

PROCEEDINGS



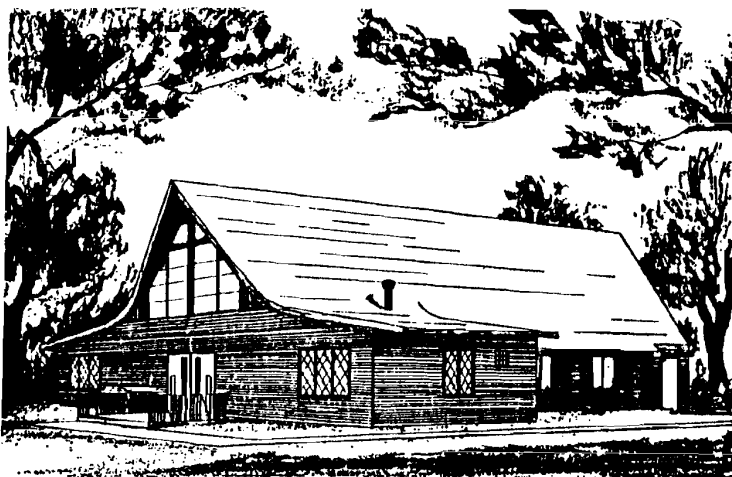
The 38th Annual Convention

of the

CONCORDIA LUTHERAN CONFERENCE

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Peace Evangelical Lutheran Church

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Tinley Park, Illinois 60477

David T. Mensing, Pastor

1989 Convention Proceedings

OPENING SERMON

Opening Sermon
for the 38th Annual Convention of the Concordia Lutheran Conference
Delivered by Rev. M. L. Natterer, President

Text: "If a man love Me, he will keep My words." --John 14:23

Beloved in the Lord!

The word "love," like a golden thread--is woven throughout the Holy Scriptures! From the first chapter in Genesis to the last chapter in the Book of Revelation, we are told of God's love. The creation of the world, the creation of the Garden of Eden, the creation of our first parents, Adam and Eve, what else was this, but a manifestation of God's great love! But the love of God shines forth in a brighter way as we witness His love for sinners! After Adam and Eve had sinned, the Lord gave them the promise of a Savior who would save them from their sin and its final consequences--eternal death. And in the fulness of time God sent forth His only-begotten Son to carry out what He had promised. All this is summed up in the precious words of John 3:16, "God so loved the world, that He gave His only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life." While this love of God is for all, only those who sincerely believe in Jesus as their Savior enjoy the glorious blessings of this love--personal assurance of forgiveness, pardon and peace, and everlasting life in the mansions of heaven. The love of God which has shined into our hearts is to be reflected in our daily lives. What manner of love is this to be? How is this love to be understood? Is it the mawkish, sentimental love of the world? Is it the kind of love which would lay aside all doctrinal differences for the sake of an external unity? Is it the kind of love which would tolerate the errors of the false teacher? These are some of the questions that will be answered in the Convention essay and sermons since our Convention theme will be centered upon the word "love." This morning, under the gracious guidance of God the Holy Spirit, we shall meditate upon the words of the Lord Jesus:

"IF A MAN LOVE ME, HE WILL KEEP MY WORDS!"

First of all, we look at the word "love." Where does it fit in? When the Lord Jesus says, "If a man love Me," does He refer to all men? This can hardly be the case. Why? Because no man loves the Lord by nature. "The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness unto him; neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned" (I Cor. 2:14). There is that malady with which all men are afflicted and with which they are born into this world which we call Original Sin, the sin which originated and which we inherited from our first parents, Adam and Eve. The Apostle reminds the members of the Ephesian congregation, "(we) were by nature the children of wrath, even as others" (2:3). No son or daughter of Adam and Eve is exempt from this total corruption and guilt. The Lord Jesus reminded the learned Nicodemus, "that which is born of the flesh is flesh" (John 3:6). And this spiritual disease, which has its seat in the soul of every man, woman, child, and infant, breaks forth into all manner of actual sins. "For out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, blasphemies" (Matt. 15:19), says the omniscient Son of God. Then this dreaded affliction culminates in death: Temporal death and everlasting death in hell. "The wages of sin is death" (Rom. 6:23). It cannot be otherwise with sinful man. Why? "Death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned" (Rom. 5:12). Now, then, how can it be possible that the natural man love the Lord Jesus when he is in such a condition? It simply is **not** possible! "Without faith it is impossible to please God" (Heb. 11:6). Obviously, then, the Lord Jesus is not referring to all men, but to those who are Christians, to those who have repented of their sins and believe that Jesus is their Savior from sin, death and hell.

We must note the context here. "Jesus answered and said unto him," we are told in the words preceding our text. It is self-evident that a question must have been asked of the Lord. It was Judas (not Judas the betrayer) who had asked Jesus, "Lord, how is it that Thou wilt manifest Thyself unto us, and not unto the world?" Then follow the words of our text, "Jesus answered and said unto him, If a man love Me, he will keep My words."

Obviously, this answer of Jesus, "If a man love Me," presupposes the existence of faith in the heart--for only those can truly love the Lord Jesus Christ whose hearts have been transformed or regenerated by the power of God's Holy Spirit in the Gospel so that they accept and believe in Jesus as their Savior. Where true faith in Christ exists, there will also be love for Him and His Word. In this way Christ manifests Himself in the hearts of the believers.

Within the realm of external Christendom there are those who teach that faith **alone** cannot justify but that it is love which gives faith its justifying and saving power. We know from the Word of God, however, that it is indeed **faith alone**, that is, the acceptance of and trust in Jesus as our Savior from sin, death and the power of the devil which personally justifies us before God. "Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ" (Rom. 5:1). Those who insist that love belongs to the essence of such a faith, bring us back under the yoke of the Law, concerning which we are told by Him for whom it is impossible to lie, "No man is justified by the Law in the sight of God" (Gal. 3:11). It is our dear Lord Jesus Christ who "hath redeemed us from the curse of the Law, being made a curse for us; for it is written, Cursed is everyone that hangeth on a tree" (Gal. 3:13). For "Christ is the end of the Law for righteousness to everyone that believeth" (Rom. 10:4). Therefore, with the Apostle Paul, every true believer in Christ declares, "And be found in Him, not having mine own righteousness, which is of the Law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith" (Phil. 3:9). "Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy He saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost; which He shed on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Savior; that being justified by His grace, we should be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life" (Titus 3:5-7). No wonder our Lutheran forefathers echoed this precious truth so emphatically in Article IV of the Augsburg Confession of 1530, "We teach that men cannot be justified before God by their own strength, merits, or works, but are freely justified for Christ's sake, through faith, when they believe that they are received into favor, and that their sins are forgiven for Christ's sake, who, by His death, has made satisfaction for our sins. This faith God imputes for righteousness in His sight. Rom. 3 and 4."

But our Lutheran Confessions do not end there! We read in Article VI, "That this faith is bound to bring forth good fruits, and that it is necessary to do good works commanded by God, because of God's Will. . ." (Augsburg Confession). "This is the will of God, even your sanctification" (I Thess. 4:3), writes the Apostle Paul, for all believers in Christ "are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them" (Eph. 2:10). Where there is no love, no fruit of faith, there certainly is no true faith. For "faith without works," writes the Apostle James, "is dead" (James 2:26). Thus faith and the fruits of faith are indeed inseparably connected, so that whoever is a Christian will also love the Lord Jesus.

The Savior does not simply say: "If a man **love**" but rather, "If a man **love Me**."--for otherwise the statement would include all men, since all men love something or other in this world. The love for Jesus springs forth from faith in Him. "If any man be **in Christ**, he is a new creature (II Cor. 5:17). This means that Jesus must always come **first** in our hearts and lives, even as He Himself declares, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind" (Matt. 22:37). Where anyone allows anything or anyone else to come **before** the love which he should have for Jesus and His Word, such an one had better examine his own heart whether he be in the faith (II Cor. 13:5)--for the Lord Jesus declares, "He that loveth father or mother more than Me is not worthy of Me; and he that loveth son or daughter more than Me is not worthy of Me" (Matt. 10:37). And the Apostle John warns, "Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him" (I John 2:15).

Let there be no mistake! **When the Lord Jesus speaks of those who love Him, He clearly sets forth that they must at the same time also keep His Word!** "If a man love Me, he will keep My words." And again in the verse following our text, "He that loveth Me not, keepeth not My sayings." Now, what is the Word of Jesus? Does it simply refer to the words which Jesus spoke in the Gospels and which are printed in red in many Bibles?

This is what many of the liberals and modernists would have us believe. And they even chide and rebuke us for insisting upon the divine authority of **all** of the Scriptures.

But think of the comprehensive statement of the Lord Jesus when He states, "The Scripture cannot be broken" (John 10:25). He thereby declares the divine authority of the Scriptures. Think of the Savior's high regard for the Scriptures, when He says in Matthew 5:17,18, "Think not that I am come to destroy the Law and the prophets; I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil. For verily I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the Law till all be fulfilled." In His high-priestly prayer to His heavenly Father, the Savior states concerning the Scriptures, "Thy Word is truth" (John 17:17). The Apostle Paul, who calls himself "an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God" (Eph. 1:1), reminds us that "ALL Scripture is given by inspiration of God" (II Tim. 3:16). Those who would divorce the words of the Lord Jesus from the Word of God are simply following in the steps of the father of all lies, the devil himself! How do we learn about the love of our dear heavenly Father in Christ "in whom we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of His grace" (Eph. 1:7)? God does not send down one of His angels to announce to each of us these joyous tidings! He does not come to each of us in a dream or vision to make known this precious truth! He had all of this written down by the prophets, evangelists and apostles, giving the commission to His Church, "Go ye therefore, and teach (make disciples of) all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you" (Matt. 28:19,20). "Whosoever therefore shall be ashamed of Me **and of My words** in this adulterous and sinful generation," warns the Lord Jesus, "of him also shall the Son of Man be ashamed, when He cometh in the glory of His Father with the holy angels" (Mark 8:30).

Now, how can people **justifiably** declare that they love the Lord Jesus, when, at the same time, they deny the Scriptural account of creation and uphold the theory of evolution; or when they hold that the Pastoral Office is open to women in spite of the Apostle's words in I Corinthians 14:34,35 and I Timothy 2:11,12; and when, in their own estimation, many Scriptural teachings are simply out-of-date? How can someone **justifiably** state that he loves the Lord Jesus, when, at the same time, he sets aside the Scriptural principles concerning Church Fellowship, enunciated in I Corinthians 1:10 and Romans 16:17, by practicing the sin of religious unionism? No, my dear brethren, such things simply do not jibe! Our Lord Jesus reminds us, "If ye continue in My word, then are ye My disciples indeed" (John 8:31). The attitude of those who **truly love** the Lord Jesus is one of humility, a sincere desire to bow to the authority of His Word, saying with Samuel, "Speak, Lord, for Thy servant heareth" (I Sam. 3:9).

And what prompts and motivates us Christians to love our Lord Jesus and to keep His words? God's Word says, "We love Him, because He first loved us" (I John 4:19). Again, "Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God" (I John 3:1). Again, "For the love of Christ constraineth us" (II Cor. 5:14). Again, "Walk in love, as Christ also hath loved us, and hath given Himself for us" (Eph. 5:2). We who are privileged "to know the love of Christ" (Eph. 3:19) should daily ask our dear heavenly Father, for Jesus' sake, to grant us His Holy Spirit that we continually warm our cold hearts with the sunshine of His love by faithfully hearing His Word proclaimed in the divine services of our local congregations, diligently searching it together with our brethren in our Bible Classes and with our families in our homes, and gladly learning it--always receiving that Word "not as the Word of men, but as it is in truth, the Word of God" (I Thess. 2:13). Believing that Word, we shall then strive earnestly to live according to it and to spread its message to others!

Oh teach me, Lord, to love Thee truly
 With soul and body, head and heart,
 And grant me grace that I may duly
 Practice fore'er love's sacred art.
 Grant that my every thought may be
 Directed e're to Thee. Amen. (TLH, 399)

1989 Convention Proceedings

SUNDAY SERMON

Sermon for the Sunday Service, June 25, 1989
 Delivered by Rev. E. R. Stallings

Text: "In this was manifested the love of God toward us, because that God sent His only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through Him. Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us, and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins. Beloved, if God so loved us, we ought also to love one another." --I John 4:9-11.

Dear Friends in Christ,

Our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ once said, "And because iniquity shall abound, the love of many shall wax cold" (Matt. 24:12).

Who exactly is Jesus referring to when He says, "the love of **many** shall wax cold?" He cannot be referring to the people of the world or the human population in general. The unbelieving world does not possess nor can it practice the kind of love to which our Savior refers. Our Savior is not speaking of carnal, worldly love, but of Christian love, the spiritual love which comes from God and is produced by God in us His Christians. We often speak of this love as **agape**, the Greek word for spiritual, Godly love. Thus, when Jesus says, "The love of many shall wax cold," He is telling us that in these last times, as we get closer to Judgment Day, the love of Christians will suffer a chilling-down. Their love for God and for their brethren will lose its warmth and intensity.

This is certainly a striking and disturbing prophecy. What accounts for this? What will cause the love of many Christians to wax cold? In the context of Jesus' remarks we find that the influence of false teachers, the general apathy and indifference to God's Word, and the evil influences of the world will cause many to become lax in holding faith and a good conscience. Added to this, many will grow weary of carrying their crosses and suffering persecutions. Where spiritual convictions based on the Word of God grow weak, there also the desire to do that which is morally right and the abhorrence for sin grow weak. Where faith becomes lukewarm, there the fruits of faith also begin to decline. Christian love is a fruit of faith, and where faith weakens, there Christian love also grows cold. Therefore, the lack of Christian love serves as a warning signal that there is an underlying deterioration of faith. In fact, just prior to our text, the Apostle John says, "He that loveth not knoweth not God; for God is love." (v.8).

In view of all this, it is good that we have chosen as our Convention theme the subject of Christian love. We all can stand to hear again what God's Word says about our responsibility to love one another. We, both pastors and laymen, are not immune to having our love wax cold. We are subject to the same temptations and evil influences as others. Each of us must confess that he has sinned against the Law of Christian Love in some way or another. As the Bible says, "If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us" (I John 1:8). Indeed, the only way to prevent our love from waxing cold is to apply our hearts to the Word of God. Only the Holy Spirit through the Word shores up our faith and creates and strengthens in us true Christian love.

With this in mind, we turn to our sermon text. As we examine our text we see that it speaks of God's love for us, and also our responsibility to love one another. It makes it very clear that

**THERE IS AN INSEPARABLE CONNECTION
 BETWEEN GOD'S LOVE FOR US AND OUR LOVE FOR ONE ANOTHER.**

Our text expresses this fact in these words: "If God so loved us, we ought also to love one another." Our sermon will be in three parts:

1. How God loved us,
2. Why we ought to love one another, and
3. The good effect and **results** of practicing Christian love in deed and in truth.

I.

In the **first** place, our text explains how God has first loved us. It says, "In this was

manifested the love of God toward us, because that God sent His only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through Him" (v.9). When God the Father sent into the world His only begotten Son, Jesus Christ, this was the manifestation or revelation of God's love for us. However, it might be asked how God's sending of His Son into the world is "love." What makes this "love?"

