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OPENING SERMON PREACHED AT THE SERVICE OF CONVOCATION
of the
Fifty-second Annual Convention
of the
CONCORDIA LUTHERAN CONFERENCE

Delivered by the Rev. E. R. Stallings, Conference President

Text: Philippians 3:4-11

Dear Friends in Christ,

In one of our hymns we sing, “The world is very evil, the times are waxing late. Be sober and keep vigil, the Judge is at the gate.” This hymn expresses not only that the world is very evil, but that the end of the world is fast approaching. These two elements are related. According to Scripture, the evils of the world will increase more and more up to the very last day. The Bible says, “*But evildoers and seducers shall wax worse and worse, deceiving and being deceived.*” (II Timothy 3:12).

Thus, each succeeding generation is more evil than the previous. In this respect, when our grandparents said to our parents, “Things are not the way they used to be,” they were right! And when our parents said to us, “Things are not the way they used to be,” they were right! And when we say to our children, “Things are not the way they used to be,” we are right!

Indeed, because the world is waxing worse and worse, we Christians must fight harder and harder not to be conformed to this world. With the Judge at the gate, we must “*work out [our] own salvation with fear and trembling*” (Philippians 2:12) lest we get careless and lose our faith. This is why we have chosen as our convention theme, “*Be not conformed to this world.*” Daily the world seeks to squeeze us into its mold. And as we look at visible Christendom, the world is succeeding in getting so many professing Christians to conform. It has become very difficult to tell the difference between the Church and the world.

Now then, when we speak of the world, what do we typically think of? Typically we think of its evil deeds such as drunkenness, immorality, thievery, slander, doing drugs, getting divorced and having abortions, etc. To be sure, these are typical evils of the world. However, there is one element of the world which is more insidious than this wicked deed and that wicked deed. It is an evil which if not checked and rejected will poison any Christian and any fellowship of Christians. What would that be? It is the world’s religion, namely, the religion of the law, the religion of work-righteousness or self-righteousness. To this, we certainly must not conform. It destroys saving faith just as much as falling into worldly living. In our text, the Apostle Paul expands on this most eloquently.

As we examine our text, we see that its chief statement is this: “*But what things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ.*” In short, our text answers the two-fold question:

“What Is Gain, and What Is Loss?”

As we consider this theme, we shall do so under these three points:

- I.** What the Apostle Paul used to count as gain, but later counted as loss in view of Christ;
- II.** How anything we might consider to be gain is really a loss if it replaces the righteousness of

Christ;

III. How gaining Christ is gain indeed.

Now before we take up these three points, we must understand the immediate context which explains why Paul says what he says in our text. Just prior to our text Paul says, "*Beware of dogs, beware of evil workers, beware of the concision*" (v. 2). These dogs, these evil workers, those called "*the concision,*" are the Judaizers, those Jews who confessed to believe in Christ but held that circumcision and the ceremonial law must be maintained and upheld. These Judaizers were like vicious dogs. They were fanatics on the Law. They found their gain in their Jewishness and their law-keeping. They were elitists, those who took pride in what they thought made them holy and special. These elitist Judaizers were trying to influence and prejudice true Christians against Paul. They were seeking to make Paul look like a heretic.

Thus, as he did with the Corinthians, so to the Philippians, Paul defends himself and his work as an Apostle of God's grace. He must do a little bragging, but not to promote himself, but to defend himself against the dogs, the concision. Since the concision were always boasting about their achievements and their fleshly righteousness, Paul speaks in their terms. He says, "*Though I might also have confidence in the flesh*" (v. 4a). If righteousness is truly gained by what the flesh produces, Paul could proudly look back to his old life as a Jew. He even adds this: "*If any other man thinketh that he hath whereof he might trust in the flesh, I more*" (v. 4b). Paul is saying, "Alright, you Judaizers, if any of you think you have something to boast about on the basis of fleshly achievement, I have more! I have out-done you all!"

It is here that Paul expounds on **what he used to count as gain**. He proceeds to unfold a very impressive resume of his past accomplishments and distinctions as a Jew. First he says, "*Circumcised the eighth day.*" The Judaizers prided themselves on being circumcised. Circumcision was for them a badge of honor and glory. Of course, circumcision had already been fulfilled in Christ and had been abrogated. Thus, their badge had no merit or honor before God. Yet speaking on the level of the Judaizers, Paul says that he had not only been circumcised, but circumcised on the eighth day as the Law required. Many of the Judaizers were proselytes or adult converts to Judaism. As such, they were circumcised in later life. Hence, Paul could say, "My circumcision was more pure than yours! Mine was an eighth-day circumcision!"

What is more, Paul also used to count as gain the fact that he was a pure descendant of one of the original twelve tribes of the people of Israel. He says, "*Of the stock of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin.*" Paul may well have had written documentation or family records which proved that he was a direct descendant of the tribe of Benjamin. This tribe belonged to the southern kingdom of Judah. Unlike the lost ten tribes of Israel which became amalgamated with the heathens, many from the Southern kingdom of Judah were never so assimilated. They remained pure Jews even after the Babylonian Captivity. As such, Paul was a Hebrew of the Hebrews. He was a real "blue-blood."

Added to this, Paul was a Pharisee. He says, "*As touching the law, a Pharisee.*" To be a Pharisee spoke for itself. To be a Pharisee meant one was among the strictest keepers of the law above all others. The Pharisees were very proud of their law-keeping and truly believed they were better than others. The Pharisee in the parable of the Pharisee and the Publican exemplifies this.

But Paul added another credential. He says, "*concerning zeal, persecuting the church.*" As we know, before the Apostle Paul was converted, he as a Pharisee persecuted the church. Saul the Pharisee was the preeminent persecutor of Christians. He out-did all the other Jews in rounding up Christians to have them imprisoned and even put to death. He was among those who supervised the stoning party which stoned to death Stephen, the first Christian martyr. He believed he was doing

God a service! He saw this as gain!

Finally, Paul used to count as gain something else. This is the most significant of all. He says, *“touching the righteousness which is in the Law, blameless.”* Like all Pharisees, Paul was an impeccable observer of all the ceremonial laws and also of the traditions of the scribes and elders. No one could lay any blame on his outward adherence to the Law. Before men, he was blameless. He was sincerely obedient and dedicated. Yet he also sincerely believed this made him blameless before God! Paul was a pure-bred advocate of the natural religion of work-righteousness. In short, Paul was saying to these Judaizers, I was what you are now, but more!

Yet here Paul makes the stunning statement that all those things which he used to count as gain, he now counts as loss for Christ. Hear his words again: *“But what things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ”* (v. 7). All those things which were impressive before men, all those things which made Paul at one time elite among the elite, he now sees as having no value whatsoever. But why? None of those past gains produced righteousness before God! None could remove his inbred sin and guilt. As the Scripture says, *“But we are all as an unclean thing, and all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags”* (Isaiah 64:6). All of Paul’s zealous Law-keeping had no value in terms of righteousness before God. The Bible says, *“For by the works of the Law shall no flesh be justified”* (Galatians 2:16). Sinners are capable of earning only one thing: God’s eternal wrath and punishment. Righteousness before God is not what we earn, but what Christ earned.

But when did Saul the Pharisee realize this? He came to realize this when Christ suddenly appeared to him on the road to Damascus and crushed him with the Law! Then and there Paul came to see his sinful nature and that despite all his Law-keeping he was guilty before God and deserved only God’s wrath and eternal damnation. He came to see that being circumcised on the eighth day, being of the stock of Benjamin, being a Hebrew of the Hebrews, being a Pharisee, being outwardly blameless under the Law, none of these things could add up to righteousness. None of these things could justify him before God.

Indeed, it was when Paul gained Christ by faith that he saw clearly that his past gains were only loss. He says, *“Yea doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ”* (v. 8). From the world’s point of view, Paul did lose a lot. Upon becoming a Christian, he was no longer a member of the Jewish elite. He was cut off from all Jewish favor and the support of his family. He was now counted among the off-scouring of the earth. He now lived a life often marked by poverty and want. He was now himself the target of persecution on the part of the Jews. Yet now he counts all that he lost as nothing but dung or manure. All that he lost was worth losing because he had won Christ by faith. He now had what is truly excellent, namely, the knowledge of Christ Jesus his Lord.

Yet what did Paul mean when he said, *“that I may win Christ?”* He explains. He says, *“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”* (v. 9). He won Christ by putting aside all the self-righteousness of the Law, and by simply embracing by faith the righteousness which Christ won for all sinful mankind. The only righteousness which avails before God is the righteousness Christ earned for us. Christ’s perfect obedience to the Law and His sin-atonement death on the cross, the two taken together, are what satisfied the offended justice of God. In God’s sight, in God’s estimation, this is righteousness. This is what Paul gained by faith in the Lord Jesus.

Now only one thing mattered to Paul—to know Christ. To know Christ more and more! As he says, *“That I may know Him, and the power of His resurrection, and the fellowship of His sufferings, being made conformable unto His death.”* By these words Paul mentions three specific things which he

gained by knowing Christ. First, he gained the power of Christ's resurrection. The power of Christ's resurrection is that it sealed the redemption and justification which Christ won. Paul saw that his own salvation was sealed and confirmed by Christ's resurrection. Also, by knowing the power of Christ's resurrection, Paul saw that his own death had been conquered. No longer was Paul enslaved by the fear of death even though he often stared death in the face such as when he was stoned in Lystra, was shipwrecked, was bitten by a poisonous snake, and was five times beaten with forty stripes save one. In other words, the hope given by Christ's resurrection empowered Paul to live his life with single-minded devotion and faith-courage.

What is more, by knowing Christ, Paul gained "*the fellowship of Christ's sufferings*" and was "*made conformable unto Christ's death.*" The more he suffered on account of Christ, the more intimately he fellowshiped Christ's own sufferings. Unlike Christ's sufferings, Paul's were not expiatory. Nevertheless, Paul suffered from the same hatred and scorn which were heaped upon Christ. In that respect, by suffering for Christ, Paul also was made conformable unto His death. In suffering for Christ, he was a partaker of Christ's sufferings and death. The Bible says, "*But rejoice, inasmuch as ye are partakers of Christ's sufferings*" (I Peter 4:13). Thus, what Paul suffered or lost for Christ's sake, resulted in the gain of being conformed to Christ. The ultimate gain of fellowshiping Christ's sufferings would be that of finally attaining the resurrection of the dead on the Last Day. As Paul says, "*If by any means I might attain unto the resurrection of the dead.*" This is the ultimate gain: To rise on the Last Day and to be with Christ for all eternity.

Well now, this brings us to our own case as Christians. As we live in this world, we must ever keep in mind what is really our gain, and what is really no loss. As we live in this world, we are constantly tempted to think like the world. We are tempted to see things as Paul did before he was converted. Chiefly, we are tempted to see our righteousness before God as something we achieve by our works. Because of our Old Adam, because we have a sinful nature, we have a natural tendency to think in terms of self-righteousness. For example, we can take a false pride in our orthodox heritage. Yet our orthodox heritage is not the ground of our righteousness before God. Being a part of the Concordia Lutheran Conference is not what justifies us before God. Also, no Christian should conclude that he is a better Christian because he has been a Christian longer than someone else. We must not think we are more spiritual simply because we have accumulated more knowledge. Indeed, when the accumulation of knowledge makes us puffed up with pride and self-righteousness, this is not gain, but loss!

What is more, very subtly, we can find ourselves converting our sanctification into being the basis of our justification. We are justified before God, not by how holy a life we think we may live, but only by faith in what Jesus did for us. Indeed, our sanctification ever remains imperfect. As Paul said of himself beyond our text, "*Not as though I had already attained, either were already perfect*" (v. 12a). Thus, we are to live the rest of our lives striving to be more and more sanctified. Yet no matter how hard we strive, we never achieve perfect sanctification. Indeed, even as we strive to mature in sanctification, the motive must be Christ's love for us and gratitude to Him for what He did for us. As Paul says, "*For the love of Christ constraineth us*" (II Corinthians 5:14). Oh how subtly we Christians can become Pharisees! Let none of us ever get stuck on himself and his own importance. Like Paul, we must ever say, "*I am what I am by the grace of God,*" and sincerely mean it!

Furthermore, Christians are sometimes tempted to think that they live a deprived life. Our young people in particular are tempted to feel that they deserve to have a time in their life when they can go out and really taste the world. Many a young Christian has been like the Prodigal Son. "Give me my money now before I get old and can no longer live a little!" The Prodigal Son went off and lived in riotous living, but soon realized he had been a fool. He threw away what was really gain, and gained what was really only loss. He came to himself, repented, and went back home both to God and to his earthly father to reclaim what was of true value — his soul's salvation! Young people, do

not let the glamor of the world deceive you. All the glamor and gain of the world is really nothing but dung, nothing but manure, nothing but loss! It all leads to hell!

Therefore, let us never fret over what we think we have sacrificed for Christ. Once the disciple Peter came to Jesus and said, *“Lo, we have left all, and followed thee”* (Luke 18:28). Peter was rather impressed with himself in what he had given up. Yet whatever we may have had to give up in remaining true to Christ is worth it! In fact, Jesus said to Peter, *“Verily I say unto you, There is no man that hath left house, or parents, or brethren, or wife, or children, for the kingdom of God’s sake, who shall not receive manifold more in this present time, and in the world to come life everlasting”* (Luke 18:29-30).

Thus, let us see that what we gain in Christ makes all losses nothing but pure gain. If you have Christ, you have everything and have lost nothing. Did you really lose when you lost your old worldly friends who feel you betrayed them by becoming a Christian? Did you really lose when you lost a job because you refused to cheat or be dishonest or because you asked not to be scheduled for work on Sunday? Did you really lose when someone you loved and wanted to marry turned away from you because he or she would not accept your Christian faith? Did you really lose when you did not make that all-star team because the coach only wanted players who were like him —worldly? Are we losers by belonging to a small orthodox church which cannot provide our children with a large youth group to socialize with or an exciting variety of programs? All that is dung, pure manure, compared to Christ and His true saving Word. Most people who belong to such churches may well be on the road to hell because fleshly, worldly gain has replaced the saving Gospel of Christ! What good are all such so-called advantages if in the end we lose our souls! *“What is a man profited if he should gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? And what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?”* (Matthew 16:26).

Like the Apostle Paul, let us see that in Christ we have nothing but gain, not only now, but for all eternity. By faith in Christ and His righteousness, we are accounted righteous before God even now. In Christ, we stand justified before God. We do not have to wait for Judgment Day to know what God’s verdict is. Jesus says, *“Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that hath My word, and believeth on Him that sent Me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation, but is passed from death unto life”* (John 5:24). Even now our sins are forgiven and all our guilt is removed. We live with a clean conscience. *“Being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ”* (Romans 5:1).

In and through Christ and the power of His resurrection, we are able to live a truly God-pleasing or sanctified life. In Christ, our family life, our jobs, our school work, our recreation, our entire life is blessed by God’s grace. In Christ and His righteousness our marriages are blessed with Jesus’ love and forgiveness. In Christ our job as parents is made easier because we have Christ’s sufficient grace in place of our weakness.

Finally, in Christ we shall attain, along with Paul and all the saints, the resurrection of the dead. Even death cannot steal away our gain in Christ! In Christ, our death is swallowed up in victory. Ironically, it is in the hour of death that we will appreciate most the words of Paul: *“But what things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ. Yea doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ.”* May this ever be the faith of us all! In Jesus’ Name. Amen.

THE SUNDAY SERMON

for the

Fifty-second Annual Convention

of the
CONCORDIA LUTHERAN CONFERENCE

Delivered by the Rev. Ross A. Mahan, Pastor
 Faith Ev. Lutheran Church, Jackson, Michigan

Text: **I John 2:15-17**

Grace be unto you and peace from God our Father and Jesus Christ our beloved Savior.

“For where your treasure is there will your heart be also” (Matthew. 6:21). What do we truly love in this life? The answer to that question will reveal many things about us. A man’s soul will cling to that which he loves! How I spend my money, spare time, and energies will reveal what I love and what I love I will live and become! The thoughts that occupy my mind will become my meditation and my dreams until more and more they will become a part of myself. God created man to fear, love, and trust in Him above all things and will not allow any thing in this life to steal the affections of our hearts from Him. Man was created for the Lord and will find no rest until his soul rests in God. *“No man can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to one, and despise the other; Ye cannot serve God and mammon”* (Matthew. 6:24).

Trying to serve God while loving and serving other things is both sinful and impossible; we should not and we cannot serve two masters; attempting to do so will destroy our eternal souls. The context of our Epistle lesson is the believer’s fellowship with God the Father and His Son Jesus Christ (I John 1:3). The Christian walks with God in the light of the Gospel and the confession of sins according to the blessed propitiation of Jesus Christ for our sins (I John 1:7, 9; 2:2). The evidence of this new fellowship with God is our love for God and our brethren that gladly obeys His commandments out of gratitude for His great mercy given to us in His Son (I John 2:4-5). It is in light of our new relationship to God through Christ that the Apostle John reminds us this morning how dangerous and foolish it is to love the world.

A man is either a lover of God or of the world; he cannot be both.

We will see, first of all, that **(I)** love for the world separates man from God; and, secondly, that **(II)** the Lord Jesus Christ has overcome the world!

I.

Hear again the words of our text: *“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.”* If a man loves and serves the world, there will be no room in his heart for the love of the Father. Jesus said: *“If a man love Me, he will keep My words; and My Father will love him, and We will come unto him, and make Our abode with him”* (John 14:23). When we love this world, we are preventing God the Father from loving us and coming into our hearts to dwell; we are refusing to walk in fellowship with Him (I John 1:7) and are guilty of spiritual adultery. *“Ye adulterers and adulteresses, know ye not that the friendship of the world is enmity with God? Whosoever therefore will be a friend of the world is the enemy of God”* (James 4:4).

What is **“the WORLD”** that John forbids us to love? The same words for **“love”** and **“world”** appear in John 3:16: *“For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son.”* It is obvious that John is using **“world”** or *kosmos* to mean something different. **“World”** in Scripture can mean the totality of heaven and earth created by God. Paul said to the Athenians: *“God made **the world** and all things therein”* (Acts 17:24); and in Hebrews: *“By faith we understand that **the***

worlds were framed by the Word of God" (Hebrews 11:3). The "world" can refer to human society alienated from God under the power of Satan or the entire human race. God's love for the **world of men** moved Him to send His only-begotten Son to be the propitiation for the sins of the *whole world* (John 3:16; I John 2:2).

John uses "world" in our text in an ethical sense to describe a **Satanic world system** that is hostile to Jesus Christ and opposed to the Kingdom of God. It is the kingdom of darkness ruled by Satan, the world not as God created it, but as the devil has corrupted it. Satan is called "*the prince of this world*" (John 16:11) through whom "*the whole world lieth in wickedness*" (I John 5:19b). The devil is "*the god of this world who hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ who is the image of God, should shine unto them*" (II Corinthians 4:4). The WORLD with its lusts and pride is reflected by the words, thoughts, behavior, and desires that flow from man's corrupt sinful nature that presumes to live his life without God. "*The carnal mind is enmity against God; for it is not subject to the Law of God, neither indeed can be. So then they that are in the flesh cannot please God*" (Romans 8:7-8). Man by nature walks "*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*" (Ephesians. 2:2).

The spiritual evil of the world dominates the lives of unbelievers. Just as a train will travel in whatever direction the railroad tracks take it, so natural man apart from Jesus Christ will go in whatever direction the world takes him. Man is born in sin; therefore a life of selfishness and neglect of God seems perfectly natural to him. "*There is a way which seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death*" (Proverbs 14:12; 16:25). Man goes about his daily routine each day without realizing the road he travels in his life is leading him to eternal destruction. Jesus said: "*Enter ye in at the strait (narrow) gate; for wide is the gate and broad is the way that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat*" (Matthew 7:13). Here is man in his natural environment, blindly traveling down the road leading to hell; and, unless he is delivered by the power of the Gospel and placed on the narrow way leading to life, he will die under God's wrath.

The WORLD represents a very real danger to the Christian's faith; its lust, sinful pleasures, and false pride attack our souls in subtle ways designed to separate us from our relationship to God. The world tries to conform us to its sinful philosophy and hates anyone that refuses to go along with it (Romans 12:2). Jesus predicted the unbelieving world would hate His disciples: "*If the world hate you, ye know that it hated Me before it hated you. If ye were of the world, the world would love its own; but because ye are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you*" (John 15:18-19). St. John wrote: "*Marvel not, my brethren, if the world hate you*" (I John 3:13). The world is no friend of Jesus Christ, nor should we expect it to be. Jesus warned us to beware even when the world speaks well of us, for this was how they treated the false prophets in the past (Luke 6:26).

Satan tempts the Christian through the world by the "*lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life.*" This was how he tempted Eve in the garden. He began by questioning, perverting, and contradicting the clear Word of God to undermine her confidence in God's Word; he then appealed to lust and pride. "*And when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree to be desired to make one wise, she took of the fruit thereof, and did eat, and gave also unto her husband with her; and he did eat*" (Genesis 3:6). Satan caused Eve to distrust God and His Word; her loss of faith led to disobedience to God's command. Satan is doing the very same thing in the churches today; he is the father of all false doctrine, and his attacks upon God's Word during the past half-century have been relentless! The Apostle John warns us: "*Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God; because many false prophets are gone out into the world*" (I John 4:1).

