mark Natterer	Mr. Lloyd E. Martin
Mr. Elvin Stallings, Sr.	Mr. Phillip Martin	Mr. Paul Natterer
Mr. Mark Natterer	Mr. David Steinke	Mr. Paul Steinke

ELECTED: SLATE B

PUBLISHING HOUSE BOARD OF CONTROL:

SLATE A	SLATE B
Rev. Paul R Bloedel	Rev. Paul R. Bloedel
Rev. Mark W. Dierking	Rev. M. I. Natterer
Mr. Robert G. Bloedel	Mr. Daniel Ellis
Mr. Victor Bloedel	Mr. Victor Bloedel
Mr. Ray Kusumi	Mr. Herman Mayrhofer

ELECTED: SLATE A

It was moved and seconded that the elections be declared unanimous. Motion carried.

A short recess was declared by the Chair at 4:30 p.m.

The session was called back to order at 4:40 p.m.

The Rev. Paul R. Bloedel made the report for the Committee on Missions. He noted in his report that the subsidy for Holy Scripture congregation, San Antonio, Texas, had been reduced over the past year at the congregation's request from \$350.00 per month to \$250.00 per month. Now they are requesting a subsidy of \$150.00 per month and the Committee heartily recommends that this subsidy be granted. It was also noted in the report that, even though there was no obvious mission work done this past year, nevethe-

less, we as a Conference are mission minded, and urged personal mission work on all our members. It was moved and seconded to adopt the report. Motion carried unanimously.

RECOMMENDATION OF THE MISSIONS COMMITTEE: It was moved and seconded that the recommendation of the Committee on Missions, namely, that Holy Scripture Ev. Lutheran Church be granted the amount of subsidy they requested, \$150.00 per month, be approved by the Convention assembled. Motion carried unanimously.

The Chair adjourned the Friday session of the convention assembled at 5:00 p.m.

SATURDAY SESSION

The Saturday morning session was opened in the Name of the Triune God with a devotion led by the Rev. Mark W. Dierking. We joined in singing the first five verses of hymn 463, "For All the Saints, Who From Their Labors Rest," and then heard the Word of God as found in Luke 12:23-48. We joined in asking the Lord to help each of us live our lives as strangers and pilgrims on this earth, looking forward to our deliverance on the Last Day. We closed our opening devotion by singing the last three verse of hymn 463 and with the Apostolic Blessing.

The first order of business was the reading of the Friday session minutes. The minutes were approved as read subject to polish.

The Rev. E. R Stallings then presented the second part of his essay, "The False Claims of the Millennialists." This section of the essay dealt with how the false doctrine of the millenium contradicts the true doctrines of the end of the world, and how other fundamental doctrines are denied. There was discussion throughout the essay - the most important point being that the millennialists essentially do not understand the nature, person, or work of the Savior, and thus, not only deny clear teachings of the Scriptures, but also hinder the work of Christ's Church on earth by promising a second chance to both Jew and Gentile unbelievers.

The Chair recessed the convention at 10:30 a.m. for a break.

The Convention reconvened at 11:50 a.m.

The first order of business was the Report of the Committee on Theological Education. In the report were presented the following PRE-SEMINARY GUIDELINES AND COURSES as recommendations for discussion and adoption:

1. Every year (September), our pastors will announce Pre-Sem and Seminary Courses to run concurrently with the regular college year on the quarter system.
2. **Eligibility.** Any male communicant member of any of our congregations is eligible for the Pre-Sem Course. To be eligible for Seminary courses, the recommendation of the prospective student's pastor will be needed, a transcript of his academic records from High School (and College?), and a summary of his performance in his Pre-Sem work. The prospective seminary student will then be required to pass a written entrance examination and also be examined orally by the Committee on Theological Education prior to his enrollment in our Seminary Program.

3. PRE-SEM COURSES.

A. Catechism: The Pre-Seminary student must know by memory the Enchiridion and all Bible Passages in the Catechism.

B. Questions on Catechism Bible Passages: Three questions answered by each Bible passage in the Catechism must be composed. The first question must take into consideration the Bible passage in its context in the Bible; the second question must take into consideration the use of the Bible passage in the Catechism; the third question must be answered simply by the words of the Bible passage itself. (At 10 Bible passages per week this exercise will be completed in less than two years.)