Behind the sending of God's Son into the world is the need and the purpose. John clearly says, "That we might live through Him." Had God not sent Christ into the world to redeem us from our sins and to gain eternal life for us, we could not live, that is, we could not have spiritual and eternal life. There would be no salvation from sin, death and the devil. We would all still be under the wrath and eternal punishment of God. We would still be lost and condemned creatures.

Thus, fundamental to our understanding of God's love for us is the fact of our sins and our deserving of eternal damnation. Without question, one of the reasons the love of God is not properly understood, especially in our day, is that the doctrine of sin is not being taught, or, if it is, it is not being taught correctly. Rarely, if ever, does a television or radio preacher present the doctrine of sin properly. Rarely, if ever, does he make a point of explaining that man is by nature sinful and unclean and deserving of God's wrath and punishment. Robert Schuller of "Crystal Cathedral" fame, who speaks every Sunday morning on a show called, "Hour of Power," comes right out and says that if you tell people they are sinners you will offend them and take away their dignity! Moreover, it is also apparent that, in the so-called "main line" churches, preachers purposely avoid making people recognize their sinfulness and their **need** for a Savior from sin. Seeing such preaching as an impediment to numerical growth, they attempt to preach God's love without first preaching His Law.

However, before we get too smug, let us recognize our own proneness to excuse our own sins and our own tendency to forget what we were like before we were baptized into Jesus Christ. In fact, it is for this reason that the Apostle Paul reminded the Ephesian Christians of their former condition by saying, "And you hath He quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins. Wherein in time past ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience; among whom also we all had our conversation in times past in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind; and were by nature the children of wrath, even as others" (Eph. 2:1-3). What Paul described to the Ephesians is the exact description of us all. We all walked according to the course of this world. We all belonged to the prince of the power of the air, the devil. We all had our conduct in the past as that of fulfilling the lusts of the flesh and of the mind. We all were by nature children of wrath even as others. Indeed, even if you were baptized as a infant, this was your condition at birth and before your Baptism. With King David we must confess, "Behold, I was shapen in iniquity, and in sin did my mother conceive me" (Ps. 51:5). We were sinful (in our mother's womb) before we could even **do** anything wrong. We were conceived and born in sin. This means that you and I were not born with even a little speck of goodness or righteousness. Adam's Fall into sin so totally corrupted us all that we lost totally the spiritual image of God. We were dead in trespasses and sins.

Such being the case, we, along with all other people, were cast into a condition whereby we could not save or rescue ourselves out of our sin and guilt. Even any attempts at good works or self-sacrifice could not erase our sinful condition. As the Bible says, "We are all as an unclean thing, and all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags" (Is. 64:6) In other words, we could not earn back the righteousness man had before the Fall. Scripture says, "Who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean? not one" (Job 14:4).

Being unable to save ourselves we were doomed to eternal damnation in hell. "The soul that sinneth, it shall die" (Eze. 18:20). That this is the sentence of God upon sinners does not make God unloving or unjust or unfair. God cannot be accused of being evil because He sentences sinners to hell. God is a holy, just God. "Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord of hosts" (Is. 6:3). God says, "Be ye holy; for I am holy" (1 Pet. 1:16). Eternal

damnation is the just, holy and righteous judgment of our just, holy and righteous God upon sinners. And since you and I were born sinners, we also deserve the eternal wrath and punishment of God.

Here is where the love of God is manifested! God, in His gracious will, does not desire the damnation of anyone. In His Word, He says, "As I live, saith the Lord God, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked; but that the wicked turn from his way and live" (Eze. 33:11). Scripture says, "(God) will have all men to be saved . . ." (I Tim. 2:4). Yet, God had to remain a holy and just God. What a **seeming** dilemma! God, in His grace, solved that seeming dilemma by sending His only begotten Son into the world as a true man to have the justice of God exacted upon Him and thereby sparing us! God sent Jesus to do for us what we as sinners could not do. God's Law demanded perfect obedience; we could not perform it! Christ did! He kept the holy will and Law of God in our stead. God's Law demanded a holy sacrifice and payment for sin. We could not make restitution for our sins, but Christ did! The Bible says, "Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the Law, being made a curse for us: for it is written, Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree" (Gal. 3:13) Christ actually bore the justice of God in our stead. It was the Just for the unjust!

This is what our text means when it says, "Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us, and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins." Love does not begin with us loving God, but with God first loving us. In particular, it is God sending His Son to be the **propitiation for our sins**. What does this mean? A propitiation is an offering or atonement or payment. It is an offering which appeases or satisfies one who is offended. Christ's offering up of His lifeblood on the cross appeased and satisfied the justice of God which was justly offended by our sins. Isaiah 53:11 says, "He shall see the travail of His soul, and shall be satisfied." God the Father saw the holy travail of the soul of Jesus who suffered and died in our stead. God was satisfied. God was reconciled to us. Scripture says, "To wit, that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto Himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them" (II Cor. 5:19). God no longer charges our sins against us. The blood which Jesus shed on Calvary was holy, precious blood. "The blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanseth us from all sin" (I John 1:7). Truly, herein is love! It was the love of the Father which offered Jesus in our stead. It was the love of Christ for the Father and for us which moved Him to make Himself the propitiation for our sins. As we sing in one of our Lenten hymns: "O wondrous Love, what hast Thou done? The Father offers up His Son! The Son, content, descendeth! O Love, how strong Thou art to save!"

II.

However, our text tells us in the **second** place that since God has so loved us, we ought also to love one another. Our text says, "Beloved, if God so loved us, we ought also to love one another" (v.11). These words of Scripture teach us that since God has loved us so much that without any merit or worthiness on our part He saved us from our sins, we have a divine obligation or duty to love one another! To put it another way: Loving one another is not optional! It is our **duty** before God. No, it is not to be construed as a form of paying God back since there is nothing we can do, even in deeds of love, whereby we could actually repay God for His love. Indeed, we are indebted to God for eternity! Rather, our debt and obligation is one of love and **gratitude**. If in fact we have seen and received God's love through faith in Christ, that very faith-acceptance of God's love will move us to love one another! Not to love others shows that we have not seen and received God's love in Christ. (I John 4:8)

The classic illustration of this is Christ's Parable of the Unmerciful Servant. A man who owed his lord ten thousand talents (about \$12,000,000) was called to account by his lord. Yet he had nothing with which to pay his debt. His lord was going to sell the servant and his wife and children to pay off the debt. The servant begged for mercy and promises to pay off the debt. The lord was moved with compassion and forgave the man's debt. The debt was completely cancelled. How utterly relieved and thankful this man should have been! Yet this same servant found one of his fellow servants who owed him a

mere hundred pence (about \$17!). He demanded that full payment be made. This fellow servant also begged for mercy and promised to pay all. But what was the reply of the first servant? He refused to have mercy and had this fellow servant cast into prison! How this shocks us! We wonder how this first servant could be so short on memory and how he could be so calloused! He was forgiven a huge, unbelievable debt, but he could not forgive the small debt of his fellow servant. The message is clear. We are no different than that first servant. God has forgiven us all our sins for Jesus' sake. Our sin debt was incalculable, but God has forgiven it. Can we now turn around and not show compassion and forgiveness toward our fellow servants.

Indeed, the first and foremost way in which we ought to love one another is to forgive our brothers and sisters their trespasses. If we cannot forgive one another, we prove that we have rejected God's love to us in Christ. This is why Jesus says, "Be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you" (Eph. 4:32).

Thus, our loving one another is not some mechanical, outward show. In our hearts we are sincerely and genuinely to love one another. When we forgive someone, we do not simply **say**, "I forgive you," and then go on our way secretly holding a grudge or a spirit of bitterness. As Jesus said at the end of the Parable of the Unmerciful Servant, "So likewise shall My heavenly Father do also unto you, if ye **from your hearts** forgive not everyone his brother their trespasses." Likewise, the Bible says, "Let love be without dissimulation," which means without hypocrisy!

Having love for each other should also have an effect on our over-all attitude and dealings with each other. Scripture says, "Be kindly affectioned one to another with brotherly love, in honor preferring one another" (Rom. 12:10). This means that we, in love, are not only to be kind to each other, but also that we are to be mutually respectful to each other. This applies not only to laymen, but also to pastors. Pastors should take the lead in showing mutual respect for each other. Not only should they not patronize their members; they should not patronize each other. A patronizing spirit is a condescending attitude where one treats someone as if that person were nothing but a poor simpleton. However, God's Word says, "Let nothing be done through strife or **vainglory**; but **let each esteem other better than themselves**. Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others" (Phil. 2:3,4). Our Savior Himself gave us an example of such humility toward one another in His dealings with His disciples. It was not beneath His dignity to wash His disciples' feet! Jesus then said, "If I then, your Lord and Master, have washed your feet; ye also ought to wash one another's feet. For I have given you an example, that ye should do as I have done to you" (John 13:14,15). As we know, Jesus was not instituting a Sacrament here, but, as He said, giving us an example of humble love for one another.

Furthermore, where there is Christian love, there is a concern for those who are in need. In this same epistle, John says, "But whoso hath this world's good, and seeth his brother have need, and shutteth up his bowels of compassion from him, how dwelleth the love of God in him?" (I John 3:17). We Christians are, in the best sense of the term, the **wealthiest** people on earth--for we are rich in God's grace! This is what Scripture means when it says, "For all things are yours" (I Cor. 3:21). However, it is not unusual for Christians to be poor in this world's goods. The first Christian congregation at Jerusalem was poor. Likewise were the Macedonians. Of course, God sometimes blesses His Christians with earthly wealth, and if he has done so to you, give God the glory and use your riches for His glory. But as said, the general lot of Christians, as they live in a world which hates the Christians, is that of **not** being rich in material wealth.

Here is where we have the opportunity to show and to prove our faith and our Christian love. Where God has blessed us such that we can supply the needs of others, we are to do so. However, if we close off our hearts and do nothing for any of our brethren in need, we deny our faith. Then it has to be asked, "How dwelleth the love of God in us?" In this regard, the Epistle of James says, "If a brother or sister be naked, and destitute of daily

food, and one of you say to them, Depart in peace, be ye warmed and filled; notwithstanding ye give them not those things which are needful to the body; what doth it profit?" (James 2:15,16). Likewise, the Apostle John exhorts us, "My little children, let us not love in word, neither in tongue; but in deed and in truth" (I John 3:18).

III.

In the **third** place, let us consider the good effect and results of practicing Christian love in deed and in truth. First, the Lord graciously provides an outlet or a channel for our faith in the physical and spiritual needs of our fellowmen--that we may put forth the effort to show forth our faith in Christ Jesus by acts of Christian love. This is an effort which our New Man **wants** to do! Our faith needs to be exercised and put into action.

A second good effect of practicing Christian love is that it also involves an exercise of our Christian faith in that bond of love which we have and enjoy with our fellow Christians. We are bound together in faith and love. We sing this truth often: "Blest be the tie that binds our hearts in Christian love." A Christian congregation and also the fellowship of our Conference is a spiritual family bound together in unity of faith and the bond of love. This is why our first priority in love is to our brethren. Scripture says, "As we have therefore opportunity, let us do good to all men, especially unto them who are of the household of faith" (Gal. 6:10).

The third good effect of practicing Christian love is that it is a powerful witness of our faith to the world. Love has the quality of being winsome. It draws people like a magnet. This attractiveness of true Christian love was recognized and reported by the ancient Jewish historian, Josephus. Josephus was a contemporary of the Apostolic Church. As such, he observed the love which the early Christians had for each other. He said, "How they love one another!" He could not help but see it and admire it! As Jesus says, "By this shall all men know that ye are My disciples, if ye have love one to another" (John 13:35).

Finally, as we mutually practice Christian love, we help the weak in faith. It is not uncommon for the weak in faith to be more prone to fears, suspicion, and to be easily offended. The only way, of course, for the weak to be strengthened in their faith is through the power of the Gospel, but by our acts of Christian love we help to remove obstacles over which they might stumble in their faith. As the weak, therefore, are further instructed in the Word, they also need the generosity, sympathy, support, encouragement, patience, and forgiveness of their brethren. They need to know that their brethren are truly behind them and for them; that their brethren have a patient and forgiving spirit which is able to overlook their sins of weakness. As the Bible says, "And above all things have fervent charity among yourselves: for charity shall cover the multitude of sins" (I Pet. 4:8).

In this respect we should always keep in mind the patient love of our Savior for us. O how often we must try our Lord's patient love! O how much He puts up with our much foolishness! Think of how many times in one day the Lord could justly punish us! How often we try His grace! Yet, by His grace He remains so merciful to us. As Psalm 108 says, "The Lord is merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and plenteous in mercy. He will not always chide: neither will He keep His anger for ever. He hath not dealt with us after our sins; nor rewarded us according to our iniquities. For as the heaven is high above the earth, so great is His mercy toward them that fear Him. As far as the east is from the west, so far hath He removed our transgressions from us. Like as a father pitieth his children, so the Lord pitieth them that fear Him" (Psalm 103:8-13).

Thus, as we can see, the practice of Christian love takes us right back to God's love for us. It takes us right back to God who is Love. Truly, there is an inseparable connection between God's love for us and our love for one another. "Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us, and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins. Beloved, if God so loved us, we ought also to love one another."

In Jesus Name, Amen.

1989 Convention Proceedings

ESSAY

GOD'S LOVE REFLECTED IN HIS CHILDREN

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Satan never ceases to attack Christ's Church on earth. Over the years our little Conference has suffered much from these attacks. Pastors and laymen, men whom we had called brethren, have been led astray by Satan and sinful pride into the by-roads of false doctrine and practice. Yet, by God's grace, our little Conference not only continues to exist, but also continues to hold fast to the pure doctrines of God's precious Word. Still, the attacks of Satan never cease. **"Your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about seeking whom he may devour"** I Peter 5:8. If he cannot destroy and devour us through false doctrine and practice, then he may well attempt to destroy and devour us through internal strife--strife caused not by doctrinal issues--but by willfulness in adiaphora or matters of indifference. Over this past year there has been considerable disagreement among our pastors concerning the best type of seminary program for our little Conference at this point in time. Satan was undoubtedly rubbing his hands in glee, for where he is able to sow discord and strife, he is able to get at least a handhold on souls. It is not without reason, then, that the Apostle Paul urgently exhorts and admonishes us in his epistle to the Galatians: **"For all the Law is fulfilled in one word, even in this; Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. But if ye bite and devour one another, take heed that ye be not consumed one of another. This I say then, walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfill the lusts of the flesh"** Gal. 5:14-16.

It is important, therefore, that, at this 38th Annual Convention of our Concordia Lutheran Conference, we focus our attention on the truth that, as Christians, God's love is in deed and in truth to be reflected in us: His love must be reflected first of all to God, but then also to our neighbor in general, and most especially to one another because we are brethren in the faith.