False prophets have filled the churches with so many false doctrines that many professing Christians no longer understand nor believe the Gospel. A new world religion has appeared in our country during the last few years; this new faith declares that all religions are equal and lead to the same place; man can get to heaven by his good works; Muslims, Jews, Buddhists, Hindus, and Christians all worship the same god; and, even if a man does not believe the Gospel, he can still go to heaven if he is sincere in his own religion. The world denies objective truth; all truth is relative, flexible, and changes according to the times; and, if anyone dares to believe in the inspired inerrant Word of God, he is intolerant, hateful, and bigoted. Even the doctrine of Christian love has been twisted with the use of high-sounding words like “tolerance,” “diversity,” “inclusiveness,” and “equality,” all designed to force Christians to deny God’s Word and accept perversion into the church and society as normal.

Sadly, many professing Christians have embraced the world’s sinful philosophy, deception, and lust and denied the faith. During the past few decades the church has faced an especially difficult challenge, as the world has been able to channel its satanic philosophy, false doctrine and lustful images directly into our living rooms via the television. The television industry reminds us of the words of St. Paul: “*But evil men and seducers shall wax worse and worse, deceiving and being deceived*” (II Timothy 3:13). Just when we think television cannot get any worse, it sinks to an even lower level of immorality. As Christians we must remember that the world hates God’s Law and the Gospel and will do anything to undermine and destroy His Word in the church and society. Many Christians without realizing it are imbibing of the world’s philosophy, lusts, and sinful behavior *vicariously* through television, movies, and other media.

The Apostle warns us this morning not to love the world, for “*the world passeth away and the lusts thereof.*” Jesus told the story of the rich man who loved the things of this world with its luxuries, fine clothing, food, and wealth more than anything. One day the rich man died, “*and in hell he lift up his eyes, being in torments, and seeth Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his bosom*” (Luke 16:23). The rich man was in hell, his riches and worldly pleasures gone forever; from now on he would only know remorse, torment, and eternal separation from God. The rich man is a reminder of the dangers of loving the world. If the world is tempting you with its lusts and pride, remember the words of John: *The World is passing away!* We cannot build our lives on the shifting sands of worldly opinions and lusts, for only faith in Christ our Savior can preserve our souls on the Day of Judgment when Christ returns (Matthew 7:24-27). **The love of the world separates man from God**, but the Christian has every reason to rejoice!

II.

The perfect life and the innocent suffering and death of Jesus our Savior has overcome the power of the world **for us** by canceling the guilt and the power of sin by which the world held us in bondage. When speaking of His death, Jesus said: “*Now is the judgment of this world; now shall the prince of this world be cast out. And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto Me*” (John 12:31-32). “*In the world ye shall have tribulation; but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world*” (John 16:33). Christ has overcome the world; Satan is now a dethroned prince attempting to maintain himself in a defeated worldly kingdom, knowing that his time is short. What we could not do for ourselves Christ did for us; His redemption for sins objectively justified the entire world. “*God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto Himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them;*” ... “*For He hath made Him to be sin for us, [Him] who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him*” (II Corinthians 5:19,21).

The believer in Christ now has an “*advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous; and He is the propitiation [the payment in full] for our sins; and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world*” (I John 2:2). Our Savior’s death has reconciled the world to God, and through the Word of the Gospel and our Baptism into Christ He has overcome the world **in us** by the new birth

of the Spirit. The evidence of the new birth in our hearts is our faith and confidence in Jesus Christ. *“Whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ is born of God”* (I John 5:1a). By grace through faith in Christ we are the ones that do the will of God and abide forever! The grace of God given through the Gospel teaches and enables the Christian not to love the world. *“For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men, teaching us that denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world”* (Titus 2:11-12).

The child of God by faith in Jesus Christ now enjoys blessed fellowship with God. *“If we walk in the light, as He is in the light, we have fellowship one with another; and the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanseth us from all sin”* (I John 1:7). The Holy Spirit through the Gospel gives us a new love for God along with new desires and the power to keep His commandments. *“For this is the love of God, that we keep His commandments; and His commandments are not grievous”* (I John 5:2). Christ overcame the world **for us** and **in us**; He also overcomes the world **through us** by the gift of faith in Jesus Christ. *“Who is he that overcometh the world, but he that believeth that Jesus is the Son of God?”* (I John 5:4). *“I have written unto you, young men, because ye are strong, and the Word of God abideth in you, and ye have overcome the wicked one”* (I John 2:14). The believer in Christ that overcomes Satan through the strength and power of the Gospel is victorious over the world.

Jesus promised His Church: *“He that overcometh, the same shall be clothed in white raiment; and I will not blot out his name out of the book of life, but I will confess his name before My Father and before His angels”* (Revelation 3:5). *“Who is he that overcometh the world, but he that believeth that Jesus is the Son of God”* (I John 5:5). John reminds us that **it matters what you believe!** Only faith, trust, and confidence in Jesus Christ the Son of God, our Advocate with the Father, makes the believer victorious over the world. To believe a lie is surrendering to Satan, the father of lies and the prince of this world (John 8:44; 16:11). The devil’s children in the world cling to his lies and deceptions, for they love the world; but the Christian wages a continual warfare against the world’s lusts and indifference to God; and we overcome the world through saving faith in Jesus Christ.

The Apostle John revealed the source of our new spiritual life when he wrote: *“This is He that came by water and blood, even Jesus Christ, not by water only, but by water and blood. And it is the Spirit that beareth witness, because the Spirit is truth”* (I John 5:6). The Triune God cleanses us from all sin through *“the washing of water by the Word”* in Holy Baptism through which He grants the believing sinner forgiveness, cleansing from sin, and blessed deliverance from a guilty conscience (Ephesians. 5:26; I Peter 3:21). But Christ came *“not by water only, but by water and blood.”* The blood was the life of Christ poured out for us on the cross when from His pierced side there came out *“blood and water”* (John 19:34). Our new spiritual life, given by the Holy Spirit through the water and the blood, is a continual *“witness”* of the Son of God in the earth. *“And there are three that bear witness in earth, the Spirit, and the water, and the blood; and these three agree in one”* (I John 5:8).

The Holy Spirit creates spiritual life within the heart of the believing sinner through the water of Holy Baptism and nourishes and strengthens this new life within us by the eating and drinking of heavenly food, the body and blood of Christ under the bread and wine in the Lord’s Supper. By partaking of the Lord’s Supper with hearts of repentance and faith in Jesus Christ, the new life we have received from God through His Word is nourished and strengthened within us. We come to the Holy Sacrament today that we may be strengthened in our confidence that Christ died for our sin out of His great love for us and to receive the forgiveness of sins He promised us through this blessed means of grace. Through His Word and Sacrament He gives us spiritual strength to resist the devil, the world, and the flesh. Christ has overcome the world by His perfect life death and resurrection, and today He offers and seals this forgiveness and victory to us through the promises of His Word proclaimed in the Gospel and imparted to us in the Sacrament of the Altar. May God grant this forgiveness to each of us this day for Christ’s sake. Amen.

HISTORICAL ESSAY
delivered to the
Fifty-second Annual Convention
of the
CONCORDIA LUTHERAN CONFERENCE

by

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

*“Schism in the Orthodox Lutheran Conference
and its Reorganization as the Concordia Lutheran Conference, 1956”*

(Essay continued from the 51st Annual Convention to its conclusion)

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Toward the end of last year’s portion of this essay we noted that, although the Proceedings of the Fifth Annual Convention of the Orthodox Lutheran Conference, August 20-22, 1955 at Detroit Lakes, Minnesota, indicate that **not one word** concerning this raging controversy was uttered **on the record**, nor was any **official action** taken against Dr. Kretzmann by the Conference—even though he had, in effect, already severed fellowship with a good many of his erstwhile brethren and longtime associates in the fight for orthodoxy in outward Lutheranism—the matter was far from being settled. Concerted efforts continued in less public forums to facilitate a peaceful and yet proper resolution. However, despite appearances to the contrary, including the notable silence on the matter at the convention, the fracture in the fellowship had not been healed and had not been dealt with to the complete satisfaction of all concerned, as subsequent events clearly revealed.

On October 15, 1955, the Board of Directors met in Tinley Park, Illinois, and tried again to arrive at some definitive action. The following resolution was passed:

WHEREAS, after a long and brotherly discussion of the latest developments in the controversy between Pastor E. C. Hallstein and Dr. P. E. Kretzmann, it was clear that the Board and the Committee on Theological Education could find no solution; and

WHEREAS we found through our discussion that the settlement of the difficulty at which we arrived at the Pastoral Conference in Detroit Lakes was not satisfactory to all concerned since the agreement reached was plainly understood in two opposing ways;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the President and the Vice-President arrange a discussion meeting of themselves and the disputants for the purpose of bringing the current controversy to a God pleasing conclusion, and that this meeting may include as many others as the President and Vice President deem necessary after consultation with the two parties, even the entire Pastoral Conference, before it is finally brought before the delegate

convention.

It was of course hoped that the entire matter would have been resolved by the time of the Board's next meeting in Tinley Park on January 14, 1956.

In two letters of reply to the Board's suggestion, dated October 22 and October 26, Dr. Kretzmann stated that he **refused to meet** with the *praesidium* or with anyone else who disagreed with his position **UNTIL the charges made against him had been withdrawn**. This made utterly impossible any reconciliation inasmuch as correspondence had yielded nothing, and now even face to face discussion has been ruled out. Moreover, Kretzmann stated in the same letters that, in the case of doctrinal discipline, he was **subject only to the congregation of which he was a member** and not to any "outside body." He stated that he did not acknowledge the officers of the O. L. C. nor its Board of Directors, and referred to them as a "superior court." The *praesidium* therefore wrote to the Committee on Theological Education concerning this obstructionistic conduct and urged it to plead with Dr. Kretzmann to correct his unscriptural position so that urgent disciplinary action regarding his professorship might be avoided.

"HERE, ONCE MORE AND FOR THE LAST TIME, ARE THE FACTS, presented once more, for the consideration of friend or of foe, in the interest of truth and fair play." With these words Dr. Kretzmann issued a final, undated release in which he attempted to summarize the controversy thus far. In it he expressed outrage over the charge of unionism still hanging over his head, and in his fourth point, he laid down the final gauntlet as it were concerning his continued fellowship with those who sought to admonish him:

Hence the undersigned feels under compulsion to make this declaration, and this is my last effort to restore proper theological balance in the Orthodox Lutheran Conference: **Unless the men (and others*)** [*referring to Pastor Hallstein's daughters in Minneapolis] **who share Pastor ECH's position will withdraw their sinful charges against me by December 31, 1955, I SHALL NO LONGER CONSIDER THEM, EITHER INDIVIDUALLY OR COLLECTIVELY, as BRETHREN IN THE FAITH.** I cannot consider myself in step with, nor do I care to identify myself with, men who regard themselves more orthodox than Luther or Walther.

III. Why Reorganization Became Necessary

Had this unfortunate and completely unnecessary controversy remained during the course of 1955 a matter existing only between Pastor Hallstein and Dr. Kretzmann; had the controversy concerned itself merely with an adiaphoristic matter, or with a difference in interpretation not involving Christian doctrine; or had the friction between the men resulted from a so-called "personality clash," it would still have been a serious matter. For **the refusal to be reconciled**, particularly for a whole year, even over such a relatively "minor" matter, is **wickedness**. It would have caused offense to other brethren, certainly to weak sheep and lambs of the Savior, and it had the potential of destroying the entire Conference. But this controversy involved MUCH MORE! It involved "doctrinal discipline," that is, the sincere and earnest effort of brethren to correct another brother who had slipped into error and had been for an entire year defending his error, refusing the admonition of God's Word, and setting himself over his brethren as one who is (and must remain) above reproach, with an "indelible character" unassailable by anyone except perhaps his intellectual and theological peers.

But this controversy suddenly grew to gigantic proportions! Throughout the year, various agencies of the Conference had endeavored to settle the matter, to arrive at a consensus, to get

Dr. Kretzmann to see that he had, at the very least, overstated himself. There was the Pastoral Conference back in January, the Board Meeting in April, the Plenary Pastoral Conference in August, the Board of Directors in October, and the *praesidium* which, at the behest of the Board, tried to set up a meeting with Dr. Kretzmann—all to no avail.

Now, as the year was drawing to a close, the resolve of the Conference to settle this gnawing problem began to fade, and individual pastors and laymen began to set themselves up as championing one or the other of the men involved. The President and Vice President, who had been solemnly charged with the responsibility of guarding the confessional position of the Conference, found themselves standing practically alone among the officers of the Conference, who began to rally 'round Dr. Kretzmann and who even reversed themselves on previous decisions for what they perceived as his benefit. The Conference became quite literally “paralyzed.”

In their urgent letter to all the pastors of the Conference, dated December 15, 1955, President Mehlberg and Vice President Mensing explained that, since the Board of Directors meeting on October 22nd, **1)** the Conference Secretary withdrew his yes-vote to the recommendation that the *praesidium* try to set up a meeting with Dr. Kretzmann to discuss the controversy; **2)** Holy Trinity congregation in Minneapolis and its pastor (O. G. Schupmann) now also rejected the resolution and set **itself** up as the chief arbiter to handle the matter its own way. The congregation wanted those who charged Dr. Kretzmann to meet with **it** instead of with the Conference officers. **3)** The chairman of the Committee on Theological Education refused to meet with Dr. Kretzmann because he said he already knew what Kretzmann’s reply would be. And now, the deadline of December 31st has been fixed by Dr. Kretzmann, after which time he would regard no opponent in this controversy as a brother.

As we well know, the refusal of Kretzmann to recognize the Conference officers even as brethren in the faith had dire consequences for everyone else in the Conference as well; for by January 1, everyone would be either Kretzmann’s brother or his enemy. With such a split in the fellowship, how could the members work together as a Conference any longer; how could they walk together, except they be agreed (Amos 3:3)?

The *praesidium* had their backs to the wall and wrote to the pastors of the Conference:

Because of this deplorable, disorderly, and unmanageable situation in the O. L. C., there are already a number of congregations and pastors contemplating their withdrawal from it. ...We ourselves can do nothing further because we are blocked in each attempt.

As a final effort to restore a God-pleasing unity, which must prevail if we are to continue to work and to worship together (1 Cor. 1,10; Romans 16,17) we urgently request all of our pastors who wish to remain in fellowship with us—and possibly also still maintain the O. L. C. as a God-pleasing church-body—to meet with us in pastoral conference on Wednesday, January 18, 1956, beginning at 9:30 a.m. This date has been chosen to enable all the pastors to attend without having to, leave their congregations on a Sunday. If it is still possible, the Board of Directors’ meeting first scheduled [by the October 15th meeting] for January 14 will be held in connection with the Pastoral Conference. If not possible due to the acute situation before us, the Pastoral Conference will be held in lieu of the Board Meeting,

It was our original intention when we first planned this letter to request Holy Trinity Congregation of Minneapolis to offer our Conference facilities for meeting, so that Doctor Kretzmann could more easily be present. But since he has now informed us that he will no longer consider us

his brethren after December 31st of this present year, we are calling for the Pastoral Conference to be held at Tinley Park, in Peace Lutheran Church.

Please inform me (that is, the President) soon whether or not you will be present, and whether or not you desire accommodations in Tinley Park. In case you cannot arrange to be present, please state your position very clearly, so that we can give consideration to it at our meeting.

Yours in the service of Christ,

E. L. Mehlberg

H. David Mensing

P. S. —It is to be understood that those who share Doctor Kretzmann’s position set forth in his undated release, point four, received by the President and Vice President on December 5 & 6, in which he says that he will not consider us brethren in the faith after December 31, 1955, are not welcome at the above-mentioned meeting, since this meeting is for brethren in the Faith

E. L. M. & H. D. M.

The final die cast by Dr. Kretzmann early in December, causing a wedge to be driven into the fellowship of the O. L. C. by his act of sinful separatism and by his active cultivation of adherents, now had the potential of dividing also the body politic. It remained to be seen how many of the pastors would align themselves with Kretzmann and esteem *his* refusal to meet with his brethren as just cause for terminating also *their* fellowship with his accusers. The strength of the O. L. C. had, for four blessed years, lain in “*the unity of the spirit in the bond of peace*” (Ephesians 4:3). But that precious bond was now coming unglued. Satan and all those who had predicted the early demise of the Conference were engaged in gleeful celebration. Nevertheless the *praesidium* mounted yet one desperate attempt to rescue the fractured fellowship by engaging all those who still recognized one another as “brethren in the faith” at a special January Pastoral Conference in a thorough discussion of the controversy on the basis of Scripture, to the end that *God-pleasing fellowship* could be restored as the basis of proper continuation as a church body.

While this effort was completely in agreement with both the wording and the spirit of the October 15th resolution of the Board of Directors [See above], which authorized them to arrange a meeting with the “disputants” [named in the first “whereas” as “Pastor E. C. Hallstein and Dr. P. E. Kretzmann”], and to include “even the entire Pastoral Conference” if they deemed it necessary, the President and Vice President inadvertently set themselves up for a charge of abusing their *political* power when they unilaterally **postponed by four days the date** of the scheduled *Board Meeting* in favor of that *pastoral* meeting and its SPIRITUAL AGENDA. They trusted that the pastors (and even the laymen) with whom they had stood side-by-side in the cause of the truth would have understood and valued this order of priorities and would have appreciated the opportunity to discuss the entire controversy on the basis of God’s Word face to face. Surely such a *study* meeting was more important (and should have taken precedence over) a mere *business* meeting! Moreover, as they stated in their letter, “this date” —January 18th instead of January 14th— [had] been chosen to enable all the pastors to attend without having to leave their congregations on a Sunday,” a fine choice indeed from the point of view of a Christian pastor whose FIRST priority is to be the feeding of his own flock (Acts 20:28; I Peter 5:2). Would not the pastors and their congregations appreciated that consideration??

But had the *praesidium* made the *right* decision? The answer will, of course, vary with the

factional loyalty of the respondent; but polling numbers do not determine what is *right*. Just as the rules of parliamentary procedure are not an end unto themselves, even for the cause of decency and good order (I Corinthians 14:40), but must bend to the law of love in Christian assemblies (Galatians 5:14), so also purely *political* decisions (such as the calendar date of a meeting) must yield to the greater importance of *spiritual* unity and onemindedness demanded by Scripture in such passages as Amos 3:3 and I Corinthians 1:10. This is the principle to which the *praesidium* adhered and which the constituent membership of what was to become the *Concordia Lutheran Conference* sustained in its “Declaration” of June, 1956. To have held a Board Meeting (and later on a delegate convention) of a conference rent in two by a chain reaction of *severances of fellowship* (beginning with that of Dr. Kretzmann), so that assembled board members and seated convention delegates could not even have engaged in a joint opening devotion, would have made a **mockery** of the Conference’s claim to “Christian unity” and would have made its spiritual agenda an empty sham. The *praesidium* could not in good conscience become party to such a charade (I Timothy 5:22), regardless of the indignation and censure they might have to face for their action.

The reaction was swift and immediate, specifically from Pastor Albert M. Schupmann, Conference Secretary, who made no secret of the fact that he was a supporter of Dr. Kretzmann. On December 31st he directed sixteen pointed questions to the President for his immediate answer and copied these to the rest of the pastors in a letter dated January 4, 1956. The questions and the commentary following them are devoid of any Scriptural admonition whatsoever, deny even the existence of the long-standing, unsettled controversy, and express no concern whatsoever over the breakdown of Christian fellowship and love within the Conference. Schupmann’s challenge of the *praesidium* centered almost exclusively on their procedure, on their exercise of political authority, and on their motives, which he describes as being hypocritical. Considering all that had been written over the course of the year by Dr. Kretzmann and Pastor Hallstein, as well as by other pastors, and the opinions and resolutions of two pastoral conferences and the Board, Schupmann spoke as though no historical and evidentiary paper-trail existed; and he apparently saw no conflict in Conference membership without fellowship. The following examples from Schupmann’s own words bear out this characterization. [The stress is *ours* for the purpose of directed comment.]

- “We have the unusual situation that the elected *praesidium* insists upon the right of an **outsider to open** a controversy inside the OLC.” —The so-called “outsider,” Pastor Hallstein, had been a member of the Conference in good standing (an “insider”) from January to September (during which time the controversy, initiated by Dr. Kretzmann in his statement to the seminary class, raged unchecked and remained unsettled). Pastor Hallstein did not “open” the controversy, either before or after his resignation.

- “They insist that the **accused** is duty-bound to meet with them and the **foreigner**.” —Dr. Kretzmann’s steadfast refusal to meet with “anyone” who accused him of anything was the reason that the controversy raged for as long as it did. He refused admonition in any and every venue and form. Compare his attitude with that enjoined by the Savior and the apostles concerning a brother’s duty to hear and to heed reproof and correction. Note also the resolution of the Board of Directors (October 15, 1955) authorizing and directing the *praesidium* to seek such a meeting.

- “I believe that the OLC is for **OLC** business...that officers should be the first line of defense against attacks from the **outside**...” —He again speaks as though nothing had taken place until

after Hallstein's resignation in the middle of September; and he fails to recognize that the Board itself took up the controversy in October as an **OLC matter**, recognizing the need for a meeting between "the disputants" and the *praesidium*.