C. Outline of Bible Chapters: The Pre-Sem student will be required to outline every chapter in the Bible. The outline may be as complete or as simple as the student may choose but should be sufficiently detailed to assure the pastor that the student has read the chapter. (Several topic sentences may suffice for an acceptable outline.)

D. Bible History: Worksheets for 70 Bible Stories from the Old Testament and 70 Bible Stories from the New Testament to be completed with the use of the Bible. Every answer, unless otherwise indicated, is to be substantiated with the proper Scripture text.

E. Pre-Isogogics Course: Text and worksheets based on Klink's Old Testament Bible History and Arndt's New Testament Bible History in the old Concordia Teacher's Training Series.

F. Speech: Reading aloud from the lectern (in the presence of the pastor) every Gospel and Epistle Lesson for the Church Year.

G. General Composition: The student is asked to write ten 5-paragraph essays on some religious subject of his choosing.

It was noted that the CTE would attempt to provide sufficient materials so that our pastors may begin a Pre-Sem course in September. The suggestion was made that the Finance Committee allocate \$1000 in the budget to cover expenses associated with producing the above named materials. It was moved and seconded to adopt the report in its entirety. Motion carried unanimously.

The "pastor loci" announced the procedure for Communion announcements.

The morning session adjourned for lunch at 11:38 a.m.

The afternoon session was begun at 1:35 p.m. in the name of the Triune God and with hymn 656, "Behold, the Host Arrayed in White." The Rev. Paul R. Bloedel then read Rev. 7:9-17. We joined together in prayer and closed by singing hymn #619, "Jerusalem, Thou City Fair and High" and the Apostolic Blessing.

The first order of business was the presentation of the Report of the Editorial Committee, given by our Editor, the Rev. E. R. Stallings, Jr. In this report, Pastor Stallings explained why only four issues of the "C.L." had been published thus far, namely, the work

of our pastors in their respective local congregations. It was moved and seconded that the report be adopted. Motion carried unanimously.

The next item on the agenda was the report of the Publishing House Board of Control presented by the Rev. Paul R. Bloedel. He noted that besides printing the "C.L.," the Publishing House hoped to print the revised Conference Constitution, the "Catechism on Church and Ministry," as well as materials for our Pre-Seminary Program. Pastor Bloedel briefly mentioned some of the problems involved in the actual printing of the "C.L." and other materials, noting that the time involved in printing was the biggest problem. It was moved and seconded to adopt the report. Motion carried unanimously.

The Financial Report of Scriptural Publications was given by its manager, Victor Bloedel. It was noted that Vic Bloedel donates the mailing costs for the Sunday School materials and that Paul and Tommi Luedtke and Julius Schmidt produce the materials simply as a labor of love. Our sincere thanks were expressed for this work by the Chair. It was moved and seconded that the Report of the Publishing House Manager be adopted. Motion carried unanimously.

At this time, the RECOMMENDATION OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS (#1), tabled at Friday's session, was brought to the floor. That recommendation reads as follows: *"The Board of Directors recommends that our congregations be urged to provide their pastors with a sufficient block of time each two month period for work on the "Concordia Lutheran" and that they do all in their power to aid their pastors in scheduling this time regularly."* Motion carried unanimously.

The next item on the Agenda was the Report of the Committee to Review the President's Report given by committee member, Mr. John Steinke. It was moved and seconded to adopt the report. Motion carried unanimously.

The Finance Committee, represented by Treasurer Victor Bloedel, then presented its first report on the 1988-89 Budget. It was moved and seconded to accept this initial report on the budget. Motion carried.

The afternoon session was reconvened at 3:05 p.m.

It was moved and seconded that the proposed budget be adopted as our budget for fiscal 1988-89. There was brief discussion and then the question was called. Motion carried unanimously.