The current needs of our own congregations and our own Conference are only part of the reason why "GOD'S LOVE REFLECTED IN HIS CHILDREN" is a timely subject for our study. There are two other equally-important reasons: **First**, is the attitude of the world and majority of outward Christendom towards love. The word "love" has been so abused in the world and in the visible Church that it is scarcely recognizable when compared with what God tells us is true Christian love. **Secondly**, the individual members of our congregations, our congregations as a whole, and our Conference, have all been accused of being "unloving," of being more concerned about outward appearances of orthodoxy than about the love of God and neighbor. Such a judgment and accusation is based not upon fact, nor upon God's Word, but, as we shall see in our essay, upon the perverted notion of what true Christian love is--again, both in the world and in outward Christendom.

One final note should be made before we begin our essay proper, and that is this: True Christian love is a fruit of the Gospel working in one's heart, not of the Law. The most prevalent and most dangerous mistake among Christians regarding the love of God reflected in their lives is that this love comes first, that this love one must have for God, neighbor and brethren, is essential for their salvation. Some church bodies have tied faith and Christian love so inextricably together that a man is justified by love rather than by confidence in Christ and that "faith is worked by love" (Romanism), not as St. Paul writes in Galatians 5:6, **"Faith which worketh by love."** It is important, then, as the Apostle Paul urges Timothy and all Christians, that we rightly divide the Word of Truth (II Tim. 2:15), carefully distinguishing between Law and Gospel as we consider:

GOD'S LOVE REFLECTED IN HIS CHILDREN

We shall consider this topic on the basis of

- 1) God's commandments or the Law,
- 2) God's Gospel: The only means by which God's love can be reflected in His children, and
- 3) How God's love truly is reflected out of the Christian to God and neighbor.

PART I

God's Law Requires Love of God and Love of Neighbor

The theme of our Convention is well suited as the opening statement of this essay, namely, **"If a man love Me, he will keep My words"** John 14:23. These words were spoken by our Savior Himself, and, while they are Law, in the purest sense of the word, obedience to them must, as we shall see later, spring not from the Law but from the Gospel. However, the statement must stand on its own merits: If a man loves God perfectly, then he will keep God's words--all of them--including God's commandments.

The first of these commandments God gives in the moral law or Ten Commandments: **"Thou shalt have no other gods before Me"** Ex. 20:3. This command to love God is repeated over and over again in the Scriptures. Moses writes: **"And now, Israel, what doth the Lord thy God require of thee, but to fear the Lord thy God, to walk in all His ways, and to love Him, and to serve the Lord thy God with all thy heart and with all thy soul"** Deut. 10:12. Again, **"Therefore thou shalt love the Lord thy God, and keep His charge, and His statutes, and His judgments, and His commandments, alway"** Deut. 11:1. Joshua exhorts: **"But take diligent heed to do the commandment and the Law, which Moses the servant of the Lord charged you, to love the Lord your God and to walk in all His ways, and to keep His commandments, and to cleave unto Him, and to serve Him with all your heart and with all your soul"** Joshua 22:5. And in his farewell address to Israel, Joshua again urges men to **"Take good heed therefore unto yourselves, that ye love the Lord your God"** Joshua 23:11. One of the clearest of these commands to love is found not only in the Law given by God unto the Children of Israel through Moses, but is repeated again word for word by our Savior Himself in the New Testament. In Deuteronomy 6:5 and again in Matthew 22:37, we read, **"Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is the first and great commandment."** Jesus then goes on to add, **"And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love Thy neighbor as thyself. On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets"** (vs. 38-40). And Paul sums up the case well when he states clearly in his epistle to the Romans: **"Love is the fulfilling of the Law"** (13:10).

In each of these passages, including our Convention Theme, the love of God is equated with the keeping of His commandments--His words. Indeed, the love of God cannot be separated from the keeping of all God's commandments, for the love of God is evidenced by the keeping of His commandments; or to put it another way, the keeping of God's commandments is a fruit of the love of God. This truth of Scripture is taught even to our children, when in Luther's Small Catechism they read the question: **"Why do we say in this and in the following Commandments, 'We should fear and love God?'"** The Catechism answers Scripturally by saying: **"The fulfillment of all Commandments must flow from the fear and love of God."**¹ Indeed, unless the keeping of all of God's commands flows from the fear and love of Him, they are not being kept at all; in fact, without the fear and love of God as the motivation, all outward keeping of the Law is an abomination before God.

The Ten Commandments or moral law the Lord Himself divides into two tables, the first requiring love of God and the second requiring love of neighbor. The love of God precedes or comes before the love of neighbor. In fact, the love of God is a necessary prerequisite for love of neighbor. But the love of God also does not exist without the corresponding love of neighbor. St. John testifies to this truth when he writes in his first epistle general: **"If a man say, I love God, and hateth his brother, he is a liar: for he that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, how can he love God whom he hath not seen?"** I John 4:20. Thus, when we speak of keeping Jesus' words, of keeping God's commandments as a testimony of our love for God, that means that the Christian must keep the entire Law of God--the whole of the Ten Commandments or moral law, the specific instructions for Christians in the New Testament regarding fellowship, love of enemies, marking and avoiding false prophets, searching the Scriptures, etc., all of which are simply elucidations or fuller explanations of the already existing Law of God written in the hearts of all men and formally recorded in the Ten Commandments by Moses as the instrument of the Almighty God. Yes, **"Love is the fulfilling of the Law,"** Rom. 13:10,--love of God out of which proceeds love of neighbor.

How are we to love God and neighbor? The Bible answers this question fully and unequivocally as well. As we heard, Christ Himself tells us that we are to love God **"with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind"** Matt. 22:37. Such love is, therefore, a perfect love. It requires that nothing, absolutely nothing else in this life, take God's place in one's heart. Every thought, every action, every word, every intention must be centered on and flow from that love of God. As one commentator puts it: "God will have no mere part, allow no division or subtraction. Not even the smallest corner is to be closed against God. The whole heart, the seat of our personality; the whole soul,... and the whole mind, the entire activity of this our being is to turn to God in love."² Anything less than perfect love of God is idolatry. Jesus explains this very clearly in the Gospel of Matthew where we read: **"He that loveth father or mother more than Me is not worthy of Me: and he that loveth son or daughter more than Me is not worthy of Me,"** (10:37). And as we recite in the Close of the Commandments, God says: **"I the Lord thy God am a jealous God"** (Ex. 20:5), which simply means that God is not willing to share the honor, glory, and love due Him with anyone or anything else.

However, no such love has existed on earth in sinful man born of woman since, in the Garden of Eden, Adam and Eve first broke the covenant which God had made with them and brought sin, misery, death and eternal damnation into the world. There are so many, many things which interfere with this love.

The first of these is **love of self**. Self-love, simply being more concerned about one's own welfare, one's own needs and wants, one's own image, is the order of the day in this present world. Satan, when speaking to God in regard to the Old Testament believer Job, states the case regarding man's own self-love very well: **"And Satan answered the Lord, and said, Skin for skin, yea, all that a man hath will he give for his life,"** Job 2:4. Matthew records how Jesus and His apostles confronted just such a young man who was unwilling to sacrifice anything which contributed to his own welfare for the sake of God and His Kingdom.³ This young man came to Jesus and asked what He should do to inherit eternal life. Jesus told Him the Law, and the man claimed to have kept all these commandments since His youth. So Jesus said: **"If thou wilt be perfect, go and sell that thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven: and come and follow Me"** Matt. 19:21. The young man went away sorrowful, the Bible tells us. Not only was this young man self-righteous, but he also was unwilling to give up anything which bore upon the pleasures and desires of this life. Jesus clearly lays down the principle of what is required in love of God when He says: **"If any man will come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me. For whosoever will save his life shall lose it: and whosoever shall lose his life for My sake shall find it. For what is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?"** Matt. 16:24. Thus, the first thing that interferes with perfect love of God is simply self, the desire of self to fulfill all and any of its desires.

The **love of money** and all that it can do and buy is simply an extension of this love of self. The lust for money is nothing more than covetousness; and covetousness is nothing less than idolatry, the putting of things in the place of God. As the Apostle Paul confesses, **"No whoremonger nor unclean person nor covetous man, who is an idolater, hath any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and of God."** And money is not only the means for purchasing the desires of the flesh, but in today's world is all too often the means of a man's success or failure. Thus, money becomes the gauge of a man's worth in the eyes of the world. But the Bible warns: **"Woe unto them that join house to house, that lay field to field, till there be no place, that they may be placed alone in the midst of the earth"** Is. 5:8. The world may view a man's success in terms of money and what it can buy; but God warns that such a man will find himself alone, cut off from everything that is really important. It is with good reason, then, that Paul tells Timothy: **"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"** 1 Tim. 6:10.⁴

Indeed, **love of the world** itself, even of all its beauties and pleasures and the myriad blessings which God has poured out upon mankind in the world, is warned against by the Apostle John who writes: **"Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. . .**

For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world. And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof" I John 2:15,16. This wonderful world which God has created is to be used and enjoyed by man, and especially by Christians. But such use and enjoyment must never interfere with the love of God. If the love of the world and the things of this world, its treasures, pleasures, honors, its wealth, its power, its wisdom, its physical beauty, if any of these things take precedence in one's heart above the Lord God, that person is guilty of idolatry. Indeed, St. John says that anyone who intends to be a friend of the world is an enemy of God. This does not mean that those who would love God cannot enjoy and appreciate the things of this world, for Jesus says, "**I pray not that Thou shouldest take them out of the world, but that Thou shouldest keep them from the evil**" John 17:15. St. Paul says, "**For every creature of God is good, and nothing to be refused, if it be received with thanksgiving**" I Tim. 4:4. And in I Corinthians 7:31, Paul says, "**And they that use this world, as not abusing it: For the fashion of this world passeth away.**" Luther writes: "**To be in the world, to feel the world, is a different thing from loving the world; just as to have and to feel sin is a different thing from loving sin.**"⁴ R.C.H. Lenski, in his Interpretation of First John, says: "We are not forbidden to admire, appreciate, use aright the natural things of this earth such as relatives, friends, home, occupation, and the thousand of useful, attractive, valuable things which God has put all around us. But whatever in its connection, tendency, and influence is hostile to God, to Christ, and to His Kingdom, however alluring or attractive it may otherwise appear, is 'a thing of the world' to which (the Christian) must be hostile since we belong to God, to Christ, and to His kingdom."⁵ Even the love of family can supplant the love that God's demands of everyone for Himself. As we heard earlier, Jesus forbids familial love which surpasses one's love for God. In Luke 14:26, Jesus says: "**if any man come to Me, and hate not his father, and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren, and sisters, yea, and his own life also, he cannot be My disciple.**" So many people have been offended at these words. After all, how can the Son of God, who preaches love of God and neighbor so clearly, preach and encourage hate? But all the Lord Jesus is saying here is that, if family takes precedence over God, if mother, or father, or brother, or sister, or any other family member is more important to a person than God, if their feelings and welfare cause one's love for God to diminish in even the least degree, then such a person becomes guilty of idolatry, of breaking the first commandment.

Just as the command in Scripture to love God is perfectly clear, so also the command to love one's neighbor is clear and indisputable. Jesus compares the command to love God with the command to love one's neighbor in the sense that both commandments demand our love. The love toward God is and must remain supreme in that nothing is to be loved above God; but the Second Table requires that one love his neighbor **not above** himself but **as** himself. There is a proper self-love. This is not the sinful love of self which flows from and results in pride, but a love which is natural, a love in which we have a due regard to the dignity of our own natures, and a due concern for the welfare of our own souls and bodies. With this same love we are to love all men as truly and sincerely as we love ourselves, and must wrong and injure none. This love of all men means that we dare not look out merely for our own needs and concerns, but must give equal consideration to the needs of our neighbor. Such love is, therefore, like unto the love one is to have towards God in that it, too, is to be perfect.

The difficulty with loving our neighbor is the same difficulty all men have in loving God. The devil, the world, and our own flesh all seek to interfere with, yes, even to destroy, this love of neighbor even as they seek to destroy our love for God. And for the natural, unregenerate man, who has no love for God, the love for his neighbor is impossible because the latter love flows from the former.

Yes, the command of God to love Him above all things and to love one's neighbor as one's self is an impossibility because of man's sinful nature. As was mentioned earlier, the love for God and for one's neighbor must both be a perfect love. It is a love that demands nothing in return. As Paul states, love or "**charity seeketh not her own**" I Cor. 13:5. In the case of our neighbor, he may well be our enemy and must yet be the object of our love. Unfortunately, because of the common distortions perpetrated by both the

world and much of visible Christendom today, this command to love God and to love neighbor has been so perverted as to become unrecognizable, simply because their definition of love flows from their sinful reason instead of from the infallible Word of God. Thankfully, God has revealed to us in the Holy Scriptures what true love is and not left it to man's corrupt imaginations or the sophistic thinking of so-called theologians

The Greek language uses four different words for love: **Agape**, **phileo**, **eros** and **thelo**. Our primary concern is with only one of these four Greek words for love, **agape** (pronounced "ah gah pay"), since **phileo** refers primarily to **the love of friendship**, **eros** to **the love of romantics** and **thelo**, used only once in the New Testament, **has a purely carnal connotation**. The word **agape**, however, has an important impact on any discussion of Christian love. In fact, wherever God commands love--love of Himself or love of neighbor--the Greek "**agape**" is always the word used.

Agape is not the "gooey" love of romantics, nor is it the binding love of a good friendship (though **agape** may well be at the core of true friendships); **agape** is not the love of country or of causes. Indeed, **agape** is not found in this world naturally--in fact, **agape** cannot be found in man apart from God. **Agape** comes from God alone, is produced by God alone and can be reflected in man by God alone. It is precisely because this **agape** comes from God alone and is produced by God alone, and, most important, is manifested most clearly in God's sending His only begotten Son into the flesh to redeem mankind from sin, death and the devil, that it is impossible to define this love of God, this **agape**, this perfect love which God requires of man, without looking to Christ and the Gospel.

Agape is a "spiritual love." R.C.H. Lenski, the author of an extensive interpretive work of the New Testament, defines **agape** as "the love of true comprehension and understanding coupled with corresponding purpose."⁶ While this may not be the perfect definition for **agape**, it is as adequate a definition of a heaven-produced love as I could use for this essay. **Agape**, as we said, begins with God. This love or **agape** of God is easily understood and easily seen. A man can see God's love for him every time he looks at the cross of Christ and realizes that there was absolutely no reason in the world for Christ to be hanging on that cross--other than, of course, His and His Father's great love, **agape**, for us. Christ hung on that cross because God's love, before the world began, comprehended the lost and sinful condition of mankind and purposed to save us, despite the fact that man deserved nothing but His eternal wrath and punishment.

Man's **agape**, that is, the reflection of God's love in man, must be the very same kind of love. That is what God requires. Such love is, however, impossible for man without his knowing, assenting to and trusting in the love of God so clearly revealed to man in His Son, Jesus Christ. When one sees what God has done for him through God's only begotten Son, our Savior; when one knows and understands that Jesus, the Author of the Law, put Himself under that same Law and kept it for all mankind; when one begins to comprehend the great sacrifice Jesus made for all men in taking away both sin and guilt by suffering God's wrath against mankind; when one grasps with his heart that God raised Jesus from the dead and thereby declared the whole world righteous or justified in His sight for the sake of Christ's redemptive work, the sinless life and innocent, bitter suffering and death of the very Son of God; when one truly believes that Christ's sacrifice was not made merely for mankind as a whole, but for each, individual sinner, then, and only then, can one begin to grasp the true nature of God's love, of God's **agape**.