- "They go beyond their authority and set up **their own conditions** for attendance at **their** meeting." —The *praesidium*'s assumption that an OLC pastoral conference "is for brethren in the faith" and that membership requires fellowship is not only germane but is *Scriptural* in principle (Amos 3:3; Romans 16:17; I Corinthians 1:10; etc.) and *constitutional* in concept. Fellowship is a *sine qua non* for membership, not vice versa.
- "They issue a frantic call for what is, at present yet, an **illegitimate** controversy." —The Pastoral Conference of August 19 did not consider the controversy "illegitimate," neither did the Board in its meeting of October 15. **Both** bodies recognized the controversy as existing then already, but without an imminent solution. Neither dismissed the controversy, but both attempted to settle it.
- "Two men among us are using their office to **promote** a controversy that was **settled** at Detroit Lakes." —The *praesidium* never "promoted" the controversy but decried it and tried to get it settled in accordance with God's Word. The Board specifically **stated** (October 15) "that the Board and the Committee on Theological Education **could find NO final solution**; and... we found through our discussion that the settlement of the difficulty at which we arrived at the Pastoral Conference in Detroit Lakes **was NOT satisfactory to all concerned**."
- "They should **unmask**, show themselves in their role as accusers, and **state what their own charges are** in their own words." —Schupmann's veiled accusation of hypocrisy has no basis in fact. It is an evil surmising contrary to Zechariah 8:17 and James 4:11. Pastor Mensing's mimeographed **letter of July 18** (cited earlier in this essay) speaks for itself with clarity and specificity as to Dr. Kretzmann's "*fault*" that occasioned the controversy and his *obstinacy* that perpetuated it; and both the President and Vice President specifically addressed the latter point in particular in their **letter of December 15**.

IV. How the Final Separation Took Place

The new year dawned on January 1, 1956 and found that, the charges against Dr. Kretzmann NOT having been withdrawn in accordance with his ultimatum, the **fellowship** of one-mindedness that once characterized the Orthodox Lutheran Conference had been fractured by Kretzmann's own threatened action: "**Unless the men (and others) who share Pastor ECH's position will withdraw their sinful charges against me by December 31, 1955, I SHALL NO LONGER CONSIDER THEM, EITHER INDIVIDUALLY OR COLLECTIVELY, AS BRETHERN IN THE FAITH.**"

Pastor Albert M. Schupmann in his letter to the pastors dated January 4th (concerning which enough has been said above) characterized the *praesidium*'s call for a special pastoral conference on January 18th as "a partisan call" and their role as "leaders of some faction." He also impugned their stated purpose for that meeting, namely, "as a final effort to restore a God-pleasing unity, which must prevail if we are to continue to work and to worship together (1 Cor. 1,10; Romans 16,17)," as having been "disguised" to cover their nefarious political agenda. Moreover, in a hand-penned note on the bottom of the copy addressed to Pastor M. L. Natterer, Schupmann wrote: "PEK received no invitation to the conference. The praesidium thus refuses

to recognize one man's membership granted to him by the OLC. How long will they recognize your membership?" Remember that Dr. Kretzmann had during the first days of December issued his threat to sever fellowship (quoted again above) by the end of the month. When the *praesidium* on December 15 sent out its call for a special pastoral conference "for brethren in the faith," knowing that they would not and could not for conscience' sake withdraw their charges against Kretzmann before the end of December, they only recognized Kretzmann's OWN termination of fellowship. They did not terminate his "membership" in the O. L. C., nor the "membership" of any of his adherents. "Membership" *per se* was not their concern at the time — "membership" in a corporate, man-made organization concerning which Scripture says nothing. Their entire purpose sought a *Godpleasing spiritual outcome*, after which any and all "political" questions and problems could and should be able to be settled "*in the bond of peace*" (Ephesians 4:3), as all could then work together again, "*by love serv[ing] one another*" (Galatians 5:13) as dear brethren.

On the other hand, the agenda of what soon came to be called "the Minneapolis faction" was entirely different. In its regular voters' meeting on January 8, 1956 — less than a week before the originally-scheduled date of the Board of Directors meeting in Tinley Park and only ten days before the date of the special pastoral conference — Holy Trinity Lutheran Church of Minneapolis, the Rev. O. G. Schupmann, Pastor, unanimously resolved that **impeachment proceedings** be brought by *their congregation* against President Mehlberg and Vice President Mensing; that these charges be lodged immediately in the hands of the Conference secretary to be brought by him before the Board of Directors at its regularly scheduled meeting on January 14; and that a special convention of the OLC be called for the express purpose of considering these charges.

It is significant to note here that no provisions for the impeachment of its officers were ever a part of the constitution of the *Orthodox Lutheran Conference*, nor was such action ever envisioned by its founders. Holy Trinity congregation, however, took it upon itself to resolve impeachment of the Conference's officers, to resolve that the Conference secretary (Rev. A. M. Schupmann) act as president of the OLC while these charges were pending, and to resolve that the Board call a special convention. Indeed, while a congregation is autonomous with regard to its own internal matters, it was a decidedly "new wrinkle" for only one congregation to resolve what the entire Conference's Board of Directors was to do — at its pleasure. Not surprisingly, it was this same congregation to which **alone** Dr. Kretzmann held himself to be responsible as president of the Conference's seminary and as its theological professor; and it was this same congregation which determined itself to be the arbiter in any dispute with Dr. Kretzmann.

What were "the charges" against the *praesidium*? In its letter to Conference Secretary Albert M. Schupmann, Holy Trinity Lutheran Church, over the signature of its own secretary, Donald E. Pavey, specified them as "nonfeasance, misfeasance, and malfeasance" in the conduct of their office.

Specified as "nonfeasance" (neglect of official duties) were four allegations of failure to perform certain official functions to the satisfaction of the congregation, none of which were confirmed with objective evidence. In several cases, the subjective character of the charges was betrayed by expressions of personal judgment to quantify the degree of "failure" alleged, e.g., "Failing to use their good offices to..." do what the Board of Directors had asked be held in abeyance; "failing to cooperate vigorously with the treasurer of the O. L. C..." in locating certain missing funds; "failing properly to announce..." Pastor Hallstein's severance of fellowship with the

Conference and his resignation from it – which severance was dealt with by the *entire Board* back in October; and “failing to carry out the instructions of the convention regarding arrangement of meetings with representatives of the Norwegian Synod” – a charge that even the Board of Directors on October 15 did not make, nor did the Board (including Secretary Schupmann and board members present from the Minneapolis congregation) even suggest urgency on the President’s part in making such a contact.

Specified as “misfeasance” (impropriety in the conduct of their office) were three charges:

- a. Calling a pastoral conference of the O. L. C. from which those clerical members of the O. L. C., who recognize the maintenance (after due admonition) of false charges against a brother as a breaking of fellowship relations, are expressly excluded.
- b. After accepting nomination and election with the understanding that such false charges were dropped, using their office and the Board of Directors meeting over which they presided to urge investigation of these charges in meetings presided over by themselves (who had admittedly taken a position in the premises, not expressly withdrawn, and hence justifiably presumed to be functioning *ex parte*), and at which a schismatic who has repudiated the fellowship of the O. L. C. was to be present.
- c. Insisting on officially dealing with a case not rightly before the O. L. C. as such, and to that end obstructing, resp., being unresponsive to, the proposals of an O. L. C. congregation that the matter at issue be dealt with according to Acts 15 between sister congregations.

Specified as “malfeasance” (wrongdoing in the conduct of their office) were three charges:

- a. Formally and publicly, with the support of their congregations, advocating false charges against a brother, which have not been withdrawn in like manner.
- b. Encouraging and strengthening others in the same sin.
- c. Disturbing the peace of the O. L. C. without basis in Scripture or fact, and thus working incalculable injury to the church body which their office obligates them to promote, protect, and support.

The *praesidium*’s urgent, brotherly letter of December 15 and its stated purpose notwithstanding, the majority of the **Board of Directors** traveled to Tinley Park on January 14, 1956, to convene its meeting as originally scheduled. Finding no one at home at Peace in Tinley Park, the four men decided to meet at an apartment in Chicago. Contacted by telephone at his home in Milwaukee, President Mehlberg declined to attend the meeting, stating that he would, however, attend the Special Pastoral Conference called for four days hence. The board then proceeded with its meeting, at which it **a)** revised the Board Minutes of October 15 in such a way as to deny that the so-called Kretzmann-Hallstein controversy was still an open matter in the Conference, **b)** acknowledged that both Secretary Schupmann (on November 26, 1955) and now Mr. E. MacDonald at the present meeting had withdrawn their assent to the resolution of the Board authorizing the *praesidium* to arrange a meeting between themselves, Pastor Hallstein, and Dr. Kretzmann to settle the controversy, thus destroying the unanimity with which the Board had dealt with the matter in October, **c)** changed the word “disputants” to “Pastor E. C. Hallstein and

Dr. P. E. Kretzmann” in the above-referenced resolution “because the Secretary’s notes of that meeting use the names of those two men instead of the word ‘disputants.’” [NOTE that Holy Trinity (11/28/55) originally charged the *praesidium* with surreptitiously stating the names of the disputants; NOW the Minneapolis faction itself states the names in the record.] **d)** The Board also received and approved the impeachment charges preferred by Holy Trinity congregation and resolved that a **special convention** of the Conference be called for **February 4, 1956** at Holy Trinity **in Minneapolis** to try the *praesidium* on the charges preferred against them. Expected to be present were the pastor and two lay delegates from each congregation, as well as all pastoral and individual members of the Conference.

By the time this notification was received [Schupmann’s letter was dated January 17], together with the Board Minutes of January 14th, the pastors and congregations of the Conference had approximately **two weeks** to secure time off from work for their lay delegates, to make travel arrangements for their pastoral and lay delegates, and to travel to Minneapolis, Minnesota. No time at all was provided for the *praesidium* to prepare ITS CASE and to mount ITS DEFENSE. Candidly, the racing locomotive had been fueled and fired up to “railroad” the *praesidium* —**with all deliberate speed!** What indeed was the hurry to secure a *political* ouster, when, with over a *month’s* notice, the Minneapolis faction had been unwilling to meet as brethren with the rest of the pastors in a special pastoral conference at Tinley Park for the purpose of preserving the *fellowship* of the Conference?? No Scriptural Christian admonition had been brought to the President and Vice President; no concern for their souls had been expressed; no brotherly cooperation had been solicited in the spirit of meekness. There was, on the contrary, a running series of demands and legalistic deadlines coming out of Minneapolis, accompanied by accusations and sarcastic quips, also from the Conference secretary. All of this culminated in a litany of charges such as would be brought by a bevy of attorneys in a civil lawsuit concerning technical, political and procedural failures and errors. The die had been cast on the basis of a purely **political agenda**; and, even before the special convention convened in Minneapolis and completed its purge, the *Orthodox Lutheran Conference* had been effectively destroyed as a Godpleasing Christian and Lutheran church body.

At the Special Pastoral Conference called by the *praesidium* for January 18, 1956, only those convened to repair and preserve the **fellowship** of the *Orthodox Lutheran Conference* who had fallen under the condemnation of Dr. Kretzmann and his adherents. Since that meeting had been called and intended for “brethren in the faith” [Letter of 12/15/55], since Dr. Kretzmann by his own ultimatum had broken fellowship with them as of December 31st, and since Kretzmann’s adherents could hardly be *his* brother and the brother of *those* whose fellowship he had *disavowed*, no one from the “Minneapolis faction” attended the Special Pastoral Conference. This fact, together with the letter from Secretary Albert M. Schupmann informing everyone about the action of the Board and the purpose of the Special Convention in Minneapolis, caused the assembled pastors to draft the following declaration, summarizing the controversy and reacting to the action taken by the “Minneapolis Faction” at its special convention:

Our Declaration

(Principles adopted at our Special Pastoral Conference, Tinley Park, January 18-19, 1956)

I.

We acknowledge and declare that Dr. P. E. Kretzmann, by his declaration in his undated release received by our President and Vice-president on December 5 and 6, 1955, has terminated his fellowship with us as of December 31, 1955. Those who share this declaration of his, namely,

“Unless the men (and others) who share Pastor E. C. Hallstein’s position will withdraw their sinful charges against me by December 31, 1955, I SHALL NO LONGER CONSIDER THEM, EITHER INDIVIDUALLY OR COLLECTIVELY, AS BRETHERN IN THE FAITH,” have also terminated their fellowship with us. They have compelled us, therefore, in obedience to the Holy Scriptures, I Cor. 1:10, I John 2:19; Rom. 16:17,18, no longer to regard them as brethren in the faith.

We have been charged with the causing of this break. This cannot be the case since our fellowship was cut off at the very time when we were striving to meet together as brethren to discuss differences which had arisen between us. The fact that we charged Dr. Kretzmann with error gave him no Scriptural reason for refusing to meet with us as his acknowledged brethren to discuss the charges, Eph. 4:2, 3. Neither does the fact that we charged Dr. Kretzmann with error give him any Scriptural reason to refuse to consider us “either individually or collectively as brethren in the faith.” Even though Dr. Kretzmann should hold *us* to be in error, yet Romans 16:17 (to which he appeals against us) does not call for such hasty action, but the Lord requires much patience and long-suffering among acknowledged brethren, John 13:34; I Cor. 13:4; Tim. 2:24-26. This action is sinful separatism forbidden by the Word of God, Heb. 10:25; I John 2:19.

The *Orthodox Lutheran Conference* is an organization for *brethren united in the faith* (Constitution, Art. V, 1, 2.). The membership is therefore disrupted when the fellowship is disrupted, otherwise the organization itself would be of a unionistic nature. Those members who support Dr. Kretzmann’s hasty *action* have wrongfully disrupted the fellowship and can, therefore, no longer be recognized by us as *bona fide* members of the *Orthodox Lutheran Conference*. For this reason our brethren could not Scripturally meet with them in the so-called Board Meeting of January 14, 1956, and in our Orthodox Lutheran Conference Special Pastoral Conference of January 18, 1956. For the same reason we cannot regard the convention which is proposed to be held by them on February 4, 1956, or any other meeting proposed or conducted by them as a *bona fide*, constitutional meeting of the *Orthodox Lutheran Conference*. We shall continue, God willing, to hold our own constitutional *Orthodox Lutheran Conference* meetings.

II.

We declare that the congregations of our Conference, because they confess, teach, and practice the Word of God in its full truth and purity and use the Sacraments according to Christ’s institution, comprise the *true visible church on earth*, Matt. 28:20; John 8-31,32. We do not deny that there *MAY BE* others, unknown to us, who truly share our Scriptural position in doctrine and practice. We hold those to be in error who apply to this doctrine of the true visible church Scripture passages which pertain only to the invisible Church, such as John 4:22; Luke 17:16; 10:33 —thus confusing the two.

We recognize those only as true brethren in the faith who *openly* and *publicly* acknowledge our Scriptural position in doctrine and practice, I Cor. 1:10. This we designate by the human term: *confessional fellowship*. It is the Scriptural duty of such heartily to *support* our work and endeavors and thus to practice *church fellowship* with us, otherwise they are separatistic, 2 Tim. 1:8; 3 John 9.

Such true confessional fellowship does not necessarily require the immediate severance of *membership* from a heterodox body, nor the joining in *membership* with an orthodox organization; but it does require a cessation of every kind of church fellowship with the corporate body in which outward *membership* is still held, 2 Thess. 3:14,15. This Scriptural principle we designate by the human term: *a true state of confession*.

III.

According to the Constitution of the Orthodox Lutheran Conference, we, the undersigned congregations and their pastors, denounce the threatened unscriptural impeachment proceedings of the faction. We still acknowledge the President and Vice-president elected by our last convention at Detroit Lakes, Minnesota, August 20-22, 1955, as *bona fide* and *faithful* officers of the *Orthodox Lutheran Conference*.

Any who found it difficult to attend, or to send a statement of their position to, the Special Pastoral

Conference, Tinley Park, January 18-19, 1956, as well as others, are herewith cordially invited still to join us in our *Declaration* and thus continue in their original status with the *Orthodox Lutheran Conference*, “Endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace,” Eph. 4:3. Their subscription to our *Declaration* is to be sent to our President, and an announcement of their subscription will then be made promptly in the *Orthodox Lutheran*.

All practical matters pertaining to proper order and procedure in the work of the *Orthodox Lutheran Conference*, which are necessitated by the present unusual situation, will be presented to our next OLC convention as recommendations of the Board of Directors (the vacancies on the Board and on various committees to be filled by the President according to the By-Laws of our Constitution—see 1954 Proceedings).

Inasmuch as the faculty of the Seminary in Minneapolis disavows us as brethren in the faith, it is impossible for us any longer to regard and support them as our professors. It also follows that we do not recognize the treasury or any incumbents in office of the faction group.

If our former brethren communicate with us regarding our position in these matters, we stand ready to discuss these matters again with them *as brethren* as soon as they have retracted and repented of this unscriptural *break in fellowship* with us, Gal. 6:1.

This *Declaration* is unanimously subscribed to by the following congregations and their pastors:

Christ Lutheran Church, Milwaukee, Wisconsin
E. L. Mehlberg, Pastor

Peace Evangelical Lutheran Church, Tinley Park, Ill.
H. David Mensing, Pastor

Holy Trinity Orthodox Lutheran Church, Oskaloosa, Ia.
J. Ernest Shufelt, Pastor

St. Stephen Evangelical Lutheran Church, Wilmot, S. D.
O. W. Schaefer, Pastor

Trinity Evangelical Lutheran Church, Clark, S. D.
E. C. Hallstein, Pastor

St. John Orthodox Lutheran Church, Lebanon, Ore.
M. L. Natterer, Pastor

St. Paul Orthodox Lutheran Church, Empire, Ore.
P. R. Bloedel, Pastor

This declaration was published in the February, 1956* issue of the *Orthodox Lutheran* by the duly-elected editor, Pastor Paul R. Bloedel (who, incidentally, had NOT been impeached and removed from office), while a competing “*Orthodox Lutheran*” appeared, not surprisingly, out of Minneapolis the very same month. The latter periodical carried a brief summary of the Special Convention held by the “Minneapolis Faction” and its impeachment action against President Mehlberg and Vice President Mensing, ostensibly removing them from office in the Conference.

**Our Declaration* was then also re-printed in the July, 1956 issue.

What was, however, TRULY SIGNIFICANT about the Minneapolis faction’s February issue was **NOT** its report of the impeachment of its chief executive officers. Rather, it was the EXTREMELY TIMELY appearance of an article by Professor Wallace H. McLaughlin (Dr. Kretzmann’s colleague and adherent at the seminary in Minneapolis) which put the entire Kretzmann-

Hallstein controversy into perspective. The reader is reminded that, during the first part of January, 1955, Dr. P. E. Kretzmann told his seminary class that “under the circumstances” he could preach for Pastor Gervasius W. Fischer of Mankato, Minnesota, a pastor of the Wisconsin Synod. Pastor Hallstein took exception to that statement as being unionistic in character and reminded Dr. Kretzmann that, in the Pastoral Conference held later that same month, “all who spoke **plainly confessed** that we are not, and cannot be, in fellowship with Pastor Fischer because he himself is not in a true state of confession with **the heterodox Wisconsin Synod**, of which he is still a member.” (Our stress). This was, of course, the *status controversiae* all along. Had the Wisconsin Synod been an *orthodox* church body, nothing could have legitimately stood in the way of fellowship with Pastor Fischer, assuming that the declaration of fellowship had been mutual and reciprocal.

In the July-August, 1954 issue of the *Orthodox Lutheran*, in an item entitled, “Our Position over against the Wisconsin Synod,” President McLaughlin has stated unequivocally:

Our position is that the Wisconsin Synod as a corporate body has become heterodox through its unionistic association with the Lutheran Church–Missouri Synod and through its tyrannical action in the case of Pastor Hallstein. For these two reasons we withhold the hand of fellowship formerly extended to the Wisconsin Synod. We hold that the Wisconsin Synod as a corporate body is not in a true state of confession because of its continued fellowship with the Lutheran Church–Missouri Synod.

Now, however, in the very issue of the *Orthodox Lutheran* which documented the “melt-down” of the *Orthodox Lutheran Conference* as a church body—due largely to the Kretzmann-Hallstein controversy—McLaughlin singlehandedly re-wrote and re-cast the confessional history and position of the O. L. C. over against the Wisconsin Synod. In an article entitled, “A Clarification: Wisconsin Synod ‘Heterodox’?” with reference specifically to his statement quoted above, McLaughlin wrote in the February, 1956, issue:

I regard this phraseology of mine as unfortunate, since of course a body does not become “heterodox” through tyrannical action, but only through teaching and confessing false doctrine. But also this statement does not declare the Wisconsin Synod “heterodox” by reason of any false teaching which it as a corporate body has adopted [...**as it has since 1962 with its false teaching on the Church and its Ministry –Ed.**], but only “through its unionistic association.” [“**ONLY ‘through its unionistic association’???** Isn’t that ENOUGH?? **Proverbs 29:24. –Ed.**]

The considered opinion of the undersigned is that the Wisconsin Synod cannot at the present time be stigmatized as a heterodox body, and that such a charge is incapable of proof.