The next item on the agenda was the Report of the Committee on Lutheran Union. Pastor Mensing, reporting for the Committee, noted that they had investigated several bodies that "appeared" to be close to us in doctrine and practice. Two of these groups were the Federation of Lutheran Congregations (F.L.C.) and the Faith-Life Group, or as they are formally known, the Protestant body. The erroneous position of the F.L.C. on Matthew 18:17 remains unchanged and they show no willingness to yield to the Word of God on this. The Protestant Conference is centered on the so-called Wauwatosa theology. They practice a so-called "free" exegesis and seem to focus on introspection, and thus, appear to have pietistic tendencies. They seem to condemn formal doctrinal positions as legalism and dead orthodoxy. While there seem to be no official channels to pursue at the moment, our pastors are encouraged to make personal contacts with men they know to be "conservative" with the prayer that such contacts might lead to official contacts later. It was noted that our information on the "Faith-Life" group is limited, though we have requested more information from them. It was moved and seconded to adopt the report. Motion carried unanimously.

There was no initial report of the Resolutions Committee.

It was moved and seconded to amend the Agenda to hear the Statistical Report at this time. Motion carried.

Mr. Ray Kusumi, our Statistician, presented the Statistical Report. Moved and seconded to adopt the report. Motion carried.

The motion was made and seconded to adjourn the Saturday session of our Convention. Motion carried and we adjourned with the Apostolic Blessing. Meeting adjourned at 3:35 p.m.

SUNDAY SESSION

We began the Sunday session with a Divine Service in which the liturgy was conducted by the "pastor loci," the Rev. Paul R. Bloedel. An instructive sermon was delivered by the Rev. Mark W. Dierking based on Acts 17:31b,32a, with the central theme, "God Hath Appointed A Day of Judgment in the Which He Will Judge the World in Righteousness. This sermon focused on the fact of the Judgment Day itself, and, that on that Day, the Lord Jesus will indeed Judge this world in Righteousness; for Christians on the basis of Christ's imputed righteousness and for the unbelievers on the basis of their unrighteousness. We received the body and blood of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ in, with, and under the bread and wine in the Lord's Supper for the strengthening of our faith and as a declaration of our unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.

The Sunday afternoon session of the Convention opened in the name of the Triune God with a devotion led by the Rev. E. R. Stallings, Jr. at 2:50 p.m. We joined in singing the first three verses of hymn #604, "Great God, What Do I See and Hear?" and then heard the Word of God as recorded in Colossians 3:1-16. We joined in asking the Lord's blessings on our work in prayer and then closed by singing the last verse of hymn #604 and the Apostolic Blessing.

The Chair noted that Mr. Larry Turner was serving as delegate from St. John's in place of Mr. Jeff Ellis.

It was also noted that the Report of the Auditing Committee had not been included in the agenda. It was moved and seconded to place the report after the final report of the Committee on Registration and Excuses. Motion carried.

The minutes of Saturday's session were then read and approved as read.

The Rev. E. R. Stallings, Jr. then presented the last part of his essay "The False Claims of the Millennialists." This section of the paper dealt with the practical lessons to be learned from the study of the false claims of Millennialism. It was moved and seconded to adopt the essay with thanks. Motion carried unanimously.

The report of the Resolutions Committee was next. The **RESOLUTIONS** are summarized as follows:

RESOLUTION #1 expresses thanks to committee members for their efforts this past fiscal year. Motion carried unanimously.

RESOLUTION #2 expresses thanks to Stephen Bloedel as organist and the St. Luke's choir for beautifying our divine services with music. Motion carried.

RESOLUTION #3 expresses thanks to the pastors for the sermons, essay, and opening devotions, all of which were edifying and instructional. Motion carried.

RESOLUTION #4 expresses thanks to Pastor Bloedel and St. Luke's for all their labors in hosting the 37th Annual Convention of the CLC, and thanks to God for the blessing of unity in our Conference and the continued blessings of His Word in our midst. Motion carried.

The Committee on Registration and Excuses gave their final report. It was stated that that approximately 130 attended the divine service on Sunday, 69 communing at the Lord's Table, 33 as guests of St. Luke's. They reported that approximately 78 registered guests attended convention sessions. In addition, they reported that the offerings for the opening service of the Convention were \$290.00 and the offerings for the Sunday service were \$1339.00. Adoption of the report was moved and seconded. Motion carried.

The Audit Committee was not ready with its report and so invitations for the 1989 Convention were considered. Peace Ev. Lutheran Church, Tinley Park, Illinois, extended an invitation to host the 1989 Convention (June 23-25, 1989) and it was thankfully accepted unanimously.