The command to love God and to love neighbor is clear. How we are to love God and to love neighbor is equally clear. Now, it is necessary for us to see how it is possible for men, who are by nature sinful and enemies of God, to keep those commands even to some degree. Thus, in the second part of our essay, we shall focus our hearts and minds on **God's Gospel: The only Means by which God's Love can be reflected in His children.**

PART II

God's Gospel: The Only Means By Which God's Love Can Be Reflected In His Children

The Law of God requires perfect love of God and neighbor, but, as we have seen, the Law of

God cannot work that love in any human being. The Bible clearly says that the natural mind of man **"is not subject to the Law of God, neither indeed can be,"** Rom. 8:7b. Paul teaches us in Romans: **"Therefore by the deeds of the Law there shall no flesh be justified in His (God's) sight,"** Rom. 3:20a. The Law tells us what God demands of us, it shows us how we have not kept His Law, and, therefore, serves as a mirror to show us our sins as Paul so clearly states, **"By the Law is the knowledge of sin,"** Rom. 3:20b. But the Law cannot work in us the power to keep it, for the natural, unregenerate man, as we have seen, cannot keep the Law of God in even its smallest detail. **"They are all gone aside, they are all together become filthy; there is none that doeth good, no, not one,"** Ps. 14:3. Again, the Bible says, **"No man is justified by the Law in the sight of God,"** Gal. 3:11. And if one cannot keep that Law, the **whole** Law, the command of God to love Him with our whole heart, soul, and mind, and our neighbor as ourselves, then, one is condemned by God's justice to everlasting damnation. **"Cursed is everyone that continueth not in all things which are written in the Book of the Law to do them,"** Gal. 3:10, and, **"The wages of sin is death,"** Rom. 6:23, spiritual death, temporal death, eternal death.

This being the case, a man could study the Law of God his entire life, dedicate every moment of every day, give his entire being over to trying to keep what God commands in His Word, still it would be to no avail, for **"the natural man receiveth not the things of the spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him; neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned,"** I Cor. 2:14, and the Law is spiritual. As we have seen, an external keeping of the Law is not sufficient--the keeping of the Law must flow from the **fear and love** of God--something impossible for man in the state into which he is born, that is, totally corrupt, "without true fear, love, and trust in God. He is without righteousness, is inclined only to evil, and is spiritually blind, dead, and an enemy of God."⁷

Since God demands perfect keeping of His Law, and since the natural man is clearly unequal to the task, and since the certain consequence of not keeping the Law of God is both temporal and eternal death, natural man is without **"hope, and without God in the world,"** without "a prayer," so to speak, in this world or in the world to come. A complete change in man was necessary--a change which man himself could not effect, no matter how hard he worked at it. Thus, unless God Himself intervened, intervened to expiate or pay both for the original sin of man, that is, the corrupt nature with which he was born, as well as his for actual sins, namely, those acts of thought, word and deed by which he transgresses God's holy Law--and if God, at the same time, did not work in man the ability to make at least a beginning of keeping God's Law, the situation of man would be hopeless indeed. But **"God is love"** I John 4:8, He is agape in His very essence, and since God's love existed from before the foundation of the world, God in eternity, in that love comprehended and understood the hopeless plight of sinful man and, in that same love, purposed to save man from his own folly.

Thus, we read: **"God so loved the world, that He gave His only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish but have everlasting life,"** John 3:16. And again, **"But God commendeth His love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us,"** Rom. 5:8. Still again, **"But God, who is rich in mercy, for His great love wherewith He loved us, even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ,"** Eph. 2:4,5. And still again: **"Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God,"** I John 3:1. And still once more, **"In this was manifested the love of God toward us, because that God sent His only begotten Son into the world that we might live through Him,"** I John 4:9. Yes, God, in His great agape for sinful man, sent His only-begotten Son, the second Person of the God-head, true God, begotten of the Father, into this world to deliver sinful mankind from his certain fate, to change man's hard and stony heart, a heart which hates God by nature, into a heart which is able to reflect reflect the love God had for man back to God and to his fellow man.

How this was done is--or at least should be--one of the most familiar stories to any Christian. So why should we repeat it here? Not only should we repeat it here, we must repeat it here, for it is out of this redemptive work of God in Christ Jesus that the love

of God is worked in us and thereby reflected out of us.

God the Son didn't just suddenly appear in this world in all His glory and by a wave of His hand make sin disappear. No, **"when the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth His Son, made of a woman, made under the Law, to redeem them that were under the Law, that we might receive the adoption of sons,"** Gal. 4:4,5. To redeem man, to purchase him back from the slavery of sin and death into which he had plunged himself through the sin of Adam, the Son of God had to become a man Himself. He had to be true man so that He might take our place under the Law and fulfill the Law for us. He had to do for man what man should have done but could not do for himself, and so Jesus became true man that He might be our Substitute under the Law of God.

He became true man also in order that He might suffer what we should have suffered for our sins, namely, death. The Bible says, **"Forasmuch, then, as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, He also Himself likewise took part of the same, that through death He might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil,"** Heb. 2:14. Death, the fruit of sin, was the executioner's ax which Satan held over the head of every human being, but Christ suffered death and carried with Him to the place of His death, the Cross of Calvary, the cause of death, sin--all sin--original sin and actual sins, the sins of every man, woman, and child of all time, and through His sufferings and death endured all the wrath of God against those sins, thereby removing death as the ultimate threat and weapon of Satan. Indeed, through His death, Christ removed the teeth of Satan, so to speak, in essence destroying Satan by destroying Satan's power over sinful man.

But death could not hold Jesus, the Son of God. Three days later He rose from the dead, God thereby declaring that, because the sacrifice Christ made was a sufficient ransom for the souls of men, the whole world now righteous for the sake of Christ's perfect obedience to the Law and His bitter sufferings and death. As Scripture testifies, Jesus was **"delivered for our offenses, and was raised again for our justification,"** Rom. 4:25. Christ's resurrection is, therefore, the guarantee of what God was doing in Christ, as Paul declares in II Corinthians 5:19, **"To wit, that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto Himself."** How did He do this? By **"not imputing their trespasses unto them."** This is the Gospel, the Good News of mankind's salvation: That God, for Christ's sake, no longer charges or imputes to mankind the sins which would condemn him to everlasting hellfire.

How does this righteousness of Christ become ours personally. **"For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: not of works, lest any man should boast,"** Eph. 2:8,9. When sinners, convicted of their sins by the indictment of God's Law, stand at the very brink of despair, their cold, unregenerate hearts devoid of any comfort or hope; only the Gospel which proclaims this amazing love of God is the power of God to change those hearts, to enkindle in them the warmth of saving faith and the assurance of their salvation by God's grace in Christ their Redeemer. The Gospel works a change in the hearts of such men. Jesus Himself told Nicodemus that just such a change of heart must take place in a man if he is to see the kingdom of God. Jesus calls it a rebirth, Paul calls it a regeneration--either way, the giving of life where there was once only death. In John chapter 3, we read: **"Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God,"** (vs. 3). This rebirth is the result of the Holy Ghost's working through the Gospel, for **"the Gospel of Christ, . . . is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth,"** Rom. 1:16. A believer is born, therefore, not of his own power, nor by his own works, but, as Scripture testifies, he is **"born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the Word of God, which liveth and abideth forever,"** I Peter 1:23. It is this same Word working through Baptism which generates life and faith in a once dead heart. Paul writes to Titus, **"According to His mercy He saved us by the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Ghost,"** Titus 3:5. Thus, through faith the Christian appropriates or puts on the righteousness of Christ; he becomes a child of God, an heir of eternal life--and all of it is God's work. **"(God) hath saved us and called us with an holy calling, not according to our works, but according to His own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began,"** II Tim. 1:9.

This is the Gospel of Christ which quickens or makes alive a heart that was dead, that makes a friend of one who was God's enemy. This is the same Gospel by which Old Testament believers were saved. This is the same Gospel of which Ezekiel speaks when he says: "**And I will give them one heart, and I will put a new spirit within you; and I will take the stony heart out of their flesh, and will give them a heart of flesh,**" Ez. 11:19. This is the Gospel which does indeed change the stone-cold hearts of unbelievers into new hearts, ruled and dominated **not** by the world, Satan and sin, but by God Himself. This Gospel is what changes sin-filled hearts into a place fit for the Christ, a heart in which the Holy Ghost Himself dwells, in which He lives and resides and makes His temple.

This new, regenerated heart wants to live in accordance with God's Word and will. As Paul testifies, "**Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new,**" II Cor. 5:17. Thus, that the children of God live in accordance with God's Word and will is, as we have seen, one of the chief reasons God sent His Son into this world to redeem mankind from sin, death and the devil. Too often we are told that Christ came into this world only to save us; it is true that Christ did come into this world to save us, but He also came into this world to change our lives as Zacharias testifies, "**That we, being delivered out of the hand of our enemies, might serve Him without fear, in holiness and righteousness before Him, all the days of our life,**" (Luke 1:74,75). Even as St. Paul also tells us that faith is not a product of our works or will in Ephesians 2:8,9, he immediately adds: "**We are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them,**" (Eph. 2:10). Indeed, the purpose of Christ's coming was to restore in man what the first Adam through his sin had lost, lost not only for himself but for all mankind. This included, of course, eternal life, but that was only part of what Christ intended to restore in man. Just as Adam before his fall into sin walked in the spirit, desiring only what was pleasing to his God and Creator, so also the new man in Christians, created through the work of the Second Adam, Christ,⁸ desires only to walk in the footsteps of Christ his Savior. "**This I say then, Walk in the spirit** (that is, the new man created in Christ Jesus which is spirit and not flesh), **and ye shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh,**" Gal. 5:16.

We see, therefore, that God has worked in the Christian the power and the will to keep His words, that is, to love both God and neighbor according to His commandments. It should be no problem, then, for the Christian to do as God commands. Indeed, it would be no problem if man were all spirit, recreated in the image of God; but man is also flesh, and despite the change that God in Christ, working through the Means of Grace, has worked in the spirit of man, the sinful flesh remains sinful flesh in this world. Even as Jesus told Nicodemus that a man must be born again according to the Spirit of God, He also points out that "**that which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit,**" John 3:6. There is, therefore, an on-going strife between the spirit and the flesh.

St. Paul states the case accurately and succinctly in his epistle to the Galatians: "**The flesh lusteth against the spirit, and the spirit against the flesh: And these are contrary the one to the other: So that ye cannot do the things that ye would,**" (5:17). The flesh and the spirit are opposites, and yet they exist within every Christian, face to face and toe to toe, in constant confrontation with one another. Although a "right spirit" and holy desires have been created within the Christian, the flesh stands in the way of the fulfillment of those desires. The flesh remains as sinful as it was at its conception and continues to hate God and His will. Paul expresses the situation well for every Christian when, to the Romans, he writes: "**For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh,) dwelleth no good thing: For to will is present with me; but how to perform that which is good I find not. For the good that I would I do not: but the evil which I would not, that I do,**" Rom. 7:18,19. Thus, the task of the Christian is, with the help of the Holy Spirit, to overcome the flesh, to bring the flesh into subjection to the new spirit (the new man) which the Holy Ghost has worked in him through the Gospel. This growing in a life more pleasing to God, a life which desires and carries out the will of God, the Scripture calls "sanctification." Unlike conversion, and consequently also subjective justification, which is instantaneous and is complete the moment that saving faith is worked in one's heart and

continues as long as that faith remains in the heart, sanctification is a life-long process--a process at which the Christian constantly works and in which he continually grows, although he never achieves perfection in this present life. St. Paul testifies: **"Not as though I had already attained, either were already perfect: but I follow after, if that I may apprehend that for which also I am apprehended of Christ Jesus. Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended: but this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus,"** Phil. 3:12-14.

It is for this reason that the Christian must always be able clearly to distinguish between the desires of the new spirit within him and the contrary motions of his old sinful flesh. For if the Christian would see only his flesh and his lack of growth in sanctified living, he would soon cry out with Paul: **"O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?!"** Rom. 7:24. But the New Man, which is **"created in righteousness and true holiness,"** (Eph. 4:24) and, thus, desires only that which is God-pleasing, in fact, which truly **does** only that which is in accordance with God's will, also knows the nature of the Old Adam and does not despair when the flesh falls into sin. The Christian confesses with Paul, **"Now then it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me,"** Rom. 7:17. Instead of crying out in despair, then, the Christian instead can shout with joy the words of the Apostle Paul: **"O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death? I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord. So then with the mind I myself serve the Law of God; but with the flesh the Law of sin,"** Rom. 7:24,25.

It is the mind, the new heart, of the Christian which must prevail in this battle, however. For the Christian who is not growing in sanctification, in holier living, is dying. The Christian's task is to bring the Old Adam into subjection to the New Man. **"How shall we, that are dead to sin, live any longer therein. Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, that ye should obey it in the lusts thereof. Neither yield ye your members as instruments of unrighteousness unto sin: But yield yourselves unto God, as those that are alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness unto God. For sin shall not have dominion over you: For ye are not under the Law, but under grace,"** Rom. 6:2,12-14. Indeed, good works, love of God and love of neighbor, are the evidence of living faith in Christ as Savior. In the Epistle general of James we read: **"Even so faith, if it hath not works, is dead, being alone. Yea, a man may say, Thou hast faith, and I have works: Shew me thy faith without thy works, and I will shew thee my faith by my works. . . But wilt thou know, O vain man, that faith without works is dead. . . For as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also,"** James 2:17,18,20,26. Thus, it is clear that where there is faith, there are also works. **But faith precedes works!** Love is a fruit, a product, a result of faith, not the other way around. Thus, the Christian grows in sanctification aware that **"I through the Law am dead to the Law, that I might live unto God. I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God who loved me and gave Himself for me,"** Gal. 2:20; and again, Jesus Himself says: **"He that abideth in Me and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit; for without Me ye can do nothing,"** John 15:5.

It is, then, Christ's Gospel alone which produces saving faith in the hearts of sinful men. It is this same Gospel which changes the cold and stony hearts of men into hearts that quite literally become the temple of the Holy Spirit for it is the Holy Spirit of God, living and abiding in the Christian, who alone enables the Christian to make a beginning of returning or reflecting the agape so evident in God's gift of His Son for our salvation--restoring that which was lost by the first Adam to each believer by the second Adam (Christ).⁹ The Holy Ghost through the Apostle Paul explains why the Christian desires to keep and do the will of God perfectly when he says: **"The love of Christ constraineth us,"** II Cor. 5:14. The love of God and neighbor does not begin in us, but begins in God. **"We love (God) because He first loved us,"** I John 5:19. Thus, no matter how the love is reflected out of the Christian, it begins and it ends with the love God has for us.