McLaughlin then (uncharacteristically) “rode the fence” as to whether Wisconsin was or was not heterodox. Note the following. The emphasis is ours:

It has **cast suspicion** upon its orthodoxy by its **dangerous procrastination** in severing its **bonds with the heterodox Missouri Synod**, and...we can have no fellowship with it **until it has fully established a clear orthodox position** against Missouri’s heterodoxy. We recognize that there have also been utterances in print and on the floor of conventions of the Wisconsin Synod which should be officially disclaimed **in order fully to restore “the orthodox position of the Wisconsin Synod** which we have been so happy to acclaim” [that is, in the earliest days of our Conference. –Ed.].

The Wisconsin Synod, according to McLaughlin’s own characterization, had “cast suspicion” upon its own orthodoxy! If its “orthodoxy” was *suspect*—at its own hand—why would he choose to ignore that? It had not severed its “bonds” with the heterodox Missouri Synod. Its “bonds”? Bonds of *what*?? Bonds of *fellowship*? Fellowship with the *heterodox*? What did that make Wisconsin? *Orthodox*?? The Wisconsin Synod had, in McLaughlin’s words, not “*fully*

established a clear orthodox position;” and it needed “*fully to restore*” its orthodox position. Was it or was it NOT orthodox?? Was it or was it NOT heterodox?? Professor McLaughlin had backtracked on his original statement, now unwilling to call the Wisconsin Synod “heterodox.” Yet, in that same article, he never once characterized the Wisconsin Synod as “orthodox.” Did he hold that there was a *middle ground* between the two poles?? (Cf. Jesus’ statement in Matthew 12:30.) By God’s grace, WE **recognized** the Wisconsin Synod for what it was on the basis of I Corinthians 1:10; and, since its official adoption of a false position on the doctrines of the Church and Ministry in 1962, its heterodoxy eventually became clear (apparently) also to McLaughlin.

Significantly, and perhaps due in no small way to McLaughlin’s duplicitous published declaration, Dr. Kretzmann’s statement that he could preach for Pastor G. W. Fischer of Mankato *now* seemed to many observers to have been completely *appropriate*—now that the Wisconsin Synod was, according to McLaughlin, no longer heterodox—and the entire controversy appeared to be moot. It also explains why, when the “Minneapolis faction” of the Orthodox Lutheran Conference dissolved some six years later, approximately half of its pastoral constituency [to the best of our information] went into the **Wisconsin Synod**—the body which McLaughlin had “clarified” in February, 1956, as having been no longer heterodox. These included from the original O. L. C., according to published reports, three of the Pastors Schupmann and Teacher Carl Bloedel. Strangely (his declaration notwithstanding), McLaughlin himself, as well as Dr. Kretzmann, Pastors E. E. Erickson** and L. N. Wilenius, and Teacher Herbert Gade chose *not* to join the Wisconsin Synod but remained “independent” for a short time and then subsequently, in 1964, participated in the formation of the **Lutheran Churches of the Reformation** together with pastors who, more than a decade after the formation of the O. L. C., finally heeded the Word of God in Romans 16:17 and left the heterodox Missouri Synod.

**Some twenty years later, after having examined the written evidence, including the extant correspondence, from the Kretzmann-Hallstein controversy, Pastor Erickson acknowledged the Scriptural position of our pastors in the matter and was received into the Concordia Lutheran Conference by colloquy and his congregation in Midland, Michigan, into its membership.

For the first six months after the break in fellowship, the bonafide Orthodox Lutheran Conference continued to function under its original constitution, even though the Minneapolis faction claimed the same identification, published a periodical under the same name, and represented itself as the legitimate O. L. C. In order to obviate the confusion occasioned by this duplication, it was suggested that the future structure and name of the Conference should be submitted to its constituent congregations for their joint determination in a sort of referendum. The 1956 convention, therefore, decided to vest the wording of such a referendum, as well as a revision of the Constitution, in the Conference Board of Directors, which, by January, 1957, had drafted and submitted to the member congregations and congregations in fellowship the following document and had received their unanimous approval of:

The Agreement

Recognizing the break made in our fellowship last January by a faction which espoused unionistic and arbitrary principles (Titus 3:10; Rom. 16:17; I Tim. 5:22; Gal. 5:13); and

Recognizing the problem that has since resulted from the break, namely, that the erring group, or faction, continues to use the name *Orthodox Lutheran Conference*; and

Recognizing further that these and other previous offenses brought upon this name are not serving the glory of Christ our Savior and His Word of Truth to which we have pledged ourselves before God and men (2 Thess. 3:1); and

Being willing rather to suffer earthly loss than to permit such conditions to obstruct the free course of the Gospel of Christ (Phil. 3:7-8);

Therefore, we, the Orthodox Lutherans, who have pledged ourselves to uphold the Savior's full Word of Truth as set forth in our Confessions make the following agreement:

We unanimously continue to abide by our orthodox Lutheran position, having no intention to depart in any respect from the orthodox teaching and practice of God's holy Word, which we have confessed, for the sake of any temporal peace and tranquility. We continue to hold that in the sight of God we are and remain the bonafide orthodox Lutherans. Nevertheless, for the Christian purpose of preventing any striving before the world for temporal advantages, we hereby reorganize ourselves, relinquishing the name of *Orthodox Lutheran Conference*, and taking for ourselves the name CONCORDIA LUTHERAN CONFERENCE.

Unanimously approved by the following congregations:

Christ Lutheran Church, Milwaukee, Wisconsin
E. L. Mehlberg, Pastor

Trinity Lutheran Church, Oskaloosa, Ia.
J. Ernest Shufelt, Pastor

Peace Evangelical Lutheran Church, Tinley Park, Ill.
H. David Mensing, Pastor

St. Stephen Evangelical Lutheran Church, Wilmot, S. D.
O. W. Schaefer, Pastor

Trinity Evangelical Lutheran Church, Clark, S. D.
E. C. Hallstein, Pastor

St. John Orthodox Lutheran Church, Lebanon, Ore.
M. L. Natterer, Pastor

St. Paul Orthodox Lutheran Church, Empire, Ore.
P. R. Bloedel, Pastor

This agreement was published in the new *Concordia Lutheran* in its January, 1957, issue.

Moreover, as a summary of the controversy that precipitated the reorganization of the Conference, and as the Conference's official response to the charges and claims of the Minneapolis faction, the Seventh Annual Convention, assembled in Wilmot, South Dakota, August 23-26, 1957, unanimously passed the following resolution and published it in the September issue of the *Concordia Lutheran*:

Resolution Concerning the Minneapolis Faction

WHEREAS a controversy was begun in January, 1955, by Dr. P. E. Kretzmann, when he taught his theological class that "under the circumstances" he "could preach for" a pastor who was at the time a member of the heterodox Wisconsin Synod and who was not in a true state of confession over against his synod*, which statement was challenged by our brother, Pastor E. C. Hallstein as being a unionistic statement; and

WHEREAS Dr. Kretzmann would not acquiesce in Brother Hallstein's earnest request that he retract the statement; and

WHEREAS Dr. Kretzmann persistently refused to discuss the matter, either with the Committee on Theological Education or in a pastoral conference or in the delegate conference, but chose rather to regard the request that he retract the offensive statement as a personal insult and refused to consider Brother Hallstein as a brother in the faith until he would withdraw his request; and

WHEREAS Dr. Kretzmann permitted himself to give expression to several evil and unbrotherly charges which were untrue in fact against both Brother Hallstein and those of his brethren who could not with good conscience approve the Doctor's unbrotherly and arbitrary attitude in the whole matter, such as this that Brother Hallstein was "by way of becoming a pathological case," and this, that he called a conference in which he took part and whose resolutions he had approved a Latrocinium (robbers' den); and

WHEREAS Dr. Kretzmann refused to discuss the matter also with the President and Vice President of the Conference as representatives of the congregations who had called him, contending that, as President and Professor of the Orthodox Lutheran Seminary, he was answerable only to Holy Trinity Orthodox Lutheran Church of Minneapolis, of which he was a member, for his teaching in the Seminary; and

WHEREAS Dr. Kretzmann arbitrarily set a date (December 31, 1955) beyond which he declared that he would regard no one his brother in the faith who did not "withdraw" his "sinful charges" against him;

THEREFORE BE IT KNOWN BY THESE PRESENTS that we, the members of the Concordia Lutheran Conference, assembled in regular convention at Wilmot, S. Dak., AUGUST 23-26, 1957, deeply regret the unhappy circumstances brought about by the faction which led up to and made necessary the drawing up and publishing of "Our Declaration," adopted at Tinley Park, Ill., January 18-19, 1956, and published in the February, 1956, issue of the Orthodox Lutheran;

That we are, by God's grace, happy to reaffirm our devoted loyalty to the principles of the bonafide Orthodox Lutheran Conference as set forth in that declaration;

That we are prepared, with our consciences bound in the truth and in God's pure Word, to stand before Him on that Day in full loyalty to these principles, wherein we uphold the full Truth of His Word in doctrine and practice; and

WHEREAS the printed account of the factional convention of February 4, 1956, added as a supplement to their version of the 1955 Detroit Lakes regular convention, contains libelous charges which require an answer before God and the world; and

WHEREAS these same libelous proceedings contain statements which describe us as schismatics who disrupted the fellowship, which accusations statements in their own correspondence to us plainly disprove;

THEREFORE BE IT KNOWN BY THESE PRESENTS that we repudiate and denounce as untrue and without foundation in fact the various and sundry charges made by Holy Trinity Orthodox Lutheran Church of Minneapolis, Minn., and adopted in the factional convention assembled in Minneapolis, February 4, 1956, against Pastors E. L. Mehlberg and H. D. Mensing, President and Vice President respectively of the Orthodox Lutheran Conference, in the so-called impeachment proceedings after they, the members of the faction, had by their renunciation of our fellowship ceased to be a part of the bonafide Orthodox Lutheran Conference; and

That we also repudiate and denounce the charge of causing a schism in the Conference made against Pastors E. C. Hallstein, E. L. Mehlberg, H. D. Mensing, J. E. Shufelt, P. R. Bloedel, M. L. Natterer, and O. W. Schaefer and their adherents.

*Although stating that his sympathy was with our cause, this pastor nevertheless refused publicly to acknowledge us as his brethren in the faith and refrained from publicly declaring our position in doctrine and practice to be Scripturally correct. (II Tim. 1:8; II John 8, 9.)

The Seventh Annual Convention also approved the draft of a revised constitution and submitted it to the member congregations and congregations in fellowship for ratification. In its preamble, the Concordia Lutheran Conference made its final reference to the controversy whereby Satan took such a toll of the fellowship and corporate body which only five years earlier had emerged out of the heterodox Lutheran Church–Missouri Synod, formed by those who, by the grace of God and to His glory, dared to stand shoulder to shoulder as the *Orthodox Lutheran Conference*. Section 3 of the Constitution's *Preamble* reads as follows:

3. The formers of the **Concordia Lutheran Conference** were continuously bonafide members and officers of the **Orthodox Lutheran Conference**. Recognizing, however, a break in the fellowship in January, 1956, made by a faction which espoused unionistic and arbitrary principles and then, when corrected, openly declared and/or demonstrated that we were not their brethren in the faith; recognizing also the practical problem that resulted from this break, namely, that the erring group continued to use the name "Orthodox Lutheran Conference;" and recognizing further that these and other offenses brought upon this name were not serving the glory of Christ, our Savior, and His Word of Truth; therefore we, the bonafide orthodox Lutherans, resolved to reorganize ourselves under this present constitution. (Compare: *The Orthodox Lutheran*, February, 1956; *The Concordia Lutheran*, January, 1957.)

In the January, 1957, issue of the *Concordia Lutheran*, its editor, Pastor Paul R. Bloedel, introduced the readers to the new name of our beloved Conference with the following words:

The name CONCORDIA is not a new name but dates back to the time when Jacob Andreae's German edition of the Confessional Writings of the Lutheran Church was published officially in the year 1580 under the name *Book of Concord*, or, *Concordia*. We, therefore, greatly cherish this designation for our Conference because it directs us to the tried and proven confessions of our church, on which, by God's grace, we continue to stand in our endeavors to preserve for us and for our children the teachings and treasures of the True Lutheran Church.

Under this new, yet old and familiar name, may the congregations of our Conference, by God's abundant grace, continue to hold high the banner of God's Word and Luther's doctrine pure for many generations to come in these last and evil days.

As a concluding word to this essay, we note that Dr. P. E. Kretzmann died on July 16, 1965, only three years after the Minneapolis faction officially dissolved its "Orthodox Lutheran Conference" and just a year after the formation of the Lutheran Churches of the Reformation. On behalf of the Concordia Lutheran Conference, and in demonstration of the fact that our men bore no personal ill will toward him because of the controversy he occasioned, the editorial staff of the *Concordia Lutheran* published in its October, 1965, issue an obituary, of which the following is an excerpt:

The Lord has called to his eternal reward another former defender of the faith, in the passing of Dr. P. E. Kretzmann. He died on July 16, 1965. ...

He severed fellowship with the Missouri Synod because it no longer upheld the full truth of God's Word in doctrine and practice, being one of the organizers of the Orthodox Lutheran Conference in 1951 and its first vice president. He served also as professor and president of the Orthodox Lutheran Theological Seminary, 1952-58.

While honoring Dr. Kretzmann as a faithful servant of the Lord for many years, we must express our regret that at the end of 1955, in the very midst of our brotherly dealings with him, particularly our attempts to meet with him in a brotherly manner, he, without showing Scriptural cause therefor, chose no longer to regard us as his brethren in the faith, making this evident in his announcement to us. (Cf. *The Orthodox Lutheran*, February, 1956, printed in Empire, Oregon, p. 18ff., *Our Declaration*). We trust that it was not willfully but rather due to some weakness in his wonderful Christian character

that he took this regrettable, separatistic action.

Among some of his best known and beloved works we mention especially his *Popular Commentary of the Old and New Testaments* in four volumes and the *Concordia Cyclopaedia*, 1927, of which he was co-editor.

“Oh that men would praise the Lord for His goodness, and for His wonderful works to the children of men!” Psalm 107:8.

Unlike the first three installments of this on-going history of our Concordia Lutheran Conference, the present retrospective on this brief, turbulent period required considerably more detail and the citation of primary documentation to demonstrate the nature of the controversy and the proper efforts of our pastors to resolve it in a truly Scriptural manner. The controversy proved to be a test of our orthodoxy in both doctrine and practice; and the way in which our pastors comported themselves in both word and deed bears witness to the fact that they were not “spoiling for a fight,” looking for trouble, touting a subjective agenda, or seeking to establish political power over their brethren. On the contrary, they did, on the basis of Scripture, what ALL the Conference brethren had done with respect to error and errorists in the Missouri Synod—which led to the formation of the O. L. C. in 1951: They exercised *doctrinal discipline* within their fellowship, “endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace” (Ephesians 4:3) by hewing themselves and their brethren to the Scriptures. And they stayed the course with complete consistency in doctrine and practice, not to their personal credit, but to the glory of God’s grace in Christ Jesus. They comported themselves as Christian gentlemen in the spirit of meekness, refrained from verbal cheap shots, and besought their brethren to put personal issues, political posturing, subjective judgments, and ill-tempered rancor aside in favor of truly brotherly discussions and theological onemindedness on the basis of God’s Word alone. Such *doctrinal discipline* is the hallmark of every truly orthodox church and church-body, and it must continue to be exercised with scrupulous consistency among us if we are to survive the onslaughts of Satan in these last and evil days of sore distress (John 8:31-32). To that end we pray with the hymnwriter:

Oh, keep us in Thy Word, we pray;
the guile and rage of Satan stay.
Oh, may Thy mercy never cease;
give concord, patience, courage, peace.

(TLH 292, 4)

SOLI DEO GLORIA!

DOCTRINAL ESSAY

delivered to the

Fifty-second Annual Convention

of the

CONCORDIA LUTHERAN CONFERENCE

by

The Rev. Edward J. Worley, Pastor ● St. Luke's Lutheran Church, Seattle, Washington

*The Great Danger that Worldliness Presents
in Our Congregations and in the Lives of Individual Christians*

Introduction: The Holy Bible Is Our Foundation

We believe, teach and confess that the Holy Bible is our only source and norm for faith and life, sufficient to tell us what we should believe and how we should live. The Bible is clear and able to make us wise unto salvation and to train us in holy living. This essay will apply pertinent proof passages to the problem and danger of worldliness. May God grant to all who hear open ears and hearts by His gracious Spirit through His Word for Jesus' sake, our only Redeemer. Amen.

I. An Explanation: What Is Worldliness?

As one studies the terminology, one realizes that the term "worldliness" has been defined in two ways. The secular dictionary includes both a **positive** and a **negative** meaning. As a positive aspect of character or a quality to be sought after and admired (obviously in the world's own view), worldliness is "the character of being intellectually sophisticated rather than naive and includes a predominant passion for obtaining the good things of life" (*Webster's Unabridged Dictionary*, 1913). Here knowledge of the practices, usages and ways of men is considered to be an accomplishment denoting acquired shrewdness and the casting aside of illusions. As such it is praised by the world with such terms as "street-smart," "citizen of the world," "cosmopolitan," "having *savoir-faire* (F)," etc.. Ian Fleming's fictional spy, James Bond, is considered such a *bon vivant, connoisseur, gourmet*, etc., as "a man of the world" and someone the world would like to emulate, a true "sophisticate."

At once we see how basic meanings of terms reveal value judgments — the world commends itself for being worldly! But those that use self-chosen standards to commend themselves are not wise! (Cf. II Corinthians 10:12).

As "worldliness" is used in the present essay, it falls into the **negative** category: "Covetousness; addictedness to gain and temporal enjoyments; worldly-mindedness" (*Webster's Unabridged Dictionary*, 1913); "devotion to worldly affairs, to the neglect of religious or spiritual needs" (*Oxford Dictionary*, 1955). Here we have a meaning akin to materialism, irreligion, secularism, carnality, etc. Charles Dickens put it this way: "'The world' is a conventional phrase, which being interpreted, signifies all the rascality in it." One recent author, Iain Murray, says:

Worldliness is departing from God. It is a man-centered way of thinking; it proposes objectives which demand no radical breach with man's fallen nature; it judges the importance of things by the present and material results; it weighs success by numbers; it covets human esteem and wants no unpopularity; it knows no truth for which it is worth suffering; it declines to be a "fool for Christ's sake." Worldliness is the mind-set of the unregenerate. It adopts idols and is at war with God. Because "the flesh" still dwells in the Christian, he is far from immune from being influenced by this dynamic. (Excerpted from Murray's *Evangelicalism Divided*).

The term "worldliness" does not occur in Holy Writ, but both "*the world*" in a *negative* sense (I John 2:15) and this present age as being *evil* are clearly delineated. The first term, *kosmos* in

the Greek, is “the present condition of human affairs, in alienation and opposition to God, ... the whole circle of earthly goods, endowments, riches, advantages, pleasures, etc., which although hollow, frail and fleeting, stir desire, seduce from God and are obstacles to the cause of Christ” (Thayer. *A Greek Lexicon of the New Testament*). A variation is *kosmikos* or “worldly,” i.e., having the character of this present corrupt age (cf. Titus 2:12, “*worldly lusts*”). Then there is *aion*, which literally means “an age, a period of time, marked by spiritual or moral characteristics.” Used in a similar way as *kosmos*, it denotes this transitory and corrupt present age in contrast to God and His children. As such, the *aion* has “*cares*” (Mark 4:19), “*children*” (Luke 16:8; 20:34), “*princes*” (I Corinthians 2:6 and 8), “*wisdom*” (I Corinthians 1:20; 2:6; 3:18), “*fashion*” or form (I Corinthians 7:31), character (Galatians 1:4), “*evil*” (John 17:15; Galatians 1:4), and “*god*” (II Corinthians 4:4). In the latter passage particularly we find the clear connection between the world and Satan (cf. also especially Ephesians 6:10 and 12; John 8:44). As Cyprian (ca. 200-258 A. D.) once said:

It is not persecution alone that we ought to fear, nor those forces that in open warfare range abroad to overthrow and defeat the servants of God. It is easy enough to be on one’s guard when the danger is obvious; one can stir up one’s courage for the fight when the Enemy shows himself in his true colors. There is more need to fear and beware of the Enemy when he creeps up secretly, when he beguiles us by a show of peace and steals forward by those hidden approaches which have earned him the name of the “Serpent”...Light had come to the Gentiles and the lamp of salvation was shining for the deliverance of mankind... Thereupon the Enemy, seeing his idols abandoned and his temples and haunts deserted by the ever growing numbers of the faithful, devised a fresh deceit, using the Christian name itself to mislead the unwary. He invented heresies and schisms so as to undermine the faith, to corrupt the truth, to sunder our unity. Those whom he failed to keep in the blindness of their old ways he beguiles and leads them up a new road of illusion. (Quoted from Cyprian of Carthage, Treatise I, “On the Unity of the Church,” from *The Early Church Fathers and Other Works*. Edinburgh, Scotland: Wm. B. Eerdmans Pub. Co., 1867).

As the *father of lies* and spiritual *soul-murderer* (John 8:44), Satan does all he can with “*doctrines of devils*” (I Timothy 4:1) to assault the church-at-large and to turn it into *his* kingdom. Every apostate is in his power. He continues his deceit begun with Eve (II Corinthians 11:3), and we are not to be ignorant of his devices and strategic assaults (II Corinthians 2:11; cf. also 11:14).