The Chair declared a short recess at 3:51 to await the work of the Auditing Committee.

The session reconvened at 4:25 p.m.

The Auditing Committee Report was delivered by Mr. Phillip Martin in which he stated that the books of the Conference and that of Scriptural Publications were in order and expressed thanks to the Treasurer and Business Manager of Scriptural Pubs for his fine work.

The Rev. E. R. Stallings, Jr. expressed the thanks of his congregation for providing funds so that they could have two delegates present here at the Convention.

The "pastor loci" expressed his pleasure in the Convention and thankfulness for the peaceful nature of the Convention and for everyone's coming.

The Chair announced that the Organizational Board Meeting would be held immediately following the close of the Convention.

The meeting was adjourned at 4:30 p.m. with hymn 410, "Jesus, Lead Thou On" and the traditional closing prayer for our Conference in Convention Assembled.

Respectfully submitted,

Rev. Mark W. Dierking, Secretary

RESOLUTIONS OF THE 37th ANNUAL CONVENTION

of the

CONCORDIA LUTHERAN CONFERENCE

held at

ST. LUKE'S LUTHERAN CHURCH

Seattle, Washington

June 24-26, 1988

RESOLUTION #1

WHEREAS the officers, standing committees and appointed temporary committees of our beloved Conference served this past fiscal year with untiring faithfulness and unremitting diligence under the continued blessings of the Lord;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that we hereby express our sincere thanks and appreciation to these brethren for all that they accomplished this past year by their selfless and loving service to the glory of God and for the welfare of our dear Conference.

RESOLUTION #2

WHEREAS the devotions and divine services conducted during our Convention were beautified by the special organ music and choral offerings rendered by members of St. Luke's congregation;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that we specially thank Mr. Stephen Bloedel, organist and choir director of St. Luke's Lutheran Church, as well as all those who sang in the choir, for giving of their particular talents for the beautification of the services and for the services and for the facilitation of our worship together. To God alone the glory!

RESOLUTION #3

WHEREAS both the delegates and visitors at this 37th Annual Convention were spiritually blessed by the thoroughly Scriptural, instructive and edifying sermons preached by our President at the opening service and by our Secretary at the Sunday service; and

WHEREAS we were also edified by the opening devotions held at the beginning of each session of the convention; and

WHEREAS the timely essay presented at this convention not only identified the various errors of the Millennialists and countered them with the pure, unadulterated doctrines of Holy Scripture, but also reminded us of the unspeakable joy we have as we look forward in faith to the Second Coming of our Lord Jesus Christ to judge the world in righteousness and graciously to receive us into His HEAVENLY Kingdom;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Conference in convention assembled thank Pastors Natterer and Dierking for their edifying sermons, all the pastors for their respective devotions, and Pastor E. R. Stallings for his timely, thorough and instructive essay, above

all giving glory and praise to Christ, the Savior and Head of the Church, for preserving to us in these latter days His precious Word in its purity and the faithful preaching and teaching of it in our blessed fellowship to the salvation of our souls.

RESOLUTION #4

WHEREAS the planning and hosting of a Conference convention requires untiring devotion, loving cooperation and selfless personal service on the part of both the pastor and members of a host congregation; and

WHEREAS St. Luke's Lutheran Church of Seattle has shown itself to be a most gracious host to this 37th Annual Convention of our beloved Conference, with members opening their homes to delegates and guests, serving attractive and delicious meals, as well as welcome snacks during the recesses between sessions, providing wholesome recreational opportunities for guests and their families, and, in general serving their brethren in love with every conceivable comfort and convenience;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Concordia Lutheran Conference in convention assembled express its heartfelt gratitude to Pastor Bloedel and the members of St. Luke's Church for all their efforts and labors of love in hosting the 1988 Convention here in Seattle; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that we laud and magnify the Lord of the Church for His abiding grace and favor to us in the blessed fellowship we enjoy together as we, in loving gratitude to Him, endeavor to keep the unity of the spirit in the bond of peace, looking for and hasting unto the coming of the day of God, the second Advent of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the inheritance of His heavenly kingdom above, prepared for us from the foundation of the world. *"Even so come, Lord Jesus!"* Amen.