We have seen in **Part I** of our essay what God requires of us and, in the **Second Part** of our

essay, how God enables us to do that which He requires of us by creating in us the New Man, by regenerating our dead and sinful hearts into hearts in which Christ lives and reigns. In the **Third Part** of our essay, let us see **How God's Love truly Is Reflected Out Of The Christian Toward God and Our Neighbor.**

PART III

How God's Love Truly Is Reflected Out Of The Christian Toward God And Our Neighbor

As we have seen, God's words, the words of our convention theme, require that we love Him with our whole hearts, minds, and souls, and our neighbors as ourselves. Of ourselves we are completely incapable of such love, but God, in Christ, has redeemed us, bought us back from sin, death and the devil, and created a new man in us that desires only that which is God-pleasing--in short, desires to keep God's words, reflecting God's love to both God and to neighbor. In this last section of the essay, we desire to see at least some of the ways in which God's love for us should be reflected to God and to our neighbor. In such a brief essay, we could never begin to cover every way in which the love of God can and should be properly reflected, but through His Word, God will open the hearts of Christians so that day by day they may not only **"be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus"** (II Tim. 2:1), but also that **"your love may abound yet more and more in knowledge and in all judgment; that ye may approve things that are excellent; that ye may be sincere and without offense till the day of Christ, being filled with the fruits of righteousness, which are by Jesus Christ, unto the glory and praise of God,"** Phil. 1:9-11.

The love of the Christian reflected toward God begins with a love of God's Word. The attitude of every Christian must be that of David who said: **"I was glad when they said unto me, Let us go into the house of the Lord"** Ps. 122:1. And again, in Psalm 26:8: **"Lord, I have loved the habitation of Thy house, and the place where Thine honor dwelleth."** Still again, **"One thing have I desired of the Lord, that will I seek after; that I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life, to behold the beauty of the Lord, and to inquire in His temple,"** Ps. 27:4. To desire to be in the Lord's house is to desire to be in the Lord's Word. Indeed, the Lord Himself equates love of His Word with love of His house when He says through Moses: **"In all places where I record My Name I will come unto thee, and I will bless thee,"** Ex. 20:24. Where else does God record His Name but in the Scriptures? And where else are the Scriptures **regularly and consistently** taught and heard than in the Christian congregation?

Jesus Himself urges this love of His Word in His ministry, during His lifetime on this earth, as recorded in the Gospels. **"He that is of God heareth God's words,"** Jesus says. And again, **"If ye continue in My Word, then are ye My disciples indeed; and ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free,"** John 8:31,32. And still again, **"Search the Scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life; and they are they which testify of Me,"** John 5:39. Jesus told the huge crowds that constantly followed Him, **"Blessed are they that hear the Word of God and keep it,"** Luke 11:28. Indeed, Jesus Himself, as a boy of twelve, gladly sat at the feet of the rabbis, both asking questions and carefully listening to the answers (Luke 2:41-49). The apostles without exception encourage Christians to diligent use of the Word of God. Paul says, **"For I am not ashamed of the Gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth,"** Rom. 1:16. And again, **"Faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God,"** Rom. 10:17. **"Let the Word of Christ dwell in you richly, in all wisdom teaching and admonishing one another, in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord,"** Col 3:16. In short, the first and foremost reflection of the **agape** of God in one's heart is his hunger and thirst, his **agape** or love, for the Word of God. What does the Bible tell us of the first Christian congregation upon hearing of the love of God in Christ Jesus? **"They continued steadfastly in the Apostles' doctrine and fellowship and in breaking of bread and in prayers,"** Acts 2:42. To Timothy, Paul writes: **"But continue thou in the things which thou hast learned and hast been assured of, knowing of whom thou hast learned them; and that from a child thou hast known the Holy Scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in**

Christ Jesus. All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: that the man of God may be perfect (complete) thoroughly furnished unto all good works," II Tim. 3:14-17.

Out of this Word which the Christian loves, through which the Holy Ghost works in the Christian the saving knowledge of Jesus Christ, life, and salvation, He also creates the new hearts of which we spoke earlier. This new heart reflects this love of God and this love of His Word in the everyday activities of the Christian.

God's love, the **agape**, reflected out of man, seeks to comply with God in every and all His words. We are, therefore, to strive to rid ourselves of everything and anything which displeases and offends Him who loved us unto death. **"Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us, looking unto Jesus the Author and Finisher of our faith,"** Heb. 12:1-2a.

God communes or communicates to us through His Word, and it is God's desire that we communicate or commune with Him through prayer. Indeed, prayer is one of the highest forms of worship, of showing our **agape** for God; for in prayer we acknowledge that God is God; that we may approach Him as dear children approach their dear Father for the sake of Jesus' substitutionary work. **"Pray without ceasing,"** Paul says (I Thess. 5:17). Jesus Himself says, **"Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you. For everyone that asketh, receiveth; and he that seeketh, findeth; and to him that knocketh it shall be opened,"** Matt. 7:7,8. And again the Lord says, **"Call upon Me in the day of trouble; I will deliver thee, and thou shalt glorify Me,"** Ps. 50:15. So many Christians believe that prayer is simply something they do when they need something from God. But nothing could be further from the truth. God wants us to bring everything to Him in prayer--good and bad--likes and dislikes--needs and thanksgiving; for as we said, prayer is one of the highest forms of worship.

This love for God continues not just in the good times but in the bad times as well. It is an easy matter to love someone who, in everything that is done, gives clear evidence of his love. When God blesses us abundantly with temporal and eternal blessings, we have no trouble believing that God loves us. But it is much more difficult when things don't look so good--either temporally or eternally. Yet the Bible assures us that **"all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to His purpose,"** Rom. 8:28. Indeed, Paul goes on to say: **"If God be for us, who can be against us? He that spared not His own Son but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him also freely give us all things?"** Rom. 8:32. Indeed, chastenings, the troubles that the Lord permits to come upon Christians in this life, whether they be health problems, money problems, yes, at times, even the loss of the "feeling" of forgiveness, are sure signs of the love of God. As the writer to the Hebrews expresses it, **"For whom the Lord loveth He chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom He receiveth,"** (12:6).

So no matter what the circumstance, the Christian should always reflect the love God has for him in his everyday life and living. The Christian does this not only in the way he lives his life, giving all glory to God, but also in his words, taking every opportunity that is before him to testify of the love of God for him, and how that love has affected him in his life. In this way, Christians make at least a beginning of reflecting the love of God **for them** to God--and also to others, to their neighbors.

The love of neighbor, as we have seen in Part II of this essay, is again just a reflection of the love that God shows for us in Christ. Jesus says in John 13:34: **"A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another."** This love of neighbor manifests itself in the keeping of the Second Table of the Law. We have already heard the command of the Savior to **"love thy neighbor as thyself,"** but there is yet another passage which teaches us how Christians are to show their **agape** to their neighbors. It is known as the "Golden Rule," a rule in which Jesus says, **"Therefore all things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them: For this is the Law and the prophets,"** Matt. 7:12.

In these brief words we find the real nature of man's **agape**, that is, God's love reflected

out of His children. One of the most famous rabbis of Jesus' day stated the world's attitude towards love: **"What is hateful to thyself do not to thy neighbor; for this is the whole law, and all else is its exposition."**¹⁰ This "exposition" of God's Law is the height of selfishness and the opinion of the world. In essence it says: Don't do any harm to your neighbor, for he may harm you in return. This is an egotism which withholds injury lest it suffer injury in return. But the Savior turns this around for the Christian. He urges that only good be done to our neighbor, no matter what the neighbor does to us. Indeed, we are to treat our neighbor just as we would like to be treated, even if the neighbor be our worst enemy. The Bible says it: **"Love your enemies, do good to them which hate you, bless them that curse you, and pray for them which spitefully use you,"** Luke 6:27,28. In this respect we also need not fear those who do not love us in return, for the Bible says in I John 4:17,18: **"Herein is our love made perfect, that we may have boldness in the day of judgment: because as He is, so are we in this world. There is no fear in love; but perfect love casteth out fear: because fear hath torment."** It is for this reason that the Apostle Peter writes: **"But if, when ye do well, and suffer for it, ye take it patiently, this is acceptable with God. For even hereunto were ye called: Because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow His steps,"** I Peter 2:20b,21.

To **understand** what God desires in regard to our neighbor is not difficult; to **do** that which God desires is, of course, impossible without God's help. But note well, it **can** be done with God's help. Practically speaking, it simply means that the children of God must bring their emotions, their flesh, which demands vengeance, namely, payment in kind for what we receive, under the control, not of the flesh, but of the new spirit created in us by God in Christ through the Holy Ghost. St Paul writes, **"Dearly beloved, avenge not yourselves, but rather give place unto wrath: For it is written, Vengeance is mine; I will repay, saith the Lord,"** Rom. 12:19. True Christian love for the neighbor means dying to self. This thought is repeated over and over again in the New Testament. In telling the children of God what their attitude should be toward one another and toward their neighbor in general, Paul says, **"Let nothing be done through strife or vainglory; but in lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than themselves. Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others,"** Phil. 2:3,4. And then Paul goes on to describe Jesus in His State of Humiliation, saying first: **"Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus,"** and then tells us exactly what the mind of Christ was: **"Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God: But made Himself of no reputation, and took upon Him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men: And being found in fashion as a man, He humbled Himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross,"** Phil. 2:6-8. Peter exhorts all believers: **"Likewise, ye younger, submit yourselves unto the elder. Yea, all of you be subject one to another, and be clothed with humility: For God resisteth the proud, and giveth grace to the humble,"** I Pet. 5:5. Jesus Himself says: **"He that is greatest among you, let him be as the younger; and he that is chief, as he that doth serve,"** Luke 22:26. The proposition the Scriptures lay before us is a simple one:--Let no man think that he is better than another. And, dear listeners, the way for the Christian to accomplish that, the way to bring our flesh into subjection to the new spirit in us, is simply to remember the great debt God has forgiven us and compare it with the petty grievances we may have against one another or against a neighbor.

Indeed, this principle applies in every aspect of interpersonal relationships involving Christians. In business the Christian is not just to be "technically" honest, but is to think of how Christ Himself deals with him on a daily basis and let that be his guide in how he deals with his customers. In school the Christian student should not only be a witness of God's **agape** in him by avoiding those things which are evil, but even avoiding those things which may give an appearance of evil. Husbands and wives should deal with each other in love, each remembering their God-ordained place in the home, and each honoring and holding the other in high esteem. In our congregations the **agape** of God reflected in His children should manifest itself not in gossip, or in backbiting, neither in petty criticism, nor in unjust personal attacks, but, as the writer to the Hebrews urges, **"Let us consider one another to provoke unto love and to good works: Not forsaking**

the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another: and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching," Heb. 10:24,25. Nor should any Christian, pastor or layman, think that he or she has a corner on what is right or what is even wisest in matters of adiaphora. Indeed, Christian love at times even dictates that for the sake of a weaker brother, the whole of a congregation bend to the will of that brother that no unnecessary offense be given; but such **agape** ceases to be true **agape** when a brother or sister demands his own way to the point that, abusing his liberty, he thereby tramples on the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us all free. The list could quite literally never end. But to put it briefly, true Christian love, true **agape** towards the neighbor, the love of God reflected in His children, expresses itself most fully, most forcefully, most emphatically, most lovingly, when the self in each of us dies and stops demanding what it wants and starts listening to and doing something about the needs, the wants, the desires, the hurts, the pains, the troubles, the joys, the successes, the failures, the accomplishments, the ideas and the opinions of others rather than demanding that ours be heard and answered and acted upon first.

It all goes back to the mercies of God in Christ Jesus. God's love being reflected in His children is simply a matter of a Christian remembering daily, indeed every minute of every day, that his life is not his own, but is Christ's, bought with the price of the bitter sufferings and death of the Son of God Himself. Thus, it is appropriate that we close this essay with words of Scripture which remind us all of both the great **agape** of God and also which admonish us to let that great love of God be reflected in us, His children: **"I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service. And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect will of God. For I say, through the grace given unto me, to every man that is among you, not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think; but to think soberly, according as God hath dealt to every man the measure of faith,"** Rom. 12:1-3. For Jesus' sake, to His glory, to the extension of His kingdom, and to the exercise of God's **agape** among us, may God grant us a clearer understanding of His **agape** for us. Amen.

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- 1 Question 34, Luther's Small Catechism, p. 53, CPH, 1943.
- 2 R.C.H. Lenski, Interpretation of St. Matthew, pp.880-881
- 3 Matthew 19:16-22
- 4 R.C.H. Lenski, Interpretation of First John, p.424.
- 5 Ibid.
- 6 R.C.H. Lenski, Interpretation of St. John's Revelation, p.87
- 7 Luther's Small Catechism, Question 95, p. 87, CPH, 1943
- 8 I Cor. 15:45-49
- 9 I Cor. 15:20-23; Rom. 5:12-19
- 10 R.C.H. Lenski, Interpretation of St. Matthew, p. 295

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1989 Convention Proceedings

MINUTES

MINUTES OF THE 38th ANNUAL CONVENTION

of the

CONCORDIA LUTHERAN CONFERENCE, June 23,24,25, 1989

FRIDAY SESSION, June 23, 1989

The Thirty-eighth Annual Convention of the Concordia Lutheran Conference held at Peace Lutheran Church, Tinley Park, Illinois, began in the Name of the Triune God with a **Service of Convocation**. The Pastor loci, the Rev. David T. Mensing, served as Liturgist and the Rev. M. L. Natterer, President of the Conference, preached the sermon (**Proceedings, Pages 3-5**). The message of the sermon, entitled "If a man love Me, he will keep My words," (John 14:23) focused on the nature of love itself, God's love for us and the love which we in thankfulness to God are to return to God and our neighbor. It especially emphasized the absolute tie between true Christian love and God's love. There were 81 souls present for this opening service.

The first convention session was declared opened by the President, the Rev. M.L. Natterer, in the Name of the Triune God at 11:30 a.m.

The **Convention Committees** were then appointed as follows:

AUDITING COMMITTEE: The Rev. E. R. Stallings, Chairman; Mr. Raymond Litzkow, Mr. John Steinke.

COMMITTEE ON REGISTRATION AND EXCUSES: The Rev. Mark W. Dierking, Chairman; Mr. Phillip R. Martin, Mr. Paul Steinke.

NOMINATING AND ELECTIONS COMMITTEE: The Rev. Paul R. Bloedel, Chairman; Mr. Robert Bloedel, Mr. Ray Litzkow

RESOLUTIONS COMMITTEE: The Rev. David T. Mensing, Chairman; Mr. Victor K. Bloedel, Mr. Lloyd E. Martin.

The **Committee on Registration and Excuses** then made their initial report (**Proceedings, Page 35**) through lay member, Mr. Phillip R. Martin. It was noted that there were five pastoral delegates, eight lay delegates and a total of fourteen official votes (the pastoral delegate from St. John's and the lay delegate from St. Stephen's each have two votes). It was noted that the lay delegate from St. John's, Lebanon, Oregon, Mr. Larry Turner, was excused due to illness. We pray that God would soon restore Mr. Turner to health according to His good pleasure and for Larry's eternal welfare. The committee also noted that there were 81 souls present for the opening service of the convention. It was moved and seconded to adopt the initial report of the Committee. Motion carried unanimously.