The Scriptural use of the term “world” in the context of our topic is an essence far removed from God and ever opposed to God. Spiritually considered, its so-called “standards” and “values” are rejected by genuine believers (cf. *Godly* sorrow vs. *worldly* sorrow, II Corinthians 7:10). The world, as a corrupt entity, is ruled by the devil (John 12:31), is in utter, hostile opposition to God (I John 2:17), and shall pass away (I John 2:17). It “*lieth in wickedness*” (I John 5:19) and hates all those not of the world (John 17:14). As such, Christians overcome the world by faith alone (I John 5:4) through the victory of our Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ (John 16:33). We must beware of the temptations of the world and resist them by Gospel-engendered faith (cf. Galatians 6:14; Romans 12:2). The basic problem is simply this: Every true believer has the world fully represented in his own sinful flesh; the “*carnal mind*” of the Old Adam is the hostile “world” in each of us (Romans 8:7). The world considers Christians “*foolish*” in character, “*weak*” in ability, “*base*” in value, “*despised*” in reputation, and “[*nothings*]” in significance and relevance (I Corinthians 1:27-28). The Lord Jesus, our great High Priest, prayed for us in this regard in His intercession, John chapter 17: “*I have given them Thy Word; and the world hath hated them, because they are not of the world, even as I am not of the world. I pray not that Thou shouldest take them out of the world, but that Thou shouldest keep them from the evil*”

(John 17:14-15).

We, as Christians, are *in*, but not of, the world. The Apostle Paul speaks of this in I Corinthians 5:9-10, saying: “*I wrote unto you in an epistle not to company with fornicators; yet not altogether with the fornicators of this world, or with the covetous, or extortioners, or with idolaters; for then must ye needs go out of the world.*”

Dr. Stoeckhardt points out:

This is, of course, not meant as though Christians must avoid each and every contact with the world, must break off each and every association with the children of the world. There is an association with the world that is permitted. In an earlier letter, St. Paul had briefly written to the Corinthian Christians that they must have nothing to do with fornicators. He had meant this in the way he now explains in I Corinthians 5:11, that, when a person who is called brother is revealed to be a fornicator or a covetous person or an idolater or a blasphemer or a drunkard or extortioner, Christians must no longer have anything to do with such a person; they must break off brotherly association and contact with such a person. The Corinthians, however, had understood the apostle to say that they were generally to have nothing [at all] to do with fornicators, the covetous, extortioners, idolaters in this world, with the godless, unbelieving men of this world. This is not what Paul had meant. For were that a Christian duty, Christians would have to vacate the world. A certain contact with the godless, unbelieving world is unavoidable if Christians are to live in this world. And in such altogether necessary things, in earthly, worldly things, which belong to existence and life on earth, to converse with the children of the world, to do business with them, to have contact with them...God’s Word has approved or freely granted. ...The prohibition covers sharing in their evil: Ephesians 5:11 – “Have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them.” (George Stoeckhardt, *Exegetical Lectures on the First Epistle of Paul to the Corinthians*. Fairmont, MN: H. W. Degner, 1969, pp. 31-32.)

Pertinent Proof Passages: Romans 12:2, I John 2:15-17 —

The theme passage for this 52nd Annual Convention of our Concordia Lutheran Conference is Romans 12:2— “*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.*” Kenneth Wuest offers this expanded translation: “*And stop assuming an outward expression that does not come from within you and is not representative of what you are in your inner being but is patterned after this age; but change your outward expression to one that comes from within and is representative of your inner being, by the renewing of your mind, resulting in your putting to the test what is the will of God, the good and well-pleasing and complete will, and having found that it meets specifications, place your approval upon it*” (Kenneth Wuest, *Word Studies in the Greek New Testament*, Vol. I, “Romans in the Greek New Testament.” Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1973, p. 209). As he notes:

Christians must not change their outward expression from that of a true expression of their inmost natures, to an assumed expression not true of their new regenerated inmost being, that assumed expression patterned after the world. He exhorts them instead to be transformed, and here we have the same Greek word which is used in the Matthew passage (Cf. Matthew 17:2) and translated “transfigured.” Saints are to change their outward expression from that which was true of them before salvation, when they gave expression to what was in their indwelling sinful nature, to an expression of their inmost regenerated being. Thus Paul exhorts the saints not to assume as an outward expression the fashions, habits, speech expressions, and artificiality of this evil age, thus hiding that expression of themselves which should come from what they are intrinsically as children of God. How saints sometimes like to have just a dash of the world

about them so as not to appear too unworldly! How a coat of worldliness can cover up the Christ within! But instead, saints are to be transformed, that is, give expression of what they really are. (Wuest, *op. cit.* Vol IV, 1966 Ed., “Golden Nuggets,” p. 27.)

The word “world” here is *aion*. Trench states this refers to “an age, that is, a period of time characterized by a certain type of life or economy of government or other social regulating agency.” In the passages just mentioned it refers to “all that floating mass of thoughts, opinions, maxims, speculations, hopes, impulses, aims, aspirations, at any time current in the world, which it may be impossible to seize and accurately define, but which constitute a most real and effective power, being the moral or immoral atmosphere which at every moment of our lives we inhale, again inevitably to exhale, the subtle informing spirit of the world of men who are living alienated and apart from God” (Trench, *Synonyms of the New Testament*). It is the “age,” the “spirit of genius of the age.” This is the present age in which we are living.

Dr. Luther says that conformists to the world are “those who rely only on their own feelings and experience rather than the will of God, the self-willed, those wise in their own conceits, who trust in their own counsels and strength” (*Luther’s Works*, American Ed., Vol. 25, p. 428). We are not to run to the same excess of riot as we did prior to our conversion (I Peter 4:4) but put off the old man with the deceitful lusts (Ephesians 4:22ff.). Only the Gospel can empower us to do so (“*the mercies of God*” in Christ Jesus, Romans 12:1). Compare also Romans 11:26-27 — “...when I shall take away their sins” [by] “*the Deliverer*” (cf. Romans 6:4, 8:5-6, 14).

In I John 2:15-17 we read: “*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. 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; but he that doeth the will of God abideth forever.*” This triple proof passage gives us three specific internal, heart-based worldly attitudes that comprise “*all that is in the world*” and define what God means when He forbids us to “*love the world*” or “*the things that are in the world.*” Note well: A Christian cannot love the Father and love the world. It is an either/or situation (cf. “*Ye cannot serve God and mammon,*” Matthew 6:24).

First we have “*the lust of the flesh.*” The depraved nature, the Old Adam, the carnal mind, places its spirit upon all that God forbids, so that a constant craving, longing and desire impels world-lovers to seek to gratify and satisfy this passion. The problem with this attempt is obvious: Since the flesh never changes, the desire is never met; so the Old Adam is on a continuous quest for a sensual fulfillment without ever reaching the goal. The lust is a monster never satiated, whose appetite only increases the more it is fed! Trench remarks on the Greek word translated “*lust*” (*epithumia*) that this word includes “the whole world of active lusts and desires, all to which the flesh, as the seat of desire and of natural appetites impels” (*Synonyms*, p. 324). Examples of the use of this term are as follows: Mark 4:19 – “*the lusts of other things entering in, choke the Word;*” I Corinthians 10:6 – “[We] should not lust after evil things” (as did Israel of old in idolatry, etc.); John 8:44 – “*The lusts of your father [Satan] ye will do;*” James 4:2 – “*Ye lust, and have not;*” etc. Although these lusts are called “*worldly*” (Titus 2:12) and the cause of the corruption that is in the world (II Peter 1:4), Scripture tells us that the source is also every man’s own sinful flesh (James 1:14-15). The range of lusts is extensive (“*all manner of concupiscence,*” Romans 7:7; “*led away with divers lusts,*” II Timothy 3:6). Some objects of lust include *people* (“*lust after her,*” Matthew 5:28; “*the lusts of their own hearts,*” the “*vile affections*” of homosexuals and lesbians, Romans 1:24, cf. v. 26ff.); *money* (Acts 20:33; cf. I Timothy 6:9); and *false teachers* (“*after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears,*” II Timothy 4:3). The flesh considers lust so natural that, as the

Apostle Paul states, only “*the law*” reveals its sinful character (Romans 7:7-8). Lust is deceitful (Ephesians 4:22), as it flows out of the ultimate deceitful source, the depraved heart, of which Jeremiah, the prophet, declares: “*The heart is deceitful above all things and desperately wicked; who can know it?*” (Jeremiah 17:9, cf. Genesis 6:5). Although this word is also used for legitimate desire (e.g. of the hungry Lazarus, Luke 16:21; of the prodigal son, Luke 15:16; of Jesus’ desire to eat the Passover, Luke 22:15; of the angels’ desire to examine the Gospel revelation, I Peter 1:12; of the desire for the pastoral office, I Timothy 3:1); it is *usually* used of that which is “*against the Spirit*” (Galatians 5:17), “*evil*” (Colossians 3:5), “*ungodly*” (Jude 18), “*foolish and hurtful*” (I Timothy 6:9), and of all those not converted (I Peter 4:2, Colossians 5:16), who are all under Satan’s power (John 8:44, Ephesians 2:3). Lust marked the days or generation just prior to the Flood (Jude 16 and 18) and shall mark the last generation as well (cf. Luke 17:26-27; II Timothy 4:3; cf. also v.1).

The second phrase in I John 2:15-17 is “*the lust of the eyes,*” which connects the same word “*lust*” (*epithumia*) with the physical gift of vision or an ophthalmic source “and includes the lust that reaches out beyond what a person can actually get hold of in his sinning, the lustful eyes rove afar for sinful pleasures” (R. C. H. Lenski. *New Testament Commentary*, Interpretation of First John, p. 426). Immediately we think of David beholding Bathsheba washing herself (II Samuel 11:2), connecting Matthew 5:28 and II Peter 2:14, “*having eyes full of adultery.*” (See also Potiphar’s wife, Genesis 39:7). But any visual cue can arouse lust. Note how seeing was connected with the very first sin (Genesis 3:6 – “*saw,*” “*pleasant to the eyes*”) when Eve permitted what she saw to influence what she “*desired*” at the prompting of Satan. Because the eyes, since the fall of man, are connected to the carnal mind and depraved heart, they are often used in the service of sin (Romans 6:12-21). The objects of lust to the eyes thus are not restricted to the *sexual*, but include anything in the world. Compare Satan’s visual, panoramic temptation as he “*showeth [Jesus] all the kingdoms of the world and the glory of them*” (Matthew 4:8) “*in a moment of time*” (Luke 4:5). Money, also in the form of precious metals and rich clothing, are just two examples of other things to which “*the lusts of the eyes*” are connected (cf. Achan in Joshua 7:20-22 and Gehazi in II Kings 5:20-24).

Finally, we have the third phrase, “*the pride of life,*” “that haughty, puffed-up arrogance, that braggart show and vain glory, which causes men to make a show of the things of this life. It makes men wish to be great in the sight of others, excel in luxuries, look down on the less fortunate. Others are eaten up with envy as they behold the prosperous. Men forget that everything comes from God” (*Concordia Theological Monthly*, 1937, p. 123). Louis Wessel in his *Proof Texts of the Catechism*, p. 42, describes “*the pride of life*” in these words: “It is the lust of shining and making a boastful display of one’s possessions, the effort to outshine our neighbors in our mode of life.”

Dr. John H. C. Fritz writes:

Of such vain-glorious display in one’s style of living the rich man is an example; he “*was clothed in purple and fine linen and fared sumptuously every day*” (Luke 16:19). Likewise the daughters of Zion, of whom Isaiah says that they are “*haughty and walk with stretched-forth necks and wanton eyes, walking and mincing as they go and making a tinkling with their feet.*” He furthermore describes their dress and “*make-up*” in the following words: “*In that day the Lord will take away the bravery of their tinkling ornaments about their feet, and their cauls, and their round tires like the moon, the chains, and the bracelets, and the mufflers, the bonnets, and the ornaments of the legs, and the headbands, and the tablets, and the earrings, the rings, and nose jewels, the changeable suits of apparel, and the mantles, and the wimples, and the crisping pins, the glasses, and the fine linen, and the hoods, and the veils,*” Isaiah 3:18-23. Sounds very modern! The Bible warns against the danger of riches. Even Christians may have

and enjoy them. “*Abraham was very rich in cattle, in silver, and in gold,*” Genesis 13:2. Yet Abraham “*was strong in faith*” and is presented as an example to believers. God Himself gave to Solomon “*riches and honor,*” I Kings 3:13. But riches and honor became a snare unto him. His very luxurious way of living, his “*pride of life,*” which imposed a burden on his overtaxed people, contributed to his downfall. And it has proved to be the downfall of many; not only the wealthy at that. Pomp and show and putting on airs appeals to the sinful flesh. Much money is spent in that direction, frequently even by such as can ill afford it. (John H. C. Fritz, *The Preacher’s Manual*. St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1941, p. 316.)

It is this that makes boasters (Romans 1:30, II Timothy 3:2): “*But now ye rejoice in your boastings [i.e., of future plans, independent of God’s will and control]; all such rejoicing is evil*” (James 1:16). The examples of this attitude are myriad in Holy Writ: The children of men and the tower (Genesis 11:4ff); the people of Sodom (cf. Genesis 19 with Isaiah 3:90); Goliath (I Samuel 17:10, 44); etc. Show-offs and braggarts, those who live to impress, whose life is one of “conspicuous ostentation,” who seek to outdo each other constantly, “these are the most glaring culprits ruled by the pride of life.” Power, prestige and popularity are the unholy triad in the pride of life, that “hollow arrogance which presumes that it can decide and direct the course of life without God, determine what it will do, gain, achieve, enjoy” (Lenski, *op. cit.*, p. 426).

As one author explains:

The pride of life is self-satisfaction in who we are, what we have, and what we have done. It reveals itself in reading magazines about people who live hedonistic lives and spend too much money on themselves and wanting to be like them. But more importantly, worldliness is simply pride and selfishness in disguises. It’s being resentful when someone snubs us or patronizes us or shows off. It means smarting under every slight, challenging every word spoken against us, cringing when another is preferred before us. Worldliness is harboring grudges, nursing grievances, and wallowing in self-pity. These are the ways in which we are most like the world. (Dave Roper, *The Strength of a Man*, quoted in Steve Farrar, *Family Survival in the American Jungle*. Multnomah Press, 1991, p. 68.)

To sum up, we offer Wuest’s expanded translation of I John 2:15-17: “*Stop considering the world precious with the result that you love it, and the things in the world. If anyone as a habit of life is considering the world precious and is therefore loving it, there does not exist the Father’s love [i.e., the love possessed by the Father] in him. Because everything which is in the world, the passionate desire of the flesh [the totally depraved nature], and the passionate desire of the eyes, and the insolent and empty assurance which trusts in the things that serve the creature life, is not from the Father as a source but is from the world as a source. And the world is being caused to pass away, and its passionate desire. But the one who keeps on habitually doing the will of God abides forever*” (Wuest, *op. cit.*, Vol. II, “In These Last Days” — The Exegesis of I John, p. 128). All those who live for all that is in the world, loving the craving for sensual gratification, the greedy longings of the mind, the assurance in one’s own resources or in the stability of earthly things (KJV *Amplified Bible*) will be damned in their unbelief. As James clearly declares: “*Ye adulterers and adulteresses, know ye not that the friendship of the world is enmity with God? Whosoever therefore will be a friend of the world is the enemy of God*” (James 4:4).

The key term here is *love*. Love of God excludes love of the world; to be a friend of God makes you the world’s enemy. As one author puts it: “Buying, possessing, accumulating, this is not worldliness. But doing this in the love of it, with no love of God paramount — doing it so that thoughts of God and eternity are an intrusion, doing it so that one’s spirit is secularized in doing

it — this is worldliness” (Nerrick Johnson, selected). The connection is clear and decisive: “What I love, to that my soul clings. What I love is what I live, what I delight in; and this becomes part of my unconscious life, of my meditation, my dreaming. What I love becomes more and more part of my very self. He who loves the world becomes worldly, a man filled with the world” (Melancthon’s friend Dryander, quoted in Josiah Hotchkiss Gilbert, *Dictionary of Burning Words of Brilliant Writers*. New York: Wilbur B. Ketcham Publisher, 1895, p. 622.)

How this manifests itself is shown in the lists of the works of the flesh (Galatians 5:19-21) and the vivid descriptions of the life of the unconverted (Ephesians 2:2-3; 4:17-19; 5:3-5; I Corinthians 7:9-10; I Peter 4:2-4; etc.). Of special note is the description of the last days in II Timothy 3:1-8:

This know also, that in the last days perilous times shall come. For men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, without natural affection, truce-breakers, false accusers, incontinent, fierce, despisers of those that are good, traitors, heady, high-minded, lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God; having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof; from such turn away. For of this sort are they which creep into houses, and lead captive silly women laden with sins, led away with divers lusts, ever learning, and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth. Now as Jannes and Jambres withstood Moses, so do these also resist the truth: men of corrupt minds, reprobate concerning the faith.

Dr. John H. C. Fritz speaks of the worldliness of his day (the 1940’s) this way:

While this tendency and temptation toward worldliness is a danger which Christians at all times must face because of their sinful flesh, the evil world in which they live, and the attempts of Satan to ensnare them, yet at certain times this danger is more pronounced and greater than at other times. It is even so today. Money is more plentiful than it was forty or fifty years ago, even many of our Christians have become wealthy; they have entered the business world and have been financially successful; their circle of acquaintances takes in a much larger number of the people of the world and of a doubtful religious character; their social circle is not as limited as it was; they also more frequently inter-marry; worldly amusements have much increased and have been made conveniently accessible to the masses; salacious literature is openly displayed; the relation between the sexes is much less restricted; the moral standard has been much lowered, not only among the people of this world but also among many calling themselves Christians; what formerly horrified is now condoned or even defended; marriage is considered less sacred; youth seeks to throw off the shackles of parental and other authority; law-breaking has become less of an offense; many of the higher schools are teaching things subversive of the Christian religion; the magazines (even the better ones) carry articles that break down Christian morality; many churches have yielded to modernistic teachings; even conservative churches are not much inclined to resort to disciplinary proceedings against their members; and to this we must add the present unsettled conditions in the world and the war situation, all of which does not make for better morality and the improvement of mankind. All this much increases the danger of worldliness (and its effect on the Church). (Fritz, *op. cit.*, pp. 310-311).

We shall add some comments about present conditions in our day in the last section of this essay.

II. A Survey of Bible Examples: The Effect of Worldliness in Individual Lives

The scope of this essay does not allow an intensive study of these tragic examples: Lot’s wife (Genesis 19:26; Luke 17:32-33); Judas Iscariot (John 12:6; Acts 1:16-20); Demas (II Timothy 4:10 – “*having loved this present world,*” literally, “the now age” – *ton nun aiona*); nor of the many who loved the uppermost seats (Luke 11:43), the praise of men (John 12:43), the wages

of unrighteousness (II Peter 2:15), and the darkness of this world (John 3:19) at the cost of their immortal souls. Both the fall of David and of Peter are examples of a temporary triumph of worldliness due to presumption and conceit, lust and fear.

We will look at a chronic problem of worldliness among the Lord's twelve Apostles: Greediness for honor. The disciples had been arguing among themselves who deserved to be considered the greatest. The Lord intervened with a direct question which they were too ashamed to answer out loud (Mark 9:33ff.). The Lord dealt with the problem with a spiritual axiom: "*If any man desire to be first, the same shall be last of all, and the servant of all*" (Mark 9:35). He also used a child as an object lesson (cf. Mark 9:36 with Luke 9:46-48). This was a heart problem which brought forth "*a reasoning among them,*" that is, a disputation, contention, argument (Greek: *dialogismon*). As John Ylvisaker explains:

Such is human nature when it has its way. But they did not believe that Jesus would approve of this dissension. So they found it advisable to remain silent like naughty children. Jesus then takes a little child and places it in their midst, showing them in a speech which He connects with this act that He needs no answer. He knows it all in advance... Jesus would inform the disciples that in the Kingdom of God there is no such distinction as we find in civic and worldly affairs. Their altercation was the result of pride, love of glory, and ignorance of the spiritual nature of the Kingdom of God. Here repentance is necessary. They must return to the gentle submissiveness of the child, the truly childlike mind. The point of comparison is not innocence, but ingenuousness, the absence of arrogance, simplicity, humility. These are distinguishing traits of the child, even though the perverse spirit is early manifest. The smaller we grow in our own estimation, the greater do we become in the sight of God. True greatness before God consists in that humility of spirit which excludes every vestige of selfishness and pride." (John Ylvisaker, *The Gospels: A Synoptic Presentation of the Text in Matthew, Mark, Luke and John with EXPLANATORY NOTES*. Minneapolis: Augsburg Publishing House, 1932, p. 421).