The President then asked the Vice-President to assume the Chair in order that the President could deliver his report (**Proceedings, Pages 32-34**). President Natterer reviewed the purposes of our Conference and the relationship of the Conference to its constituent congregations. Thanks and praise were also expressed in this report for God's gracious blessing on our Conference with the prayer that God would not only preserve us in the true faith and doctrine, but that He would also enable us to use the gifts He has bestowed upon each of us in our congregations to the His glory and the extension of His kingdom. President Natterer mentioned that he had been contacted by a young man in California in regard to our Conference and its publications and provided the material requested while urging the young man to contact Pastor Bloedel, chairman of our Committee on Missions. He also reported that he and the rest of our pastors had been contacted by a young man in WELS who desired to write an essay regarding our Conference. Information was provided to him also, urging him carefully examine the doctrine of the Church and Ministry as taught in WELS and abide by the Word of God which commands that one to separate himself from such error. No copy of the essay has been

received to date. It was noted that President Natterer, at the direction of the Board of Directors, instructed Pastor Bloedel, chairman of the Publishing House Board of Control, to purchase 10 copies of "The Lutheran Liturgy" and "The Lutheran Agenda" since these books are not to be reprinted by CPH and there is now a limited supply available. Other items of interest were discussed in the President's Report. It was moved and seconded to receive the report of the President subject to normal review. The Vice President appointed the Rev. Paul R. Bloedel and Mr. Paul Steinke to review the report of the President.

The presentation of the Agenda was next. It was moved and seconded to adopt the Agenda as presented. Motion carried unanimously.

The **Press Committee** Reported that no press release had been made and no press release was anticipated in the future regarding the Convention. The motion was made and seconded to adopt this report. Motion carried unanimously.

The Pastor loci then made announcements regarding meals, including an announcement of a barbecue picnic this evening for the children in attendance at the Convention

The Chair adjourned the meeting for lunch at 11:57 a.m.

LUNCH

The **Opening Devotion** with which we began the afternoon session at 1:30 was led by the Rev. M.L. Natterer. We began by singing "Oh, For a Thousand Tongues To Sing," Hymn #360, and heard the Word of God as found in Psalm 73. We closed in prayer and by singing the last two verses of Hymn #360.

A special welcome was expressed to the Rev. David Redlin and his son, visiting our convention from their home in Tucson, Arizona.

The Rev. Mark W. Dierking presented the first section of his essay, "GOD'S LOVE REFLECTED IN HIS CHILDREN." He read his **Introduction** and **Part I**, entitled, "God's Law Requires Love of God and Love of Neighbor," (**Pages 11-15**). In this section, Pastor Dierking presented the Law, that is, the command of God to love God and neighbor, ending with the truth that such love can be produced not by the Law, but by the Gospel alone.

The **Recommendations of the Board of Directors** were presented next to the convention assembled. Those recommendations and the subsequent actions in regard to them were as follows:

BOARD OF DIRECTORS' RECOMMENDATION #1: The Board of Directors unanimously recommends to the convention assembled that in order to help defray the purchase and maintenance costs of the printing equipment owned by St. Luke's, Seattle, and the Rev. Paul R. Bloedel, that the Conference assume all regular maintenance costs, including the costs of paper and chemicals, and also all special repair costs for the press and the plate makers. It was moved and seconded to adopt this recommendation and the motion carried unanimously.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS' RECOMMENDATION #2: The Board of Directors unanimously recommends to the convention assembled that that the recommendation of the Committee on Theological Education be adopted, that is, to remove from the Pre-Seminary curriculum the "Analization of Catechism Scripture Texts" because the demands of the course would be better suited under a catechetics course in the actual seminary program. It was moved and seconded to adopt this recommendation and the motion carried unanimously.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS' RECOMMENDATION #3: The Board of Directors unanimously recommends that the Conference assume the full travel expense of the pastors of our member congregations to the Fall Pastoral Conferences and that this practice remain the established policy of the Conference. It was moved and seconded to adopt this resolution also. The motion carried unanimously.

The Chair declared a recess at 2:45 p.m.

The first item of business after the break was the initial report of the **Finance Committee**. Treasurer Victor Bloedel presented the initial budget for fiscal 1989-1990. The estimated total receipts for the fiscal year were \$12,940.00 with an estimated total cash available of \$48,611.62. The total expenses for fiscal 1988-89 totaled \$6950.01. The projected expenditures for fiscal 1989-90 total \$12,000.00. It was moved and seconded to adopt this initial budget proposal of the Finance Committee. Motion carried unanimously.

The next item of business on the Agenda was the **Election of Officers and Boards**. The nominations for officers were made from the floor and the results of the elections follow:

OFFICERS:

PRESIDENT: NOMINATED: Pastors Stallings, Mensing, Dierking, Natterer.
ELECTED: **Pastor Dierking**

VICE PRESIDENT: NOMINATED: Pastors Mensing, Natterer, Stallings, Bloedel.
ELECTED: **Pastor Mensing**

SECRETARY: NOMINATED: Pastors Bloedel, Natterer. ELECTED: **Pastor Bloedel**

TREASURER: NOMINATED: Mssrs. Phillip Martin, Victor Bloedel, Robert G. Bloedel.
ELECTED: **Mr. Victor Bloedel**

BOARD MEMBER-AT-LARGE, MID WEST: NOMINATED: Mssrs. Lloyd D. Martin, Lloyd E. (Bud) Martin. ELECTED: **Mr. Lloyd D. Martin**

BOARD MEMBER-AT-LARGE, FAR WEST: NOMINATED: Mssrs. Raymond Kusumi, Robert Bloedel, Henry Fischer. ELECTED: **Mr. Robert Bloedel**

The nominations for standing committees, both those suggested by the Nominations and Elections Committee and those from the floor as well, and election results were as follows:

COMMITTEES:

EDITORIAL COMMITTEE: SLATE A: Pastor Stallings
Pastor Natterer
Lloyd E. Martin

SLATE B: Pastor Natterer
Pastor Stallings
John Steinke

It was moved and seconded that nominations be closed. Motion carried unanimously.
ELECTED: **SLATE A**

COMMITTEE on THEOLOGICAL EDUCATION: SLATE A: Pastor Dierking
Pastor Mensing
John Steinke
Lloyd E. Martin

SLATE B: Pastor Stallings
Pastor Bloedel
Raymond Kusumi
John Steinke

SLATE C: Pastor Stallings
Pastor Mensing
John Steinke
Lloyd E. Martin

Moved and seconded that nominations be closed. Motion carried unanimously.
ELECTED: **SLATE B**

COMMITTEE ON MISSIONS: SLATE A: Pastor Bloedel
 Pastor Dierking
 Lloyd D. Martin
 Henry F. Fischer
 John Steinke

SLATE B: Pastor Natterer
 Pastor Stallings
 Dan Bloedel
 Paul Steinke
 Lloyd E. Martin

Moved and seconded that nominations be closed. Motion carried unanimously.

ELECTED: **SLATE B**

COMMITTEE ON LUTHERAN UNION: SLATE A: Pastor Mensing
 Pastor Bloedel
 Pastor Natterer
 Victor K. Bloedel

SLATE B: Pastor Mensing
 Pastor Bloedel
 Pastor Stallings
 Mr. Raymond Litzkow

Moved and seconded that nominations be closed. Motion carried unanimously.

ELECTED: **SLATE A**

FINANCE COMMITTEE: SLATE A: Victor K. Bloedel
 Mark Natterer
 Phillip R. Martin
 David Steinke

SLATE B: Victor K. Bloedel
 Paul Steinke
 Mark Natterer
 Lloyd D. Martin

SLATE C: Victor K. Bloedel
 Bill Rosenthal
 Mark Natterer
 Lloyd D. Martin

Moved and seconded that nominations be closed. Motion carried unanimously.

ELECTED: **SLATE C**

PUBLISHING HOUSE BOARD OF CONTROL: SLATE A: Pastor Bloedel
 Pastor Dierking
 Robert Bloedel
 Victor Bloedel
 Ray Kusumi

SLATE B: Pastor Bloedel
 Pastor Natterer
 Dan Ellis
 Victor Bloedel
 Hermann Mayrhofer

Moved and seconded that nominations be closed. Motion carried unanimously.

ELECTED: **SLATE A**

Moved, seconded, and carried unanimously that the elections be declared and acknowledged to be unanimous with thanks to the Committee for its excellent work.

Due to an oversight, the **Budget Committee**, while presenting the proposed budget earlier, did not give a the Financial Report for Fiscal 1988-89. This oversight was corrected and Treasurer Victor Bloedel presented the report. It was noted that there were total expenditures for the present fiscal year of \$8,517.08 and a cash balance of \$35,671.62, (**Proceedings, Page 36**). It was moved and seconded to receive the report as presented. The motion was carried unanimously.

The Report of the **Committee on Missions**, was delivered by its Chairman, the Rev. Paul R. Bloedel, (**Page 37**). The report was brief, noting that there were no meetings and only one special contact made by the Committee, namely, the Rev. David Redlin. Pastor Bloedel also noted that, by God's grace, Holy Scripture congregation of San Antonio is now able to support their own local work and are no longer in need of a subsidy from the Conference. Pastor Bloedel read the letter from Holy Scripture congregation which informed the Mission Committee of this, a letter also in which thanks were expressed for the support of the Conference over the past two years, (**Page 38**). The Committee also expressed for the Conference their joy that the Lord has so prospered and increased the sanctified giving of this congregation so that no further support was needed.

Pastor Stallings gave a brief interest report on his contacts with the Rev. David Redlin. It was moved and seconded to receive the report of the Committee on Missions, including the special interest report. Motion carried unanimously.

The Pastor loci made a few announcements regarding the evening meal arrangements.

The Chair adjourned the meeting at 5:47 p.m. with the Lord's Prayer and the Apostolic Blessing.

SATURDAY SESSION, June 24, 1989

Pastor Stallings **opened** the Saturday session of our convention **in the Name of the Triune God**. We joined in singing "Thee Will I Love, My Strength, My Tower," Hymn #399. We heard the Word of God as found in Romans 12:9-21 and then asked the Lord's Blessings in prayer. We closed by singing the last four verses of Hymn #399 and with the Apostolic Blessing.

The first order of business was to read the minutes of Friday's session. It was moved, seconded and carried that the minutes be approved as read.

The Rev. Mark W. Dierking then read **Part II** of his essay, "God's Gospel: The Only Means By Which God's Love Can Be Reflected In His Children," (**Proceedings, Page 15-20**). In this part of the essay it was noted that the ability to keep God's Law, to reflect God's love for mankind out of Christians back to God and neighbor, is worked not by the Law but by the Gospel, the Good News of salvation in Christ Jesus. There was significant and edifying discussion of this portion of the essay.

President Natterer declared a recess at 10:48 a.m.

The session reconvened at 11:15 a.m.

The only item of business on the Agenda was the report of the **Committee on Theological Education** presented by committee chairman, Pastor Dierking, (**Proceedings, Page 40**). There was a brief discussion and then it was moved and seconded to accept the report. The motion passed unanimously.

Since we were ahead of schedule, it was moved and seconded to hear the report of the **Committee on Lutheran Union**. Motion carried unanimously. Pastor Stallings, chairman of the committee, made the report. Noted in the report was the contact with the Rev. David Redlin (See Missions Report, **Page 37**). It was also noted that the Lutheran Churches of the Reformation had presented a slanderous article in their official periodical and a response was yet to be determined to that article, (**Proceedings, Page 41**). It was moved and seconded to adopt this report of the committee. After brief discussion, the motion was passed unanimously.

It was moved and seconded that the slanderous article of Pastor Jeffery Kinnery is not deserving of a response by our Conference. The motion carried unanimously.

The Chair recessed the session for lunch at 11:45 a.m.

LUNCH

The afternoon session was **begun in the name of the Triune God**, Father, Son and Holy Ghost. We joined in singing the first five stanzas of "How Lovely Shines the Morning Star," Hymn #343. Pastor Bloedel then read to us Psalm 5 and led us in prayer. We closed by singing the last two verses of Hymn #343 and with the Apostolic Blessing.

The chair gaveled the afternoon session into order at 1:45 p.m.

The report of the **Committee to Review the President's Report** was then presented by lay member Mr. Paul Steinke, (**Proceedings, Page 34**). It was moved and seconded to adopt the report with its recommendation. Motion carried unanimously.

The **Auditing Committee** presented its report through lay delegate Mr. John Steinke, (**Proceedings, Page 42**). It was moved and seconded to adopt the report with its recommendation. Motion carried unanimously.

The **Finance Committee** presented its interim report. Treasurer Victor K. Bloedel noted that, inasmuch as nothing new has been brought to the attention of this committee, the budget as initially presented, both expected income and expenditures, remains unchanged. The motion was made and seconded to accept this interim report of the Finance Committee. Motion carried unanimously.

The initial report of the **Resolutions Committee** was delivered by Mr. Lloyd E. (Bud) Martin. The Committee stated that since no resolutions had been committed unto the committee, there was no formal report except that the customary resolutions of thanks would be presented in the Sunday afternoon session. Moved and seconded to adopt this report. Motion carried unanimously.

The Chair declared a recess at 2:15 p.m.

The session reconvened at 2:57 p.m.

The first item on the agenda was the report of the **Editorial Committee**. In this report the Chairman and Editor, Pastor Stallings, spoke of the joy in editing the articles for the "C.L." and touched on the difficulties in the delays in publishing the "C.L." but noted that no blame was or should be laid regarding this. He also noted that the current series of the Sunday School materials is in the process of being revised, (**Proceedings, Page 43**). It was moved and seconded to adopt the report. Motion carried unanimously.

The report of the **Publishing House Board of Control** was presented by its chairman, the Rev. Paul R. Bloedel, (**Page 37**). He also noted that the last two quarters of Series IIA Sunday School materials are being revised and reprinted, and that special thanks should be extended to Mr. Paul Luedtke for preserving the stencils by which our Sunday School materials have been printed over the past years. He stated that this work, along with the printing of the revised Constitution, was still to be done. An expression of thanks and appreciation was once again made to St. Luke's congregation for their purchase of the new press and plate maker (See RECOMMENDATION #1 of the Board of Directors, Friday session). Moved, seconded and carried unanimously to adopt this report.

The next item on the Agenda was the report of the **Business Manager of Scriptural Publications**, Mr. Victor Bloedel. It was noted that total receipts for fiscal 1988-89 totaled \$3298.31 and expenditures were \$2953.55 with a cash balance of \$344.76. It was noted that the Publishing House has in stock 10 "Agendas" (\$60.20) and 10 "Liturgies" (\$70.20) and these are available for purchase by our congregations, (**Proceedings, Page 39**). Mr. Bud Martin moved and it was seconded that we adopt this report together with an expression of thanks to St. Luke's congregation for their labor, materials, donated space, etc. Motion carried unanimously.

It was moved and seconded that the Publishing House be authorized to purchase 5-10 "Lectionaries," funds for payment to be taken from the Conference General Fund. The motion carried unanimously.

Announcements were made.

It was agreed to hear the minutes of Saturday's session. The minutes were read. It was moved and seconded to approve the minutes as read. Motion carried unanimously.

Motion was made to adjourn and we did so with the Lord's Prayer and a blessing.