As Dr. Luther says: "The man whom He would bring to honor, to salvation, to lordship, high and great, He completely puts to shame; He condemns him, turns him into a servant, lowly and small. Here the passage applies: '*The first the last, and the last the first*' (Matthew 19:30). Let him who would be great, be small (Luke 22:26); let him who would be before, follow after" (Ewald M. Plass. *What Luther Says*, Vol. III, p. 1264, #4029). The sinful hearts of the twelve were fixated on the being "*great*" (Greek: *me-gas*), because each sought to be "*greater*" than another and ultimately "*greatest*" of all. They wanted God to be "*a respecter of persons,*" believing themselves to be "*somewhat*" ["something special"] in comparison to each other (cf. Galatians 2:6ff.; 6:3; II Corinthians 10:12; 5:12; Romans 3:9a). Peter later expressed a similar idea of superiority over the rest (Matthew 26:33ff). But this attitude was not unique to Peter (Matthew 26:35, cf. with Luke 22:24). A similar problem is mentioned in III John 9-10, where there was a certain man named Diotrephes, "*who loveth to have preeminence among them.*" Jesus warned against this attitude with these words directed against the Jews that sought to kill Him: "*How can ye believe, which receive honor one of another, and seek not the honor that cometh from God only?*" (John 5:44). God resists the proud; God would have us all clothed with humility (I Peter 5:5-6). Any good we do should be attributed to God's all-sufficient grace (cf. I Corinthians 15:9-10; II Corinthians 3:4-5). Our glory and boast must be entirely in God for Jesus' sake (I Corinthians 1:29-31). Our gifts are the result of God's will and gracious bestowal (Romans 12:6), the work of His grace and Spirit within us (Philippians 2:13; I Corinthians 12:4-7) for the mutual edification of all (I Corinthians 14:26; I Corinthians 13:4-7). As Paul declares "*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*" (Philippians 2:3-4). Everything that we do for Christ is done by the strength that Christ Himself supplies (Philippians 4:13). How then can we take the glory

away from our Savior?

The Apostles show us how insidious the worldly lusts of our deceitful flesh are and how pervasive. They arise from within our own depraved hearts! The world does not so much invade the Church and our personal lives as it operates continuously through our sinful flesh and must be constantly opposed, lest it gain dominion: “*Let not sin reign in your mortal body, that ye should obey it in the lusts thereof, neither yield....*” (Romans 6:12ff.). Grace through the Gospel of Christ gives us the victory: “*For sin shall not have dominion over you; for ye are not under the Law but under grace*” (Romans 6:14). Note that this is a statement of fact, not a command. John declares: “*For whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world; and this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith. Who is he that overcometh the world, but he that believeth that Jesus is the Son of God?*” (I John 5:4-5).

Only the Gospel can empower us to this day-to-day victory over our flesh, to obedience and sanctification, following the exhortation of the Apostle: “*And that, knowing the time, that now it is high time to awake out of sleep; for now is our salvation nearer than when we believed. The night is far spent, the day is at hand; let us therefore cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armor of light. Let us walk honestly, as in the day, not in rioting and drunkenness, not in chambering and wantonness, not in strife and envying. But put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make not provision for the flesh to fulfil the lusts thereof*” (Romans 13:11-14).

Dr. Luther warns in his *Large Catechism*: “Great and grievous, indeed, are these dangers and temptations which every Christian must bear, even though each one were alone by himself, so that every hour that we are in this vile life where we are attacked on all sides, chased and hunted down, we are moved to cry out and to pray that God would not suffer us to become weary and faint and to relapse into sin, shame, and unbelief” (*Large Catechism, Triglot*, p. 727, §105).

The general influence of the world is to lead away from God’s Word into outright unbelief, to make the true believer become entirely “*flesh*” (Cf. Genesis 6:3ff.). An article in *The Abiding Word* points out:

The world is the sum total of human minds unstirred by the Spirit of God. Hence its companionship, its speech and amusements and business and culture and philosophy tend to move the Christian into pursuits and channels which weaken the hold on God; they tend to make God unimportant (I Corinthians 1:33; 2:11ff.). The objectives of natural human life are not for God, but always for man (James 4:4). Making money, competing for existence, enjoying the sensual stimuli of food and drink and sex and success and approval are activities common to the unregenerate life of the Christian also [i.e., “*the carnal mind*,” (Romans 8:7; 7:14ff.) – E.J.W.] and hence potent devices for destroying the will to live for God (Luke 21:34; I Corinthians 7:33). Our own civilization is particularly subject to the temptations of this sort. It stresses material wealth as a standard of happiness and worth, and physical enjoyment as an objective for wealth. It is thus a vast conspiracy for belittling the power of God and the life for God, a shouting down of the Savior’s reminder, “*What is a man profited if he shall gain the whole world and lose his own soul?*” (Matthew 16:26). Furthermore, many Christians fall out of the ranks and, like Demas, forsake the company of the faithful, “*having loved this present world*” (II Timothy 4:10). Many Christians retain connection with the Church, but actually are driven by the motives of fleshly lust as are the men of the world. This causes confusion and becomes a temptation to evil for those who are unwary. The Epistle of James is the great document in Scripture on the world in the Church. It attacks the spectacle of men in the visible Church with respect of persons (2:1ff.), evil speech (3:2ff.), envy and strife (3:14ff.), accumulation of property by fleshly means (4:13ff). All of that, James would say, is a confusion of the very foundation of the Christian faith and religion, a temptation to evil which is an erring from the truth (1:20 ff., 27). (*The Abiding Word*, Vol.

II, p. 171ff.).

Dr. Luther explains the problem and the solution this way:

If a person could with firm and constant faith hold to this, and comprehend the magnitude of this gift, that he is a child and heir of God, he would regard all that there is of power and treasures in all nations in the world as filth and dung in comparison with his heavenly inheritance. He would turn with disgust from all that the world considers high and glorious; the greater the glory and pomp of the world is, the more he would hate it; in short, all that the world most admires and praises to the sky would be ugly and worthless in his sight. For what is the whole world with its power, riches, and glory compared with God, whose heir and child he is? ...But the law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, will not permit faith to become perfect. (*Luther's Works*, St. Louis Ed., IX, p. 516.)

Obviously, then, everything that strengthens and renews faith will help toward our day-to-day battle and victory over worldliness. We are given the Word of God which effectually works to renew our faith (I Thessalonians 2:13; Romans 10:17); for the Gospel “*is the power of God unto salvation*” (Romans 1:16).

III. Self-Examination: “What is the World to Me?” (*The Lutheran Hymnal*, 430, 1)

In Dr. Luther’s *Christian Questions With Their Answers*, he admonishes us how to become sensible of spiritual trouble in specific reference to the world: “Secondly, that he look around to see whether he is still in the world, and keep in mind that there will be no lack of sin and trouble, as the Scriptures say in John 15 and 16; I John 2 and 5.” In this serious matter, we are soberly to examine ourselves from the inside out. Our standard is God’s holy Law. Unlike the Pharisees and the sectarians of every stripe, we do not make elaborate lists of man-made laws and commandments and practice a hypocritical externalism, thanking God that we are better than others. Nor do we fall into the morass of subjectivism with the philosophy, “I know worldliness when I see it (especially in everybody else!)” We must, as individuals, fully accept moral responsibility for our worldliness, as Dr. Luther notes:

Since you are evil, you are made worse through the use of good things, depraved (further) by their affluence; the entire fault lies with your lust and your depraved will and reason. Example: A woman is beautiful. Very well, this is a gift of the Lord and Creator. But I am inflamed with desire. Does this make beauty an evil thing? Not at all! It is you who are evil because you are unable to make good use of a good thing. Thus the good things which are called useful and delightful convict us of the corruption of our nature, because neither the will nor the intellect is right; otherwise we would make good use of good things. (*Luther's Works*, American Ed., Vol. II, p.347).

Can you use without abusing? That is the key! Sad to say, our flesh cannot use without abusing (Romans 7:15-20); and this is why Christians must battle continuously against their own flesh.

God gives us warning examples “*to the intent we should not lust after evil things*” (I Corinthians 10:6ff.) and that we remain humbly dependent on His grace in every temptation (I Corinthians 10:12-14).

In applying God’s Law to ourselves, we may ask such serious questions as:

“Do I consider God’s Word and worship the prevailing priority in my life, so that all other considerations are over-ruled by *the one thing needful*?” (Luke 10:41-42, Matthew 6:33).

“Do I actively listen when God’s Word is taught, and do I apply it to myself no matter how uncomfortable it makes me feel?” (I Timothy 6:3ff.).

“Do I obey what God says, even when others around me think and do otherwise; or do I go with the prevailing attitudes and actions of my ‘peers’?” (I Peter 4:1-5).

“Do I speak up when an opportunity arises earnestly to contend for the faith, and do I give answer to those who ask?” (Jude 3, I Peter 3:15).

“Do I waste precious time on selfish and material pleasures at the expense of my church, my family, and my soul?” (Ephesians 5:16-17).

“Do I view my identity and personal worth according to how I feel, where I live, what I drive or wear, my material net-worth, or the opinions of others?” (Luke 12:15; Matthew 6:21).

“Do I justify myself when I am confronted with reproof? Do I offer excuses, minimize and shift blame?” (Luke 16:13-15; Luke 18:9ff).

“Do I fear to discipline my children because of the effort involved and the potential negative reaction they might express, not wanting them to ‘feel bad’ and to take it out on me?” (Ephesians 6:1-4).

“Do I allow my children to do things that they want to do against my better judgment, so that they won’t feel ‘left out’ or face rejection by their peers?” (Colossians 3:21).

“Do I own up to wrong decisions regarding the things of this world; or do I refuse to condemn myself, lest I be proven wrong or embarrassed?” (Proverbs 3:7; Proverbs 8:13).

“Do I search the Bible for answers, pray for enlightenment from God’s precious Word, and turn to my pastor for wise Scriptural counsel; or do I boldly follow my “gut hunches” and go in the way that I think or feel is ‘right’?” (Proverbs 2:10-14; Psalm 119:105, 130; II Timothy 3:15-17).

“Do Matthew 5:16, II Peter 3:14, II Corinthians 6:17-18 and I Thessalonians 5:21 find concrete application in my life?”

These are just *examples* of the kind of heart-searching questions one must answer to deal with that internal “worldling” called the “sinful flesh” according to the second use of the Law, namely, to **reveal its sin**. Then God-wrought contrition and Gospel-engendered faith must follow unto the renewal of the convicted sinner’s mind. The Apostle exhorts us: “*Examine yourselves whether ye be in the faith; prove your own selves*” (II Corinthians 13:5). Test and evaluate **your** heart and **your** life, and look for evidence of true repentance and faith in their “fruits” (Matthew 3:8). Do **you**, as a Christian, “*prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God*” by “*faith which worketh by love*” (Romans 12:2; Galatians 5:6)?

IV. Areas of Ingress for the World in the Personal Lives of Christians

We live in the so-called “information age” in which the world is literally “at our door” and “through our door.” The audio-visual media via television and computers can put everything that the world is about before our eyes and ears. Moreover, the print media is also more available than it ever has been in the history of the world. This translates into the world’s influence on our

thoughts, that is, upon our minds and hearts, like never before — *if we allow it*.

The *prodigal son* today can engage in “*riotous living*” and do virtually everything from his computer desk that the one in the Bible did by taking his journey. Think of the ramifications! Do you *allow* indiscriminate worldly influences into your home by not supervising your children when they are online or watching television? What about books, magazines, DVD’s, video games, etc? Is the telephone another unsupervised area for your children? What about instant messaging, e-mail and chat rooms?

Besides all this worldly influence coming into homes *electronically*, what about the *places* in the world which your children frequent? Do you know where they are, with whom they associate, and what they are doing? Are you a “hands-on,” responsible parent? Do you set an example for your children in how *you* speak and act, and in what types of “entertainment” *you* enjoy?

The following list is a real-world example of the inroads of worldliness over a ten year period in a Lutheran congregation. Are any of these worldly influences present in *your* life? Each one led to someone’s *leaving* an orthodox Christian congregation! Examine yourself accordingly!

• ***Family Loyalty/Influence*** —

—Following the wicked example and leading of a dominant family member in order to keep peace in the family.

Problem: Failure to recognize the importance of orthodoxy and the cost of true discipleship (cross-bearing) as a Christian’s duty and privilege; false priority set on earthly peace rather than on a clear conscience.

Application of Scripture: Acts 2:42; Matthew 10:32-38; Mark 3:33-35; Luke 9:59-62; Matthew 6:33; Luke 10:41-42.

• ***Influence of a False Teacher*** —

—Allowing oneself to be influenced by the heterodox, or actively seeking them out as an excuse to forsake orthodoxy and to leave an orthodox fellowship.

Problem: Failure to value true orthodoxy on the basis of God’s Word and to recognize the dangers of false teachers; placing a self-serving priority on finding doctrine that pleases the flesh.

Application of Scripture: Acts 2:42; Matthew 28:20; Romans 16:17; Matthew 7:15ff.; I John 4:1; Acts 20:29; Galatians 5:7-9; I Timothy 4:1; II Timothy 3:2a; 4:3-4.

• ***Neglect of the Means of Grace*** —

—Failing to attend worship and opportunities for Bible study with regularity and thus despising the Means of Grace due to various factors flowing from the flesh (laziness, pride, impenitence, worldliness, etc.).

Problem: Sins against the *Third Commandment* occasioned by the flesh, worldliness, etc.

Application of Scripture: Hebrews 10:25; Acts 2:42; John 8:47; Luke 10:16; Ecclesiastes 5:1; Luke 11:28; Hebrews 13:17.

• ***Marriage to a Non-Member*** (See also *Family Loyalty/Influence* above.) —

—Marrying one who is not of the same faith and allowing the heterodox spouse to influence the member-spouse and the children, or using the non-member spouse and his (her) pressure on the

family as an excuse for neglecting the Means of Grace.

Problem: Seeking to please one's spouse, particularly an ungodly spouse, rather than God, and yielding oneself and one's children to his (her) influence in order to keep "peace" in the family is a sin against the *First Commandment* [Fine Idolatry] and against the *Third Commandment*.

Application of Scripture: (See passages included under *Family Loyalty/Influence* and *Neglect of the Means of Grace*.)

• **Offense Taken** —

—Taking offense where none has been given —due to uncharitable judging, preconceived notions, etc.

Problem: Fleshly pride and selfishness results in unjust fault-finding; and the resulting "offense," laid at the door of an innocent brother or sister, is used as an excuse to leave the fellowship.

Application of Scripture: Matthew 7:3-5; 18:15-17; Galatians 6:1-2; Luke 6:37; Zechariah 8:17; I Corinthians 13:7; Ephesians 4:31ff.

• **Gross Outward Sins** —

—Engaging in fornication that lead to divorce or excommunication.

Problem: Sins against the *Sixth Commandment* and subsequent impenitence due to selfishness and pride divide both families and the fellowship.

Application of Scripture: I Corinthians 6:18ff.; Proverbs 1:10; Genesis 39:9; Psalm 51:10; Proverbs 28:13; I John 1:8-9.

V. Conclusion

In order to overcome the world and its evil influences in our lives, we are to:

1. *Make use of God's Word:* Ephesians 6:10ff; I Peter 5:8-9; Matthew 4:4, 7, 10.
2. *Confide in God's forgiveness for Jesus' sake,* also as the motivation to live unto our Savior: II Corinthians 5:15-17; Galatians 5:25; Ephesians 4:32.
3. *Crucify our sinful flesh with the affections and lusts:* Galatians 5:24; Colossians 3:5; I Corinthians 9:27.
4. *Avoid subjecting ourselves to temptation:* Romans 13:14; I Corinthians 6:18; II Timothy 2:2.
5. *Pray fervently for God's help:* Matthew 6:13; 26:41; Luke 22:40.
6. *Rely upon God promises to help us:* Isaiah 40:29; I Corinthians 10:13; II Thessalonians 3:3; John 15:7.

One life-line binds us to God: The Gospel of Jesus Christ, which is to this day "*the power of God unto salvation to everyone that believeth*" (Romans 1:16). May we cultivate our use of God's Word and Sacrament, not as dreary and haphazard tokens of church membership, but as carriers for the current of the Spirit of God. May we apply them to ourselves in the precious habit of prayer and joyous fellowship of worship. May we bind ourselves in our earthly pilgrimage to Christ Jesus, "*the Author and Finisher of our faith*" (Hebrews 12:2) and "*the Captain of [our] salvation*" (Hebrews 2:10). For He has prayed for us, too, that our faith fail not; He has said:

“In the world ye shall have tribulation; but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world” (John 16:33). (From *The Abiding Word*, Vol. II, page 199.)

Soli Deo Gloria

MINUTES OF THE 52nd ANNUAL CONVENTION
of the
CONCORDIA LUTHERAN CONFERENCE

June 27, 28, and 29, 2003

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FRIDAY, JUNE 27

FRIDAY MORNING — The Opening Service of Convocation

The 52nd Annual Convention, held at Peace Ev. Lutheran Church, Oak Forest, Illinois, officially began at 9:30 a.m. with a Divine Worship Service of Convocation in which the local pastor, the Rev. David T. Mensing, served as liturgist, and the Rev. E. R. Stallings of Windcrest, Texas, as President of the Conference, delivered the keynote sermon. He chose as his text Philippians 3:4-11, taking as his theme St. Paul’s implied twofold question: *“What Is Gain, and What Is Loss?”* He divided his message into three parts, namely, **I.** What the Apostle Paul used to count as gain but later counted as loss in view of Christ, **II.** How anything we might consider to be gain is really a loss if it replaces the righteousness of Christ, and **III.** How gaining Christ is all gain indeed and no loss.

THE MORNING SESSION

Immediately following the service, the first session of the convention was called to order by the President at 11:25 a.m. according to the customary usages. Hymn 231 was sung, followed by a prayer, by the responsive reading of Psalm 45, and by the usual opening exhortation.

APPOINTED CONVENTION COMMITTEES:

According to the convention **PROSPECTUS**, the following committees were appointed by the President for the carrying out of convention business:

A. Auditing Committee: Pastor David G. Redlin, Chairman
Mr. John Steinke (Holy Scripture)
Mr. Nathan Mahan (Faith)

B. Committee on Registration and Excuses: Pastor Mark W. Dierking, Chairman
Mr. Lee Roller (St. Luke’s)
Mr. Aaron Dierking (St. Stephen’s)

C. Committee on Nominations and Elections: Pastor Ross A. Mahan, Chairman

Mr. Mark Mensing (Peace)
Mr. Ted Fitzwater (St. John's)

D. Resolutions Committee: Pastor David T. Mensing, Chairman
Mr. Raymond Kusumi (St. Luke's)
Mr. Jack McCastle (Good Shepherd)

INITIAL REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE ON REGISTRATION AND EXCUSES:

The committee reported the following delegates authorized by their credentials to represent their respective congregations at this convention:

From **FAITH, Jackson:** Rev. Ross A. Mahan, Pastoral Delegate; Mr. JC Perry and Mr. Nathan Mahan, Lay Delegates; Mr. Philip DeWitt and Mr. Damon Bundy, Alternates — 3 votes.

From **GOOD SHEPHERD, Tucson:** Rev. David G. Redlin, Pastoral Delegate; Mr. Michael Malley and Mr. Jack McCastle, Lay Delegates; Mr. Martin Hermann and Mr. Joshua Redlin, Alternates — 3 votes.

From **HOLY SCRIPTURE, Windcrest:** Rev. E. R. Stallings, Pastoral Delegate; Mr. John Steinke, Lay Delegate; no Alternates — 3 votes.

From **PEACE, Oak Forest:** Rev. David T. Mensing, Pastoral Delegate; Mr. Gary A. Ruzic and Mr. Mark J. Mensing, Lay Delegates; Mr. John P. Mensing and Mr. Joseph E. Martin, Alternates — 3 votes.

From **ST. JOHN'S, Lebanon:** Rev. M. L. Natterer, Pastoral Delegate; Mr. Ted Fitzwater and Mr. William Schrader, Lay Delegates; Mr. Paul Natterer, Alternate — 3 votes.

From **ST. LUKE'S, Seattle:** Rev. Edward J. Worley, Pastoral Delegate; Mr. Raymond S. Kusumi and Mr. Lee J. Roller, Lay Delegates; Mr. Jerry Sidwell and Mr. Stephen Bloedel, Alternates — 3 votes.

From **ST. STEPHEN'S, Wilmot:** Rev. Mark W. Dierking, Pastoral Delegate; Mr. Aaron J. Dierking, Lay Delegate; no Alternates — 3 votes

It was noted that three of the authorized alternate delegates were in fact *not present* at the convention: Messrs. DeWitt and Bundy from Faith, Jackson, and Mr. Stephen Bloedel from St. Luke's, Seattle. Total number of votes to be cast: **21**. Total attendance at the opening service: **110**. The offering received to benefit the General Conference Treasury was **\$ 1,401.20**. It was moved and seconded that the Committee's initial report be adopted and that all delegations be seated as indicated in the report. This motion was unanimously carried.

ANNUAL REPORT OF THE PRESIDENT:

The President then appointed Vice President Natterer to assume the chair during the presentation of his annual report. In reviewing the Conference fiscal year 2002-2003, President Stallings made special note of Pastor Bloedel's death just prior to the last convention, a matter relating to our seminary that occasioned unfortunate potentially-divisive controversy in the late summer, the dedication of a new church building at Good Shepherd at the end of October, the bequest by

Mr. and Mrs. Oscar von Rohr of Cedar Vale, Kansas, of their estate to the Conference Student Aid Fund as their surviving beneficiary, and the colloquy and graduation of Paul E. Bloedel from our seminary in connection with this present convention. —It was moved and seconded to accept this report subject to the usual review. The motion was unanimously carried, and the Vice President appointed as the **Committee to Review the President’s Report:** Pastor David G. Redlin and Mr. Lee Roller.

It was then moved and seconded that the Resolutions Committee draft, as the official expression of the Conference in convention assembled, a suitable resolution of thanks to Mr. and Mrs. von Rohr for their generous bequest. Carried.