SUNDAY MORNING, June 25, 1989

DIVINE SERVICE with Holy Communion

(The Rev. David T. Mensing served as Liturgist and The Rev. E. R. Stallings delivered the sermon based on I John 4:9-11. The theme of his edifying sermon was, "There Is An Inseparable Connection between God's Love For Us and Our Love For One Another." This theme was treated under three parts: **1.** How God loved us, **2.** Why we ought to love one another, and **3.** The good effect and results of practicing Christian love in deed and in truth.) (Proceedings, Pages 6-10)

SUNDAY AFTERNOON SESSION, June 25, 1989

The **Opening Devotion** was conducted by the Rev. David T. Mensing. The first five verses of Hymn #464 were sung followed by a Scripture reading from St. Paul's letter to the Ephesians, chapter 3:14-4:6, and a prayer in which Pastor Mensing led us to extol God for His great love especially for Jesus' sake and to beseech Him, by His Holy Spirit through the Word, to move us now to show forth in our lives our love for Him.

After a few introductory remarks by President Dierking, Vice President David T. Mensing was asked to take the chair while President Dierking read, according to the agenda, the concluding portion of his essay.

Part III of the Essay was entitled, HOW GOD'S LOVE TRULY IS REFLECTED OUT OF THE CHRISTIAN TOWARD GOD AND OUR NEIGHBOR, (Page 20-23). Having reviewed briefly the perfect love which the Lord requires of us and of which we are indeed incapable of ourselves, the essayist proceeded to show how the Lord, through the New Man in the Christian, causes His love to be reflected both toward Himself and toward the neighbor.

This love, which is a reflection of God's love, the essayist pointed out, begins with a love for God's Word which our Savior Himself encouraged in the days of His public ministry as well as the Apostles in their Epistles. It then continues to be reflected in the life of a Christian, in words and actions which are in harmony with God's Word, in prayer, and in his everyday life.

The essayist pointed out that a Christian is not to refrain from harming his neighbor so that the neighbor will not harm him in return. Rather a Christian is to be kind and loving toward his neighbor, even though that neighbor may be his worst enemy, and that Christians need not be afraid of those who do not love them in return.

The essayist continued to show how the Christian should crucify his sinful flesh in his unselfish love for his neighbor, emulating the mind of Christ (Phil. 2:3-8) and following the exhortations of Scripture toward true Christian humility. He brought out some examples as to how this principle is to be heeded in business, in school, in the home, and

1989 Convention Proceedings**President's Report**

The Report Of The President
Of The Concordia Lutheran Conference
The Rev. M. L. Natterer

"For unto whomsoever much is given, of him shall be much required: and to whom men have committed much, of him they will ask the more" (Luke 12:48). These words of the Lord Jesus clearly apply to the congregations which make up our Concordia Lutheran Conference. Much has been committed to us in these last evil days of the world. Listen to the Confessional Standard as stated in Article II of our Conference's Constitution:

This Conference and every member thereof accepts without reservation:

1. The canonical Scriptures of the Old and New Testament as the verbally inspired Word of God and the only rule and norm of Christian faith and life. (2 Tim. 3:15-17; 2 Pet. 1:21; 1 Cor. 2:13; Ps. 119:105; Jn. 8:31,32)
2. All of the symbolical, or confessional, writings of the Evangelical Lutheran Church comprising the Book of Concord of 1580, as a true statement and exposition of God's Word.
3. The Brief Statement drawn up in the Missouri Synod, 1932, as a further correct exposition of God's Word, and as an uncompromising basis in our time for God-pleasing union between us and other Lutherans--a confession utterly different in this respect from the Missouri Synod's "Common Confession" of 1950.

By God's grace, without any merit or worthiness on our part, our dear heavenly Father, for Jesus' sake, has chosen to bequeath to us His Word in all of its truth and purity. For all of us must indeed acknowledge and confess the sinfulness of our flesh and the eruption of the same in thought, desire, word and deed (Rom. 7:14-25). Therefore, we must declare with the Psalmist, "Not unto us, O Lord, not unto us, but unto Thy Name give glory, for Thy mercy, and for Thy truth's sake" (Ps. 115:1). Being the unworthy recipients of such treasures involves obligations on our part. And this our Conference has recognized down through the years. It is well stated in the objects of our Conference Constitution under Article III:

1. The conservation of the unity in the true faith. (Eph. 4:3-6; 1 Cor. 1:10; John 8:31,32)
2. Joint testimony and defense against all public errors in doctrine and practice. (2 Thess. 3:14-15; 1 Tim. 5:20; Gal. 6:1; Matt. 7:15; Titus 3:10; Rom. 16:17-18)
3. 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. (Acts 2:42; 1 Cor. 1:10; 3 John 8:9; 2 Tim. 1:8; 2 Tim. 1:16-18; Eph 4:1-6)
4. Joint extension of the Kingdom of God through cooperative mission work of our congregations. (Matt. 28:19-20; Mark 16:15-16; Luke 24:47; Acts 1:8)
5. The adequate training of pastors for the work of the ministry in our midst, and of parochial school teachers and other helps to the ministry. (2 Tim. 2:2; 2:15; 4:1-5; Titus 1:9; 1 Tim. 3:1-7; 1 Tim. 4:12; 2 Kings 2:3-5)
6. The publication and distribution of orthodox religious books, periodicals, and other literature for the promotion of the true faith.

7. The endeavor to bring about the best possible uniformity in orders of service, church customs, and other congregational externals; without, however, abridging any congregation's rights in matters indifferent (adiaphora).

In this connection, it is significant to note in the Preamble to our Constitution that "a further reason for which we are joined together in this Conference is our Lord's Will that the diversities of gifts in His Church on earth should be for the common profit, 1 Corinthians 12:4-31." Thus all of us, by God's grace, being united in the one true faith in our dear Lord Jesus Christ, sincerely desire to use our various God-given gifts and talents "for the common profit" out of love for the Savior who has purchased us with His holy blood, recognizing the responsibility of our stewardship for which we shall also have to give an account.

The Synod of our fathers and of our early years had been the custodian of such treasures, but unfortunately the appreciation for such blessings began to wane and a new spirit prevailed--a spirit of liberalism. Listen to what the Christian News reported just last month: "Already 25 years ago a survey showed that about 1,500 LCMS pastors rejected the inerrancy of the Bible as it is taught in the LCMS's Brief Statement. A more recent survey showed that about 1,000 LCMS pastors maintain that the Bible does not oppose the ordination of women to the Holy Ministry" (May 8, 1989). In that Synod, we have sadly observed the fulfillment of the Lord's words, "A little leaven leaveneth the whole lump" (Gal 5:9). It is our fervent prayer that **our** appreciation for the blessings the Lord has given us may not similarly wane, but that the Holy Spirit may strengthen us to be more zealous in the performance of our Scriptural obligations!

Last December, I received an inquiry from a man in Susanville, California, pertaining to our confessional platform, periodicals, seminary, etc. He was planning to enter Faith Evangelical Lutheran Seminary at Tacoma, Washington, in February of 1989. I sent him the material which he requested and, at the same time, urged him to make a personal contact with Pastor P. R. Bloedel for further information since Tacoma is only about 25 miles from Seattle. Nothing further has been heard from this man to the best of my knowledge.

In December, I also received a request in the form of a questionnaire from a student at Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary who was in the process of writing a paper on our Conference for his Senior Church History Class. I responded by providing the necessary material. He assured me that a copy of his research paper would be sent to me upon its completion. I understand that a similar request was sent to our pastors and that he was urged to examine very carefully his Synod's teaching on the Church and Ministry in the light of Holy Scripture. Evidently he has not completed his research paper, since I have not yet received a copy.

Last Fall, Pastor P. R. Bloedel informed me that for personal reasons he wished to resign his position on the Committee on Theological Education. Reluctantly I accepted his resignation and consulted with the chairman of the CTE concerning a replacement. On November 13, 1988, I called Pastor David T. Mensing who graciously accepted to serve on this committee until this present Convention.

In February, the praesidium was urged to purchase copies of The Lutheran Agenda and The Lutheran Liturgy which could then be purchased by our pastors and congregations. It was pointed out that there were only a small number of these books on hand and when the present stock was sold out they would no longer be obtainable from CPH. After consulting the members of the Board of Directors, I contacted the chairman of the Publishing House, Pastor P. R. Bloedel, who then ordered these books.

The Fall Pastoral Conference of our Concordia Lutheran Conference was scheduled for November 8-10, 1988, at Tinley Park, Illinois. Due to illness, Pastor P. R. Bloedel and I, your president, were unable to attend this meeting. It was brought to our attention through the minutes of this Pastoral Conference that our seminary program as already initiated by Pastors Dierking and Bloedel (the two pastoral members of the CTE) in a

special meeting at Wilmot, South Dakota, last September, was not favored by some of our pastors. At the request of Pastor Dierking, the chairman of our Committee on Theological Education, the chairman of our Pastoral Conference, Pastor E. R. Stallings, announced that there would be a special meeting of all our pastors on January 17-18 in Lebanon, Oregon. Due to the tremendous outlay of Conference money for travel expenses plus congregational responsibilities it was decided to delay this special meeting and use the allotted time in our June Pastoral Conference for a thorough discussion of this matter and a God-pleasing solution.

Finally, brethren, I would direct your attention to the theme set for this 38th Convention of our Conference: "If a man love Me, he will keep My words" (John 14:23). As I indicated to our pastors, early last November when I formally made the assignments, "my reason for selecting the theme of LOVE is fourfold:

1. This has never been a theme in any previous convention of our Conference;
2. The word LOVE is so grossly misunderstood and so shamefully abused in visible Christendom;
3. Perhaps a thorough Scriptural presentation of this subject will put to silence the constant accusation that our Conference shows no true love, and
4. Such a theme with ample practical application should also be beneficial to us as pastors and lay people in our relationships in our Conference, in our congregations, in our homes, with those of a different faith, and with the unbelievers."

May our dear heavenly Father grant us His Holy Spirit that we "receive with meekness the engrafted Word, which is able to save our souls and be doers of the word, and not hearers only" (James 1:21,22), for Jesus's sake!

Respectfully submitted,

Rev. M. L. Natterer, President

Report Of The Committee To Review The President's Report

Having thoroughly reviewed the President's Report, we have found it to be instructive and an informative summary of our Conference's work during the past year. We heartily recommend that the Conference in convention assembled adopt this report with thanks to our President for his faithful labors in our behalf.

Respectfully submitted,

Mr. Paul D. Steinke
Rev. Paul R. Bloedel

Initial Report Of The Committee On Registration And Excuses

Congregation	Pastoral Delegate	Lay Delegate	Alternate	Votes
Peace	David T. Mensing	Lloyd E. Martin Phillip R. Martin	Lloyd D. Martin Timothy Mensing	3
St. Luke's	Paul R. Bloedel	Victor K. Bloedel Robert G. Bloedel	Raymond S. Kusumi John P. Okamoto	3
Holy Scripture	E. R. Stallings, Jr.	John M. Steinke Paul D. Steinke	None None	3
St. John's	M. L. Natterer	Larry Turner	None	3
St. Stephen's	Mark W. Dierking	Raymond Litzkow	None	3
5	5	8	6	15

The named Pastoral and Lay Delegates are to be seated at this convention of the Concordia Lutheran Conference. These delegates represent a total of 15 votes.

70 persons were registered at the opening service.

Respectfully submitted,

Rev. Mark E. Dierking
Phillip R. Martin
Paul D. Steinke

Final Report Of The Committee On Registrations And Excuses

Registered Delegates at the 38th Annual Convention of the Concordia Lutheran Conference:

5 Congregations
5 Pastoral Delegates
7 Lay Delegates
4 Alternate Delegates

Approximately **81** souls were present for the Opening Service of the Convention on Friday, June 23rd. There were about 100 souls present at the Sunday Divine Service of which 61 communed at the Lord's Table. Total Visitors to our 38th Annual Convention during the three days of meetings numbered approximately 68

The Treasurer reported to the Committee that the offerings for the Friday Opening Service were \$151.20, and \$295.37 for the Sunday Divine Service.

Respectfully submitted,

Rev. Mark Dierking
Philip R. Martin
Paul D. Steinke

Concordia Lutheran Conference
FINANCIAL REPORT
 1988-1989

	<u>-----General Fund-----</u>	<u>--Student Aid Fund--</u>
	<u>Year-to-Date</u>	<u>Year-to-Date</u>
Cash Balance, 6/1/88:	\$31,239.90	\$3,498.48
 <u>Add Cash Receipts:</u>		
Holy Scripture, San Antonio	.00	.00
Peace, Tinley Park	2,250.00	.00
St. John, Lebanon	3,305.00	.00
St. Luke, Seattle	5,100.00	1,200.00
St. Stephen, Wilmot	300.00	.00
Interest Income	1,650.91	210.73
Sale of Proceedings (Surplus)	52.64	.00
Convention Collection	290.25	.00
 Total Receipts	 12,948.80	 1,410.73
Total Cash Available	\$44,188.70	\$4,909.21
 <u>Less Disbursements:</u>		
Scriptural Publications Subsidy	2,500.00	3,000.00
Telephone	1,102.50	2,000.00
Convention	.00	1,000.00
Travel	1,419.19	4,000.00
Miscellaneous	430.59	1,000.00
Agendas and Liturgies	1,564.80	.00
Holy Scripture Subsidy	1,500.00	1,800.00
 Total Expenditures	 8,517.08	 .00
Cash Balance, 5/31/89:	\$35,671.62	\$4,909.21

V. K. Bloedel, Treasurer

Report Of Scriptural Publications Board Of Control

Dear Brethren:

During the past year, our Publishing House has again been able to produce our Conference Periodical (as the materials came to us from our editor), as well as Sunday School materials for our Conference congregations. The last 2 Quarters of Sunday School **worksheets** were examined carefully and redone on the Computer and Offset Press. We are still using most of the old metal plates for our Sunday School **leaflets** and are intending to redo them after we finish making metal plates for our 2 Series of Sunday School worksheets. Formerly these were mimeographed, but the stencils were almost worn out from use down through the years. (The credit for the careful use and care of these sencils goes to Mr. Paul F. Luedtke.)

Last Fall, St. Luke's Lutheran Church in Seattle, purchased an ABDick, 310XL, offset press, together with a metal platemaker, and has made available one of the Sunday School rooms as a small print shop. Because this Sunday School room in which we have our press is just next to the room in which we have our computer and paper platemaker, we are able to produce our printed material much more conveniently and in much less time.

We are still awaiting a complete up-to-date copy so that we can print a revised Conference Constitution. We are still planning to re-print a Catechism on Church and Ministry to distribute among Wisconsin Synod and CoLC pastors. May the Lord Jesus bless our continued efforts in the area of the printed Word.

Respectfully submitted,

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

Report Of The Committee On Missions

Dear Brethren:

The Committee on Missions had no meeting during this past year. Only one special contact was made in reaching out for those who may be one in faith with us. I have asked Pastor Stallings to give a brief interest report with regard to his visit with Pastor Redlin of Tucson, Ariz.

Respectfully submitted,

Rev. Paul R. Bloedel, chairman
Committee on Missions

Holy Scripture Ev. Lutheran Church

San Antonio, Texas

Rev. E. R. Stallings, Jr., Pastor

110 Grasmere Court
San Antonio, Texas 78218
Telephone 512/656-2125

June 6, 1988

Rev. Paul R. Bloedel, Chairman
Committee on Missions
9658 54th Avenue South
Seattle, Washington 98118

Dear Pastor Bloedel:

The Voters' Assembly of Holy Scripture Lutheran wishes to take this opportunity to thank the Conference for the generous subsidy which has been given the congregation over the past year. For seven months we received \$350 per month, and for five months we received \$250 per month, for a total of \$3,700. This has been a great blessing for our church.