THE CONVENTION AGENDA:

The President then laid before the Convention for its consideration the official AGENDA. It was moved and seconded to adopt the Agenda as printed. This motion was carried, and the Agenda was officially adopted.

REPORT OF THE PRESS COMMITTEE:

This committee, composed of the local pastor and the Conference Secretary, reported that no special advance announcement of the convention had been given to the press. It was moved and seconded to receive the report, and the motion was carried.

The Agenda for the Friday morning session having been completed, the President declared the convention in recess at 12:05 p. m. for the noon meal.

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THE AFTERNOON SESSION

The afternoon session was opened at 1:20 p.m. with a brief devotion conducted by Pastor Robert J. Lietz. Hymn 283 was sung, followed by the reading of II Timothy 3:13-17, and a prayer.

THE HISTORICAL ESSAY: “Schism in the Orthodox Lutheran Conference, 1955, and Its Reorganization as the Concordia Lutheran Conference, 1956” — continued from 2002.

The *HISTORICAL ESSAY*, delivered by the Rev. David T. Mensing, Pastor of Peace Ev. Lutheran Church of Oak Forest, Illinois, was divided into four main sections, the first two of which had been almost completed in their presentation to the 2002 Convention. Due to the voluminous primary documentation researched and included verbatim in this important essay, its presentation had to be spread over two conventions. The so-called “Hallstein-Kretzmann controversy” was explored in detail in the essay, including the severance of fellowship on the part of Dr. P. E. Kretzmann and his adherents when he refused to submit to the doctrinal discipline of the Conference for his demonstrably false position on church fellowship. The last two portions of the essay focused on the necessary reorganization of the Orthodox Lutheran Conference under its present name and constitution in order to avoid confusion and the “Declaration” by which the reorganization was effected. The voluminous documentation in the essay was truly essential for a proper and “righteous judgment” of the controversy because it constitutes the “smoking gun” of history essential to the establishment of the facts. The delegates who heard the essay were able to see clearly the matters which resulted in the split in

1955 and necessitated the reorganization of the Orthodox Lutheran Conference in 1956.

It was moved and seconded to adopt the essay with thanks to the essayist for his painstaking research and presentation. This motion was carried unanimously.

It was also moved and seconded that, since the last official history of the Conference was authorized in the late 1970's and included material only through 1980 [*A Popular History of the Concordia Lutheran Conference* by Pastor H. David Mensing (†1994)], Pastor David T. Mensing be commissioned to research and bring up to date the history of our Concordia Lutheran Conference, at least through its fiftieth year [2001]. This motion was unanimously carried.

At 3:15 p.m., a brief recess was observed.

Inasmuch as there were no recommendations to the Convention from the Board of Directors, the agenda continued with the

INITIAL REPORT OF THE FINANCE COMMITTEE:

The initial report concerned, first of all, the past fiscal year, as Mr. Robert G. Bloedel, the Conference Treasurer, presented the *Financial Report* for fiscal year 2002-2003. The report showed a beginning cash balance of \$30,831.98 in the General Fund plus total receipts of \$34,592.80, yielding total cash available of \$65,424.78. Expenditures totaled \$28,603.66, leaving an ending cash balance as of May 31, 2003 of \$36,821.12. The report also showed a decrease in the Student Aid Fund from \$28,835.37 at the beginning of the fiscal year to an ending balance of \$26,832.88 on its closing date, May 31, 2002. It was then moved and seconded to receive, subject to audit, the *Financial Report* of the Treasurer concerning the past fiscal year, and this motion was carried.

The Treasurer then distributed the Finance Committee's *Budget Worksheet* for the new fiscal year, June 1, 2003 through May 31, 2004. It showed a beginning cash balance of \$36,821.12 and anticipated receipts (including the pledges of our congregations) of \$21,321.20, for total cash available of \$58,142.32 in the General Fund. Projected budgetary expenditures totaled \$27,200.00 divided among the following items: *Scriptural Publications*—\$3,500.00; St. Stephen's Subsidy—\$7,200.00; Yekaterinburg Subsidy—\$6,600.00; Yekaterinburg Facilities Rental Subsidy—\$1,800.00; Archival Subsidy—\$500.00; Telephone Expense—\$600.00; Convention Expense—\$1,000.00; Travel Expense—\$4,000.00; Miscellaneous—\$2,000.00. It was moved and seconded to accept the preliminary budget proposal, subject to any subsequent amendment by the delegates in Convention assembled and pending final approval later in the Convention. This motion was unanimously adopted.

REPORT OF THE EDITORIAL COMMITTEE:

As the bulk of his report, the chairman of the Editorial Committee, Pastor David T. Mensing, briefly reviewed the content of our official organ, the *Concordia Lutheran*. As the editor of the *CL* this past year, it had been his desire to keep articles limited in length and thus easier to read, more narrowly focused in their topics, and also timely in their appearance. Therefore the serialization of convention essays, for example, had been avoided in favor of shorter and livelier articles solicited from all the pastors of the Conference and those in fellowship with us, so that there was broad-based contribution and consistent representation of all the pastors. Doctrinal,

practical, and devotional articles, coinciding with the themes of the festival half of the church year, appeared between December and June; and articles of a more general nature appeared in the summer and fall, culminating in recognition of the Reformation in October and Luther's birth and the annual Thanksgiving in November. This new format had been well-received by the readers, as evidenced by positive reactions received throughout the year. The report was unanimously adopted.

REPORT OF THE PUBLISHING HOUSE BOARD OF CONTROL:

Pastor Mensing then reported on the activities of *Scriptural Publications*, the publishing arm of our Conference. His report presented an overview of the success achieved under God to provide orthodox and edifying material in print for the consumption of our people and for a consistent witness of our orthodoxy to those outside our Conference. The activities of *Scriptural Publications* included the printing of the *CL*, our Sunday School materials, various tracts and confessional documents, and several book-length works. Proposed for the coming year is the publication of several more book-length works. In this latter connection, the Board of Control expressed its intention to acquire binding and trimming equipment capable of economically producing our own "paperback" editions of orthodox books, and also more sophisticated printing equipment as funds allow. At this point, the chairman acknowledged with special thanks the completely unsolicited and unexpected grant of \$ 8,000.00 from the *Fellowship of Lutheran Congregations*, whereby that church body of dear brethren desired to help underwrite the cost of such equipment and thus to become active partners in our publishing effort. This gift in the form of a check had been delivered into the hands of the business manager of *Scriptural Publications* just prior to the Board's report; and the letter accompanying the *F.L.C.*'s check was read to the assembled delegates for their information. The entire report was then unanimously adopted.

Out of gratitude to the Lord of the Church for His grace in the hearts of our dear *F.L.C.* brethren, which motivated their loving generosity, the Convention rose to sing the *Common Doxology*.

It was then moved and seconded to commit to the Resolutions Committee the drafting of a suitable resolution of thanks to the *Fellowship of Lutheran Congregations* for its generous gift. Carried

It was also moved and seconded that the Conference authorize *Scriptural Publications* to print three book-length works this coming year, namely, A. L. Graebner's *Doctrinal Theology*, F. W. Herzberger's *The Family Altar* of daily devotions, and Alfred Doerffler's *Treasures of Hope*, the third in his series of devotions specifically targeted for shut-ins. The motion was unanimously carried.

It was moved and seconded that, since the bulk mass-mailing of complimentary copies of the *CONCORDIA LUTHERAN* has not resulted in the interest expected and represents a financial outlay that probably is no longer accomplishing what it once did, the Conference authorize *Scriptural Publications* to discontinue the mailing in favor of some other periodic informational mailing to selected recipients. The motion was carried unanimously.

REPORT OF THE BUSINESS MANAGER OF SCRIPTURAL PUBLICATIONS:

The Business Manager of our publishing house, Mr. Phillip R. Martin reported that *Scriptural Publications* began the fiscal year on June 1, 2002 with a cash balance of \$ 6,757.95 and that cash receipts were added for a total cash available of \$16,364.26. Disbursements totaled

\$12,039.66, leaving a cash balance of \$ 4,324.60 at the end of the fiscal year. He also noted that, per the resolution of the 1999 convention, \$ 1,664.86 of the cash balance is set aside and earmarked for the purchase of “endangered books” and that accounts receivable on open invoices as of May 31, 2003, totals \$ 2,169.62. It was moved and seconded to receive the report, and the motion was carried.

The minutes of the Friday session were then read by the Secretary. It was moved and seconded that the minutes be adopted as read, and the motion was carried.

Following several brief announcements, the session adjourned at 5:15 p.m.

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FRIDAY EVENING — The Seminary Graduation Service

At eight o’clock in the evening, following the evening meal, delegates and guests assembled in the sanctuary of Peace Ev. Lutheran Church for a festive vesper service celebrating the graduation of our theological student, Mr. Paul E. Bloedel, who had successfully passed his colloquy before the Pastoral Conference earlier in the week. Pastor Mensing served as the liturgist, and Pastor Lietz, his co-instructor in the fifth-year seminary program, preached the sermon. The sermon text was II Timothy 2:2, and Pastor Lietz took as his theme: *The Importance of Sound Theological Training for Continued Orthodoxy in Our Midst*. President Stallings awarded the diploma which declared Mr. Bloedel to be a *candidate of the reverend ministry* (c.r.m.) and eligible to receive a call in our midst. The service was followed by a coffee and cake reception arranged by the Committee on Theological Education.

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SATURDAY, JUNE 28

THE MORNING SESSION

The session was opened at 9:00 a.m. with a devotion led by Pastor David G. Redlin. Hymn 536, verses 1-3, was sung, followed by the reading of Scripture in Colossians 3:1-10, and a prayer. The devotion concluded with singing of Hymn 378 and the Apostolic Benediction.

THE ESSAY: “The Great Danger Worldliness Presents in Our Congregations and in the Lives of Individual Christians”—Part I: What Is Worldliness?..... Pastor Edward J. Worley

The first part of the essay constituted a thorough “explanation” in answer to the question, “What is worldliness?” The essayist discussed the term itself as it is commonly used in everyday language, but also the Scriptural basis for it. He pointed out how the devil, the father of lies, uses the world with all its glamour, lawlessness, perverted behavior, and spiritual wickedness as his allies in tempting the children of God to share in its evil. Then, in a detailed exposition of two major proof passages, Romans 12:2 and I John 2:15-17, and with abundant quotations from reliable exegetes and orthodox commentators, Pastor Worley zeroed in on the words and expressions on those texts in particular to sharpen the listeners’ focus on what constitutes “the world” that is inimical to God and His holy will, and what it means to be “*conformed to*” it and to “*love*” it. This first part of the essay was enthusiastically received and was accompanied with lively discussion.

A recess was observed at 10:45 a.m.

It was moved and seconded that the agenda be amended to continue the essay to the noon hour, postponing the **Report of the Committee on Missions** to the first order of business this afternoon and moving the **Report of the Committee on Theological Education** and the **Interest Reports** of the seminary instructors and of our now graduated student to Sunday afternoon following the last portion of the essay. This motion was carried.

Pastor Worley then continued his essay with **Part II: A Survey of Bible Examples of the Effect of Worldliness in Individual Lives.**

In this section, Pastor Worley chose as particularly *tragic* examples Lot's wife, Judas Iscariot, and Demas, who yielded to the world at the cost of their immortal souls, and the fall of David and Peter as examples of a *temporary* triumph of worldliness due to presumption, conceit, lust, and fear. He then gave special attention to *chronic* worldliness among the Savior's disciples and the warnings they give US against falling into the snares they did, lest we too be carried away by the world and "*fall from [our] own steadfastness.*" This portion of the essay was accompanied by a great deal of discussion from the floor.

There being no special announcements, the convention stood in recess at 11:55 a.m. for lunch.

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THE AFTERNOON SESSION

Following the noon meal, the afternoon session began at 1:15 p.m. with a devotion conducted by Pastor Ross A. Mahan. Hymn 293, verses 1-2, was sung, followed by the reading of Scripture in Psalm 19, and a prayer. The devotion concluded with the last stanza of the hymn and the Apostolic Benediction.

REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE ON MISSIONS:

The committee's chairman, Pastor Mahan, reviewed the mission endeavors of the Conference, both at home and abroad. Concerning home missions, he took note of the influence of our Conference web site, the publication of orthodox Sunday School materials, books, and tracts, and our official organ, *The Concordia Lutheran*. He then also highlighted our subsidy support of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Yekaterinburg, and, stateside, our subsidy of St. Stephen's in Wilmot, South Dakota. Both congregations had requested modest increases in their respective subsidies for the coming fiscal year. The committee recommended the granting of both requests but noted, particularly in the case of St. Stephen's, that the congregation actively review its continued viability in the light of Scripture and report back to the committee within four months of the next convention. It was moved and seconded to receive the report; and after some initial discussion, the motion was carried.

Discussion continued on the proposals in the report, particularly on the amounts of subsidy requested and the percent of the total budget that this represented. Questions were also raised regarding the dearth of information received by the Committee on Missions over the course of the year from our subsidized congregations, including the amount that each respective congregation contributes to its own operation and the ability of each congregation to shoulder more of its own burden. During the course of the discussion, Pastor Dierking, with the

authorization of his congregation, withdrew its request for increase in subsidy this year. However, it was pointed out in the discussion that followed that God's Word requires of us due consideration of our brethren's need (James 2:15-16, I John 3:17, and Proverbs 3:27-28), and that love for our brethren and its demonstration in tangible ways should not be determined simply by fiscal concerns and budgetary constraints. The motion was then made and seconded that we **a)** grant the subsidy increases originally sought for the coming year, and simultaneously **b)** encourage the Committee on Missions to seek from all subsidized congregations current information on their economic status so that the committee is better able in the future to evaluate and recommend subsidy levels. This was carried.

REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE ON LUTHERAN UNION:

The Vice President, Pastor M. L. Natterer, who is constitutionally the chairman of the Committee on Lutheran Union, reported that little progress had been made toward Lutheran union because of Satan's opposition and obstacles laid in our path at his behest. He also remarked briefly on the illness of his dear wife which hindered him personally in the pursuit of his duties. With the full knowledge and approval of President Stallings, he had therefore asked Pastor Mahan, chairman of the Committee on Missions, to assist him in responding to certain contacts expressing interest in our Conference. In the course of the discussion that followed, it was noted that the other two pastoral members of the committee and even the lay member could well have been solicited for their assistance; but due to the press of urgency, this had apparently been unintentionally overlooked. Pastor Natterer's brief report was adopted.

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

The Committee to Review the President's Report then gave its positive assessment of the President's annual report to the Conference in convention assembled; and its report was adopted.

REPORT OF THE AUDITING COMMITTEE:

The Auditing Committee then reported that it had reviewed the books of both the Conference Treasurer and those of the Business Manager of *Scriptural Publications* and had found them to be accurate and in good order. The committee thanked the Treasurer, Robert Bloedel, and the Business Manager, Phillip Martin, for their diligent and dedicated service to our Conference. The committee's report was adopted.

CONTINUING REPORT OF THE FINANCE COMMITTEE:

Amendments to the committee's *Budget Worksheet* for the new fiscal year, June 1, 2003 through May 31, 2004 included: St. Stephen's Subsidy— \$8,400.00; Yekaterinburg Subsidy— \$7,200.00; Yekaterinburg Facilities Rental Subsidy— \$ 2,400.00, for a total projected budget of \$ 29,600.00. —It was moved and seconded to accept the revised budget proposal, subject to any subsequent amendment by the delegates in Convention assembled and pending final approval later in the Convention. This motion was unanimously adopted.

The scheduled recess was observed at 3:00 p.m.

ELECTION OF OFFICERS AND STANDING COMMITTEES:

OFFICERS—

PRESIDENT: Nominated—Pastors Worley, Stallings, Mahan, and Mensing.

Elected—Pastor E. R. Stallings

VICE PRESIDENT: Nominated—Pastors Worley, Mahan, Dierking, and Mensing.

Elected—Pastor Edward J. Worley

SECRETARY: Nominated—Pastors Mahan, Mensing, and Dierking.

Elected—Pastor David T. Mensing

TREASURER: Nominated—Messrs. John Steinke, Mark Natterer, Robert Bloedel, and Aaron Dierking.

Elected—Mr. Robert G. Bloedel

BOARD MEMBER-AT-LARGE from the Far West: Nominated—Messrs. John Okamoto, Jack McCastle, Raymond Kusumi, Paul Natterer, Stephen Bloedel, Michael Malley, and Martin Hermann.

Elected—Mr. Raymond Kusumi

BOARD MEMBER-AT-LARGE from the Middle West: Nominated—Messrs. JC Perry, John Steinke, Phil Martin, Mike Mensing, Mark Mensing, Aaron Dierking, and John Mensing.

Elected—Mr. JC Perry

STANDING COMMITTEES—

EDITORIAL COMMITTEE:

SLATE A—Pastor Mensing, Pastor Worley, Mr. Paul Natterer

SLATE B—Pastor Worley, Pastor Mensing, Mr. Ray Kusumi

SLATE C—Pastor Worley, Pastor Mensing, Mr. Paul Natterer

SLATE D—Pastor Mensing, Pastor Worley, Mr. Ray Kusumi

Elected—SLATE C

COMMITTEE ON LUTHERAN UNION:

SLATE A—Pastor Worley, Pastor Mensing, Pastor Natterer, Mr. Phillip Martin

SLATE B—Pastor Worley, Pastor Mensing, Pastor Dierking, Mr. Paul Bloedel

SLATE C—Pastor Worley, Pastor Mensing, Pastor Dierking, Mr. Phillip Martin

Elected—SLATE A

COMMITTEE ON THEOLOGICAL EDUCATION:

SLATE A—Pastor Dierking, Pastor Mahan, Mr. Mark Natterer, Mr. Daniel Bloedel

SLATE B—Pastor Mahan, Pastor Redlin, Mr. John Steinke, Mr. Michael Malley

SLATE C—Pastor Worley, Pastor Mahan, Mr. John Steinke, Mr. Jack McCastle

Elected—SLATE B

COMMITTEE ON MISSIONS:

SLATE A—Pastor Mahan, Pastor Mensing, Mr. Ron Lake, Mr. Aaron Dierking, Mr. Brett Swinney

SLATE B—Pastor Redlin, Pastor Mahan, Mr. Paul Bloedel, Mr. Ron Lake, Mr. John

Bartucciotto.

SLATE C—Pastor Worley, Pastor Mahan, Mr. Paul Bloedel, Mr. JC Perry, Mr. Nathan Mahan

Elected—SLATE A

FINANCE COMMITTEE:

SLATE A—Mr. Robert Bloedel, Mr. John Steinke, Mr. Phil Martin, Mr. Michael Schrader

SLATE B—Mr. Robert Bloedel, Mr. Gary Ruzic, Mr. Joshua Redlin, Mr. Nathan Mahan

SLATE C—Mr. Robert Bloedel, Mr. JC Perry, Mr. Martin Hermann, Mr. Gary Neely

SLATE D—Mr. Robert Bloedel, Mr. Phillip Martin, Mr. John Steinke, Mr. JC Perry

Elected—SLATE D

PUBLISHING HOUSE BOARD OF CONTROL:

SLATE A—Pastor Mensing, Mr. Phillip Martin, Mr. Raymond Kusumi

SLATE B—Pastor Mensing, Mr. Phillip Martin, Mr. John Steinke

Elected—SLATE A

The balloting having been completed, it was moved and seconded to make all elections unanimous. This motion was unanimously carried.

The Secretary was then asked to read the minutes of the Saturday sessions. It was moved and seconded to adopt them as read, subject to polish. The motion was unanimously carried.

After several brief announcements, the Convention stood in recess until Sunday afternoon at 1:30 p.m. The session closed at 5:00 p.m.

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SUNDAY, JUNE 29

SUNDAY MORNING — The Divine Worship Service with Holy Communion

The *pastor loci*, the Rev. David T. Mensing, again served as liturgist; and the Rev. Ross A. Mahan of Jackson, Michigan, preached the sermon based on **I John 2:15-17**. His theme was: ***A Man Is Either a Lover of God or of the World; He Cannot Be Both.*** In his first part, Pastor Mahan showed how love for the world separates man from God; and in the second, he pointed out how the Lord Jesus Christ has overcome the world by His perfect life, death and resurrection and gives His comforting assurance of victory over the world through the promises of His Word. Delegates and visitors from the congregations of our fellowship then partook of the Lord's Supper together as guests of Peace Congregation—for the remission of their sins, for the strengthening of their faith and of their walk in sanctification, and in testimony of their blessed unity in the Word of their Savior. Immediately following the service, delegates, visitors, and the local members assembled in the congregation's Christian education facility for the noon meal which was served by the ladies of the local congregation.

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THE AFTERNOON SESSION

The afternoon session began at 1:55 p.m. with a devotion conducted by Pastor Mark W.

Dierking. Hymn 605 was sung, followed by the reading of Scripture in Philippians 4:4-9, a prayer, and the Lord's Prayer in unison. The devotion concluded with the singing of Hymn 656 and the Apostolic Benediction.