At our regular June meeting (June 5, 1988), our Voters reviewed carefully our congregation's financial situation and have found that under God's blessing our ability has improved even more. Our present trend over the last five months reveals that we could get along without any subsidy at all, but that it would be quite close to breaking even as some months are better than others. In this regard, we are officially requesting that the Conference consider extending subsidy to us, but at the reduced rate of \$150 per month which would be \$100 less than what we have been receiving for the last five months.

It is our hope and goal, under God's blessing, to discontinue our receiving a subsidy by December of 1988. December is our month for drawing up our congregational budget for the new year. Thus, we hope to be able to notify the Committee on Missions at that time that a subsidy is no longer needed.

Should the Conference determine that a subsidy can no longer be provided, we would not feel slighted or burdened, but we would simply take our needs to the Lord in prayer as we always do, and look to Him to provide. We believe and have seen by experience that the Lord "is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think." (Eph. 3:20)

Gratefully in our Lord,

Rev. E. R. Stallings, Jr., Pastor

"All Scripture is given by inspiration of God." 2 Timothy 3:16.

Scriptural Publications
(Concordia Lutheran Conference)

FINANCIAL REPORT
6/1/88 - 5/31/89

Cash Balance, June 1, 1988	\$	56.22
Add Cash Receipts:		
Sunday School Lessons	\$ 533.09	
Books, tracts	33.00	
Concordia Lutheran Subscriptions	176.00	
Conference Subsidy	2500.00	
Other	.00	
Total Receipts		3,242.09
Total Cash Available		3,298.31
Less Disbursements:		
Gas and Electricity	.00	
Rent (P. F. Luedtke Building)	600.00	
Material and Labor Costs:		
Sunday School Lessons (Material Only)	719.44	
Concordia Lutheran (Material & Labor)	1326.28	
Mailing Costs:		
Sunday School Lessons	8.68	
Concordia Lutheran	221.52	
Supplies	77.63	
Property Tax	.00	
Total Expenditures		2,953.55
Cash Balance, May 31, 1989	\$	344.76

V. K. Bloedel, Business Manager

Report Of The Committee On Theological Education

Nearly every report of this committee begins with a reiteration of the vital importance of a seminary system for "the adequate training of pastors for the work of the ministry in our midst. . ." (Constitution, Art. III,5). To this end numerous proposals have been made by the CTE over the last several years, laid before the Conference for brief discussion on the convention floor, and then inaugurated by resolution of the delegates in convention assembled. While the CTE had spent many hours developing programs which the committee felt were not only adequate but ideally suited to our present circumstances, problems were encountered when specific programs were presented in their final form and laid before our congregations and their pastors for implementation. Retrospective second thoughts did not arise out of a carnal spirit of fault-finding among us to be sure, but represented the sincere desire on the part of the majority of our pastors to re-examine certain facets, particularly of our Pre-Seminary Program, with the intention, in a brotherly manner, to address what they felt were legitimate concerns and to arrive at mutually agreeable solutions.

These concerns were the chief topic of discussion in our Fall 1988 Pastoral Conference in Tinley Park; and, while not all the pastors were able to be present, the minutes of that Conference were shared with all the brethren so that their reaction and subsequent input could be realized. Consultation by telephone during the following weeks and months helped somewhat to crystallize the nature of the pastors' concerns, and it was evident that those concerns were not shared by all. The matter was finally laid before the Pastoral Conference this week in its pre-convention meeting where all the pastors were in attendance, so that a frank and forthright discussion might, under God, lead to complete mutual understanding and agreement and a program that could then go forward among us without hindrance.

Several of the objections and concerns proved to be the result of misunderstanding, unclear wording, or, in some cases, wording which had seemed precise and adequate to the committee due to its familiarity with the material, but which did not fully express in plain words what the committee quite naturally assumed. These and other matters were resolved in one day of frank but brotherly discussions in the Pastoral Conference; and the solutions have been laid, either into the hands of the CTE for reworking and implementation, or before the Board of Directors for its consideration and recommendation to the Conference in convention assembled.

Remaining concerns and potential problems, which arise as we go forward with the Pre-Seminary Program and later on in the Peripatetic Seminary System itself, will be addressed by the Fall, 1989, Pastoral Conference, scheduled to be held in San Antonio on November 14 through the 16th. By God's grace, these matters too will be resolved in a truly brotherly manner, so that our training program to provide faithful pastors for the future can go forward with the enthusiastic support of all our people, to the glory of "Him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think," (Eph. 3:20) and for the welfare of His Kingdom among us. May His gracious blessing continue to attend us in our work together, for Jesus' our precious Savior's sake! Amen.

Respectfully submitted,

Rev. Mark W. Dierking, chairman
Rev. David T. Mensing
Mr. John M. Steinke
Mr. Lloyd E. Martin

Report Of The Committee On Lutheran Union

Dear Brethren:

According to our Convention Prospectus, the Report of the Committee on Lutheran Union is to bring us up to date on the Committee's contacts with representatives of other Lutheran church bodies as well as with pastors of independent congregations.

During the past year there were no official contacts with other Lutheran bodies. However, at the suggestion of the chairman of our Committee on Missions, I contacted and visited an independent pastor who was formerly of the Wisconsin Synod, but who was tyrannically ousted by synodical officials some three years ago. Further comments on this contact will be given in an interest report together with the Report of the Committee on Missions.

At last year's Board of Directors' meeting, the Committee on Lutheran Union was asked to make contact with the Protes'tant ("Faith-Life") group, a pietistic Lutheran body. However, as no address could be obtained and as we already know this group to be decidedly heterodox in their confessional position, no further effort was made to contact them.

It has been brought to our attention that recent issues of "The Faithful Word," an official periodical of the LCR (Lutheran Churches of the Reformation), presented a series of articles highly critical and slanderous of our Conference. What response, if any, is in order by our Conference is yet to be determined.

It is the strong conviction of your CLU chairman that we continue to make every effort to contact independent pastors who have severed their ties with heterodox church bodies. It should be our goal to make personal contact with such men in order to determine first hand whether or not they are orthodox and are truly interested in our Conference. May the Lord help us in our endeavors to reach men whose hearts are committed to preaching the whole counsel of God without compromise, II Timothy 4:1-4.

Respectfully submitted,

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

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 of both the Conference Treasury and of Scriptural Publications. We have found them to be in good order and to be accurate. We commend our Conference Treasurer and Business Manager (Victor Bloedel) for his accuracy and the diligent and faithful use of his God-given talents in the work of the Lord's kingdom.

Respectfully submitted,

Rev. E. R. Stallings, Chairman
Mr. Ray Litzkow
Mr. John M. Steinke

Report Of St. Luke's Auditing Committee

This is to certify that the persons whose signatures appear below, members of St. Luke's Lutheran Church, Seattle, WA., have, on June 10, 1989, audited the books and financial records of Scriptural Publications and of the Concordia Lutheran Conference.

Records of the various accounts as well as the several savings certificates were physically viewed and examined and it was determined that the several sets of books are in balance and agree with the fiscal year-end statements.

The treasurer, Mr. Victor K. Bloedel, is to be commended for an outstanding job of maintaining all books and records very neatly and orderly.

The auditors:

Paul F. Luedtke
Hermann Mayrhofer

The Report Of The Editorial Committee

Dear Brethren:

During the past Conference year there was nothing out of the ordinary in the work of the Editorial Committee. As is usually the case, the chief work of the Editorial Committee has been that of soliciting and editing articles for our official periodical, "The Concordia Lutheran." I believe that I can speak for the entire Committee in saying that the work of editing the articles submitted by our pastors is nothing but a joy. It is a joy because the very reading of these fine articles is edifying and instructive. May the Lord continue to bless the efforts of our pastors in their labors of writing articles which truly glorify God and give testimony of the truth not only to those within our Conference, but also to those outside our Conference.

We could focus our attention on the various reasons why some of the issues of our "Concordia Lutheran" were not received on time, but in the spirit of true Christian love we can be sure that whatever factors were involved, there is no reason to find fault or to lay blame. In fact, considering the volume of work our pastors must assume in their pastoral work, it is amazing that our "C.L." gets out as efficiently as it does. However, due to the importance of our Conference periodical, it is incumbent upon us to do all we can to get out our "Concordia Lutheran" on time. Let us therefore continue to pray for God's blessing upon all our pastors and the laymen who assist them in this important work of preparing, publishing, and mailing of our "Concordia Lutheran."

Concerning the revising of our Sunday School materials, Series I-A, our Publishing House has already begun such revising in their reprinting of the current series. This assistance is very much appreciated.

Respectfully submitted,

Rev. E. R. Stallings, Editor

Rev. M. L. Natterer, Asst. Editor

Mr. Lloyd E. Martin, Lay Board Member

Concordia Lutheran Conference
Statistical Report
(by Congregations)

Fiscal Year: 1988-89

Respectfully submitted,
Mr. Raymond Kusumf

	San Antonio, Texas Rev. E. R. Stallings, Jr. Pastor	Tinley Park, Illinois Rev. David T. Mensing, Pastor	Lebanon, Oregon Rev. M. L. Mattered, Pastor	Seattle, Washington Rev. Paul R. Bloedel, Pastor	Wilmot, South Dakota Rev. Mark W. Dierking, Pastor	Totals
Membership	Holy Scripture Church	Peace Ev. Lutheran Church	Saint John's Lutheran Church	Saint Luke's Lutheran Church	Saint Stephen's Lutheran Church	
Baptized Members	44	75	79	97	51	346
Communicant Members	29	50	47	45	29	200
Voting Members	11	10	16	15	13	65
Children in Sunday School	10	17	24	24	13	88
Adults in the Bible Class	27	48	30	28	14	147
Received by Transfer	0	0	0	0	0	0
Received by Confirmation/ Profession of Faith	2	1	0	5	0	8
Lost by Transfer	0	0	0	0	0	0
Lost by other circumstance	0	1	0	0	0	1

Official Acts

Infant Baptisms	2	2	4	1	2	11
Adult Baptisms	0	0	3	0	0	3
Confirmations of Children	1	0	0	2	0	3
Confirmations of Adults	1	1	0	3	0	5
Marriages Solemnized	1	0	1	0	0	2
Funerals and/or Burials	0	1	0	0	0	1

Auxiliary Staff

Sunday School Teachers	2	6	3	10	3	24
Elected Church Officers	9	13	9	14	8	53
Organists	2	1	2	1	1	7
Choir Members	0	8	6	12	0	26
Formalized Groups:	2		1	3	2	

Property

Church Facilities Owned?	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	
Church Facilities Rented?	Yes	No	No	No	No	
Acreage (with or without Buildings)	N/A	3.5	0.355	0.667	2.25	
Value	N/A	\$575,000	\$100,000	\$200,000	\$250,000	

Concordia Lutheran Conference
BUDGET WORKSHEET
 1989 - 1990

Cash Balance, June 1, 1989 \$ 35,671.62

1989-90 Pledges:

Holy Scripture, San Antonio	.00	
Peace, Tinley Park	2,040.00	
St John, Lebanon	3,200.00	
St Luke, Seattle	4,800.00	
St Stephen, Wilmot	400.00	
Interest Income	2,500.00	
Other	.00	
Total Pledges and Estimated Receipts		12,940.00
Total Cash and Pledges Available for Budget Purposes		\$ 48,611.62

On-Going Expense (Budget) Items:	1988-89 Expenses	Suggested Budget	Final Budget
Scriptural Publications	2,500.00	3,000.00	3,000.00
Telephone Expense	1,102.50	2,000.00	2,000.00
Convention Expense	.00	1,000.00	1,000.00
Travel Expense	1,419.19	4,000.00	4,000.00
Miscellaneous Expense	1,993.12	2,000.00	2,500.00
Holy Scripture Subsidy	1,500.00	1,200.00	.00
Computer		5,000.00	5,000.00
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Totals	\$ 6,950.01	\$18,200.00	\$ 17,500.00

The Report Of The Resolutions Committee

Dear Brethren:

The following are the resolutions which the committee would present to the floor of the 1989 Concordia Lutheran Conference:

RESOLUTION #1

WHEREAS the Conference Secretary has for years provided his own personal computer to assist him in recording the minutes of our conventions and pastoral conferences at his own personal expense; and

WHEREAS the office of the Secretary has likewise been aimed at pastors having personal computers which without question facilitate the work and timely distribution of proceedings, minutes and other communications by the Secretary; and;

WHEREAS, by God's grace in the sanctified giving of our people, our Conference at present has ample funds to undertake the responsibility of providing such equipment at its own expense; and

WHEREAS in the market place of current technology there is available a wide variety of extremely portable so-called "lap-top" computers which can easily be transported by our secretaries to and from official meetings;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Concordia Lutheran Conference convention, here assembled, authorize the purchase of a "lap-top" computer and suitable printer for use as a valuable tool for our Secretary in processing Conference business; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that this "lap-top" computer have sufficient power to contain a 20 mega-byte , hard-disk drive, and MS DOS language compatible with most personal computers in use today, and that the portable printer produce NLQ, that is, near letter quality print, all this at a ceiling price of \$5,000.00.

RESOLUTION #2

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 #3

WHEREAS the devotions and divine services conducted during our Conference were beautified by the special organ music and choral offerings rendered by the members of Peace Evangelical Lutheran congregation;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that we specially thank Mr. Lloyd E. Martin, organist and choir director of Peace Evangelical Lutheran Church, as well as all those who sang in the choir, for giving of their particular talents for the beautification of the services, for the devotions and for the facilitation of our worship together. To God alone the glory!

RESOLUTION #4

WHEREAS both the delegates and visitors at this 38th Annual Convention were spiritually blessed by the thoroughly Scriptural, instructive and edifying sermons preached by Pastor Natterer at the opening service and by Pastor Stallings 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 showed us God's command to love, how the Gospel is the only means by which God works love in our hearts, and how we show that love to our neighbor;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Conference in convention assembled thank Pastors Natterer and Stallings for their edifying sermons, all the pastors for their respective devotions, and Pastor Mark W. Dierking for his timely, thorough and instructive essay, above all giving glory and praise to Christ, the Savior and Head of the Church, for preserving us in 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 #5

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 Peace Evangelical Lutheran Church of Tinley Park has shown itself to be a most gracious host to this 38th 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 recesses between sessions, providing wholesome recreational opportunities for guests and their families, and, in general serving their brethren in love with every comfort and convenience;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Concordia Lutheran Conference in convention assembled express its heartfelt gratitude to Pastor Mensing and the members of Peace Evangelical Lutheran Church for all their efforts and labors of love in hosting the 1989 Convention here in Tinley Park; 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 with all lowliness and meekness, with longsuffering, forbear one another in love, endeavoring to keep the unity of Spirit in the bond of peace. (Eph. 4:2-3)

Respectfully submitted,

Rev. David T. Mensing

Mr. Victor K. Bloedel

Mr. Lloyd E. Martin