THE ESSAY: "The Great Danger Worldliness Presents in Our Congregations and in the Lives of Individual Christians"—Part III: Self-Examination; Part IV: Areas of Ingress for the World; and the Conclusion Pastor Edward J. Worley

The final portions of the *DOCTRINAL ESSAY* were then presented by Pastor Worley. In the third part, he presented a series of thought-provoking questions of self-examination, entitled (after the hymn, *TLH* 430) "What Is the World to Me?" Our standard of who we are is God's holy Law in its function as a flawless and accusing mirror; and we must, as individuals, fully accept moral responsibility for our worldliness. Then God-wrought contrition and Gospel-engendered faith must follow unto the renewal of our mind. In the fourth part, Pastor Worley highlighted what he termed "areas of ingress for the world in the personal lives of Christians," centering upon the mass media of the "information age" as being a common "open door." He cited six specific examples, identified "the problem" in each case, and then applied Scripture in each situation. His concluding portion was taken from *The Abiding Word*, Volume II, page 199, in which four contrary activities are delineated to enable us to overcome the world after our Savior: 1) Make use of God's Word; 2) Pray fervently for God's help; 3) Crucify our sinful flesh; and 4) Avoid subjecting ourselves to temptation.

Following spirited and fruitful discussion of these sections, it was moved and seconded that we adopt this informative and edifying essay with thanks to the essayist, subject to polish and the usual subsequent review by the *praesidium* before it is published. This motion was carried unanimously.

A fifteen minute recess was observed before continuing with the final reports and business of the convention.

REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE ON THEOLOGICAL EDUCATION:

Pastor Mark W. Dierking, chairman of the Committee, was not present to deliver his report, having departed the convention early, immediately following the presentation of the essay. Pastor Ross Mahan, the second pastoral member of the C. T. E., read the report in his absence. The report chronicled the unexpected death of Pastor Paul R. Bloedel in June of 2002 and the need to fill the resulting vacancy on the Seminary faculty. With the unanimous consent of the 51st Annual Convention, Pastors Mensing and Lietz were selected to team-teach the fifth year curriculum, a task which the chairman characterized as "gargantuan" and which they did well. He also noted for the record that, on Friday evening, June 27th, we graduated our first seminary student in twenty-three years to fill a need to which all our people should zealously direct young men considering a career in the service of the Lord and which all of us should remember in "*effectual fervent prayer*" to the Lord of the Church. Finally, the report expressed on behalf of the entire fellowship thanks to all the professors for their faithfulness and diligence in preparing our student for the work before him. It was moved and seconded to receive the report; and, after brief discussion, the motion was unanimously carried.

INTEREST REPORTS OF THE SEMINARY INSTRUCTORS:

Pastor Lietz, who reported first, expressed thanks to the Triune God for the twofold gift of our seminary program and for a student to prepare for the work of the Holy Ministry. He cited in particular the advantage, both to the student and to the people of our Conference fellowship, of having theological training carried out in the local congregations under their respective pastors and specifically the broad-based practical experience gained by the student in the local *practicum*. He also specially noted the positive role that Christian parents play in encouraging their sons to desire the work of the ministry and to embark upon theological preparation. Pastor Lietz then expressed gratitude to God for sustaining both the instructors and their student in good health and strength during the year, thanks to his congregations for their understanding and cooperation in facilitating his work, and appreciation to the respective wives of the instructors and of the student for their unflagging support. Finally, he very briefly touched on the curriculum covered during the fifth year, specifically the courses he taught, *Dogmatics V* and *Comparative Symbolics*, leaving the details of the coursework to Pastor Mensing's elaboration in his immediately-following report. —It was then moved and seconded to receive Pastor Lietz's report; and, after brief discussion, the motion was carried.

Pastor Mensing then joyfully reported, with all glory to God for His abundant grace, concerning his privilege of having been permitted, in conjunction with Pastor Lietz, to commit to a faithful young man in our Conference what he had once learned, in order properly to equip Student Bloedel for the work of the ministry (II Timothy 2:2). He then highlighted the content and coverage of the coursework he had been assigned to teach, as well as *Pastoral Theology* and *Homiletics III*, which he and Pastor Lietz had taught as a team. Those latter two courses were the most gratifying, he said, because of their content: In *Pastoral Theology*, it was not only the administration of official acts but the study of the proper application of Holy Scripture in the context of the local congregation by the shepherd of the flock, and particularly also careful application in individual and sometimes difficult cases by the *Seelsorger* of his sheep. In *Homiletics*, it was the bi-weekly preparation of sermons and their delivery in as many as *five* pulpits over the course of the year. This involved the development of appropriate, textual, and functional outlines, as well as the writing of complete manuscripts. The faculty carefully monitored the student's exposition of Scripture, his division of Law and Gospel, and his application of doctrine. Finally, they analyzed and evaluated each sermon's delivery on the basis of personal audit or from its video recording and made constructive suggestions. In conclusion, Pastor Mensing wished Candidate Bloedel the Lord's continued blessing both upon his service and upon his life as a well-qualified candidate for the office of the Holy Ministry. —It was then moved and seconded to receive Pastor Mensing's report, and the motion was carried.

In connection with their reports, the instructors mutually shared with the convention several suggestions and recommendations for the future operation of the Seminary, chief of which was to keep the fifth year a "team-taught" effort. This was strongly advised **a)** in consideration of the preparation time involved in teaching a 19-hour course load, which ideally should be divided and shared, **b)** in view of the broad insights to be gained by the student from two instructors simultaneously, particularly in *Pastoral Theology* and in *Homiletics*, and **c)** for the sake of the variety of experience in preaching and in practical church work to be realized by the student as he labors in several congregations at the same time — all of which are of significant advantage to a student particularly in his final year of theological training.

INTEREST REPORT OF THE SEMINARY STUDENT:

The graduate himself then gave a brief interest report, touching upon his seminary experience in general over the past five and one-half years, thanking his instructors for their labor and

expressing ultimate thanks to God for strengthening them and blessing them in their work. He also thanked St. Mark's Ev. Lutheran Church in Sauk Village, Illinois, for its generous hospitality to him and to his new wife, Laura, whose marriage was blessed with a healthy son just a month before the convention. Finally, he encouraged the Conference brethren to pray earnestly for a future ministry and for able men whom God would move to desire to serve Him in the Pastoral Office. —It was moved and seconded to receive the report. There was no discussion, and the motion was carried.

REPORT CONCERNING THE SEMINARY BOOKSTORE:

Mr. Phillip R. Martin gave a brief oral report on the status of the Seminary Bookstore. He noted that, besides keeping on hand copies of the “standard texts” still available from their publishers, he is always looking for copies of out-of-print “treasures” and acquires these for *Scriptural Publications* when they are reasonably priced. He then informs the chairman of the Committee of Theological Education so that the C. T. E. has the first opportunity to purchase any of these for the inventory of the Seminary Bookstore. Since the original purpose of the Seminary Bookstore included the desire to make available to theological students volumes that should be in the working library of every pastor, it is Conference policy that the inventory of the Seminary Bookstore be kept under lock and key, and that volumes be made available for purchase only by current seminary students and by members of the Seminary faculty. — It was moved and seconded to receive the report, and the motion was carried.

REPORT CONCERNING THE CONFERENCE ARCHIVES:

Mr. Martin also reported briefly concerning the archives of the Conference. He again reminded those present that *Scriptural Publications* has available for purchase two CD sets containing image files of fifty years of the *Concordia Lutheran*. For under twenty dollars, a half century of edifying articles can be read on a personal computer and can be printed out as well for individual study or use in a class. A “premium” set is also available which includes a powerful search engine with which specific topics, words and expressions can be accessed and located in the various articles. Considering the thousands of hours that went into the production of these electronic archives, not to mention the cost of acquiring back issues of the *C.L.* in their original “hard copy” format, *both* sets are reasonably priced and well worth the investment. Mr. Martin also encouraged the pastors in particular to consider providing copies of correspondence that is of historical significance to safe keeping in the *Conference Archives* that the generation to come can be authoritatively informed about the early days of our Conference. Such documents may then also be copied in *electronic* format for a permanent file that can be easily researched and accessed. It was moved and seconded to receive the report, and the motion was carried.

FINAL REPORT OF THE FINANCE COMMITTEE CONCERNING THE BUDGET:

The Treasurer referred back to his committee's *Budget Worksheet* for the new fiscal year, June 1, 2003 through May 31, 2004. It showed a beginning cash balance of \$36,821.12 and anticipated receipts (including the pledges of our congregations) of \$21,321.20, for total cash available of \$58,142.32 in the General Fund. Projected budgetary expenditures totaled \$29,600.00 divided among the following items: *Scriptural Publications*—\$3,500.00; St. Stephen's Subsidy—\$8,400.00; Yekaterinburg Subsidy—\$7,200.00; Yekaterinburg Facilities Rental Subsidy—\$2,400.00; Archival Subsidy—\$500.00; Telephone Expense—\$600.00; Convention Expense—\$1,000.00; Travel Expense—\$4,000.00; Miscellaneous—\$2,000.00. It was moved and seconded that this final budget be adopted for fiscal year 2003-2004, and the

motion was carried. (This budget is printed out as a stand-alone document elsewhere in the *Proceedings*. Please see the Table of Contents.)

FINAL REPORT OF THE RESOLUTIONS COMMITTEE:

The Resolutions Committee submitted drafts of the following resolutions to the Convention for its consideration and moved their adoption. (Please see the **Table of Contents** for their location in these PROCEEDINGS.)

- #1: Thanks to Mr. and Mrs. Oscar von Rohr for the bequest of their estate to the Conference to benefit the support of future theological students;
- #2: Thanks to the *Fellowship of Lutheran Congregations* for its generous contribution toward binding equipment in our publishing house;
- #3: Thanks to St. Mark's congregation in Sauk Village and to Pastor and Mrs. Robert J. Lietz for their generosity and labor of love in offering hospitality to our seminary student and his family;
- #4: Thanks to the outgoing officers and standing committees;
- #5: Thanks for the essays delivered by Pastors Mensing and Worley;
- #6: Thanks for the sermons by Pastors Stallings and Mahan;
- #7: Thanks for the opening devotions conducted by the pastors;
- #8: Thanks to Mr. Lloyd E. Martin, the organist of Peace Ev. Lutheran Church, for the special organ music which enhanced the services and devotions, and to those who participated in the joint choir which sang at the worship services;
- #9: Thanks to Pastor and Mrs. David T. Mensing and to the host congregation for their loving and generous hospitality .

All of the above resolutions were unanimously adopted.

REPORT OF THE CONFERENCE STATISTICIAN:

Mr. Raymond S. Kusumi delivered his statistical report for fiscal year 2002-2003. —It was moved and seconded to receive this report. Carried. —It was also moved and seconded that Mr. Kusumi be reappointed to the position of **Conference Statistician** for the coming fiscal year with thanks for his continued faithful service. This motion was unanimously carried.

FINAL REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE ON REGISTRATION AND EXCUSES:

The Committee's final report showed that seven congregations had been represented at the convention by seven pastoral delegates, twelve lay delegates, and six alternate delegates who were actually present. Total number of eligible votes to be cast on any measure had been 21. Total attendance at the Friday service was 110, at the graduation service 123, and at the Sunday service 193. Total offerings received at the Friday service was reported to be \$ 1,401.28; at the

graduation service, \$ 600.00; and at the Sunday service, \$ 3,721.00. Total number communed in the Sunday service as guests of the local congregation was 117. It was moved and seconded to receive the report, and this motion was carried.

TIME AND PLACE OF THE 53rd ANNUAL CONVENTION:

St. Luke's Lutheran Church of Seattle, Washington, through its lay delegate extended to the Conference its invitation to host the **53rd Annual Convention**. (Dates— *Pastoral Conference*: Tuesday and Wednesday, June 22 and 23; *Board of Directors Meeting*: Thursday, June 24; *The Convention*: Friday, Saturday and Sunday, June 25, 26 and 27, 2004.) It was moved and seconded to accept this kind invitation with thanks, and the motion was carried.

The minutes of the Sunday session were then read by the Secretary. It was moved and seconded that the minutes be adopted. This motion was carried.

After several brief announcements, the chairman entertained a motion to adjourn the convention. This motion was made, seconded, and unanimously carried; and adjournment followed at 5:35 p.m. with a closing devotion conducted by President Stallings. Hymn 53 was sung, followed by a prayer by the President and the Lord's Prayer in unison. The devotion closed with the customary formula and the Apostolic Benediction pronounced by the President of the Conference.

Respectfully submitted,

Rev. David T. Mensing, Secretary

ANNUAL REPORT OF THE CONFERENCE PRESIDENT

[**Pastor E. R. Stallings**, who was the Conference President in 2003 and delivered his annual report orally from the lectern to the assembled delegates, did not provide an electronic copy of that report to the Conference Secretary for inclusion in the PROCEEDINGS. A "hard copy" was included with all other hard copies of reports and documents in a file which was submitted to President Stallings by mail in the late winter of 2004 for the customary review by the *praesidium* before publication, but he never returned that file. Later that same year, just prior to the opening of the 2004 Convention in Seattle, Pastor Stallings suddenly left our Conference in rejection of our long-standing orthodox teaching and Scriptural practice regarding Sixth Commandment principles. In spite of repeated written requests to return that file to the Conference, Pastor Stallings never so much as replied to our urgent pleas. Three documents in particular are therefore missing from these PROCEEDINGS: a) **The Annual Report of the Conference President**, b) **The Report of the Committee to Review the President's Report**, and c) **The Report of the Committee on Theological Education**, none of which was submitted in electronic format. Readers are directed to the MINUTES of the Convention (above, p. 42) for the Secretary's contemporaneous *synopsis* of the **Annual Report of the Conference President** as it was read. Unfortunately this is our only extant record of that report. —Ed.]

INITIAL REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE ON REGISTRATION AND EXCUSES

The following delegates have been seated for this 52nd Annual Convention of our Conference:

From **FAITH, Jackson**: Rev. Ross A. Mahan, Pastoral Delegate; Mr. JC Perry and Mr. Nathan Mahan, Lay Delegates; Mr. Philip DeWitt and Mr. Damon Bundy, Alternates — 3 votes.

From **GOOD SHEPHERD, Tucson**: Rev. David G. Redlin, Pastoral Delegate; Mr. Michael Malley and Mr. Jack McCastle, Lay Delegates; Mr. Martin Hermann and Mr. Joshua Redlin, Alternates — 3 votes.

From **HOLY SCRIPTURE, Windcrest**: Rev. E. R. Stallings, Pastoral Delegate; Mr. John Steinke, Lay Delegate; no Alternates — 3 votes.

From **PEACE, Oak Forest**: Rev. David T. Mensing, Pastoral Delegate; Mr. Gary A. Ruzic and Mr. Mark J. Mensing, Lay Delegates; Mr. John P. Mensing and Mr. Joseph E. Martin, Alternates — 3 votes.

From **ST. JOHN'S, Lebanon**: Rev. M. L. Natterer, Pastoral Delegate; Mr. Ted Fitzwater and Mr. William Schrader, Lay Delegates; Mr. Paul Natterer, Alternate — 3 votes.

From **ST. LUKE'S, Seattle**: Rev. Edward J. Worley, Pastoral Delegate; Mr. Raymond S. Kusumi and Mr. Lee J. Roller, Lay Delegates; Mr. Jerry Sidwell and Mr. Stephen Bloedel, Alternates — 3 votes.

From **ST. STEPHEN'S, Wilmot**: Rev. Mark W. Dierking, Pastoral Delegate; Mr. Aaron J. Dierking, Lay Delegate; no Alternates — 3 votes

Three of the authorized alternate delegates are at this time *not present* at the convention: Mr. Philip DeWitt and Mr. Damon Bundy from Faith, Jackson, and Mr. Stephen Bloedel from St. Luke's, Seattle. Total number of votes to be cast: **21**. Total attendance at the opening service: **110**. The offering received to benefit the General Conference Treasury was **\$ 1,401.20**.

Respectfully submitted,

Rev. Mark W. Dierking, Chairman
Mr. Lee Roller
Mr. Aaron Dierking

FINAL REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE ON REGISTRATIONS AND EXCUSES

A total of seven congregations were represented at the 52nd Annual Convention this year by seven pastoral delegates, twelve lay delegates, and six alternate delegates who were actually present. The total number of eligible votes to be cast on any measure was 21. Attendance at the Friday Opening Service was 110, at the Graduation Service on Friday evening 123, and at the Sunday Communion Service 193. Total offerings received at the Friday service totaled \$1,401.28; at the graduation service, \$ 600.00; and at the Sunday service, \$ 3,721.00. The total number communed in the Sunday service as guests of the Peace Congregation was 117.

Respectfully submitted,

Rev. Mark W. Dierking, Chairman
Mr. Lee Roller
Mr. Aaron Dierking

**Concordia Lutheran Conference
FINANCIAL REPORT for 2002-2003**

	---General Fund---		Student Aid Fund
	Balances	Budgeted	Balances
Beginning Cash Balance, June 1, 2002	\$ 30831.98		\$ 26832.88
Add Cash Receipts:			
Faith, Jackson	1700.00	1200.00	0.00
Good Shepherd, Tucson	534.00	450.00	0.00
Holy Scripture, San Antonio	2220.00	2200.00	0.00
Peace, Oak Forest	9600.00	9600.00	0.00
St. John's, Lebanon	6940.00	4800.00	1160.00
St. Luke's, Seattle	5600.00	3600.00	3800.00
St. Stephen's, Wilmot	0.00	0.00	0.00
Mighty Fortress Special Gift	3060.76		
Gifts for Pastor Schurganoff	2859.50		
Interest Income	456.11	500.00	270.22
2002 Convention Collection	1597.43	1000.00	0.00
<i>In Memoriam</i> (Rev. Paul R. Bloedel)	25.00	0.00	70.00
Total Receipts	\$ 34592.80		\$ 5300.22
Total Cash Available	\$ 65424.78		\$ 32133.10
 Less Disbursements:			
<i>Scriptural Publications</i> Subsidy	3000.00	3500.00	
St. Stephen's Subsidy	7700.00	7200.00	
Yekaterinburg Salary Subsidy	6550.00	6600.00	
Yekaterinburg Rental Subsidy	1650.00	1800.00	
Conference Archives Subsidy	500.00	500.00	
Convention Expense	0.00	1000.00	
Telephone Expense	480.20	600.00	
Travel Expense	4793.18	3000.00	
Miscellaneous Expense	1370.78	2000.00	
Schurganoff Gift Disbursement	2859.50	0.00	
Russo-English Courses			1600.00
Student's Moving Expense			1612.91
Student's Maintenance Allowance			7900.00
Total Expenditures	\$ 28603.66		\$ 11285.91
Ending Cash Balance, May 31, 2003	\$ 36821.12		\$ 20847.19
 Total Cash, all funds: \$ 57668.31			

Respectfully submitted,

V. K. Bloedel, Treasurer

REPORT OF THE AUDITING COMMITTEE

Dear Brethren,

The Auditing Committee appointed during this 52nd Annual Convention of the Concordia Lutheran Conference has reviewed the books of our Conference Treasurer and of the Business Manager of our Publishing House, *Scriptural Publications*. Deposit tickets, and checks and their stubs, were carefully verified against the general ledgers. All records were found to be easy to review, accurate, and in good order.

We wish to thank our new Treasurer, Mr. Robert G. Bloedel, who has taken over this duty from his most faithful father, Mr. Victor K. Bloedel, our Treasurer for so many years, and also Mr. Phillip R. Martin, the Business Manager of *Scriptural Publications*, for their diligent and dedicated service to our Conference and as faithful servants in the promotion of the work of our Lord during this past year. It is all too easy to take their labors for granted, as we tend simply to expect these tasks to get done.

Respectfully submitted,

Rev. David G. Redlin, Chairman
Nathan A. Mahan
John M. Steinke

REPORT OF THE EDITORIAL COMMITTEE

Dear Brethren:

“We cannot but speak the things which we have seen and heard!” (Acts 4:20). As Peter and John recognized it to be their singular duty and privilege to witness before men the power and coming of their Lord Jesus, even though the enemies of God’s precious truth despised and outright forbade their testimony, the pastors of our beloved Conference likewise count it OUR great privilege to contribute to the combined witness of our fellowship by writing edifying Scriptural articles about the things which *we* have seen and heard in the testimony of *“the apostles and prophets”* (Ephesians 2:20). And it is just such content that sets our *Concordia Lutheran* apart from most “official organs” of other church bodies in these latter days. We have no room in our *C. L.* for what we commonly refer to as “fluff” — the good words and fair speeches which deceive the hearts of the simple into believing that they are being nurtured thereby, but who are in reality being deprived of spiritual nutrition and edification on a diet of “chaff” (Jeremiah 23:28) and empty “husks” (Luke 15:16).

Throughout this past year, the pages of our *Concordia Lutheran* have been filled with Bible-centered articles containing doctrine, reproof, correction, and instruction in righteousness (II Timothy 3:16), to the intent that our readers might be made *“wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus”* and that they be *“thoroughly furnished unto all good works.”*

In our July-August issue, we celebrated the precious fruit of the Gospel in three areas of spiritual accomplishment: The triumphant entrance into eternal glory of Pastor Paul R. Bloedel, whom the Lord graciously delivered out of this vale of tears into the joys of heaven; the celebration of St. John's congregation in Lebanon, Oregon, as they recognized with praise to the Lord fifty years in the holy ministry of its shepherd, Pastor M. L. Natterer; and the on-going blessings being realized by Pastor Roman Schurganoff and his tiny congregation in Ekaterinburg, Russia. "What shall [we] render into the Lord for all His benefits toward [us]?" (Psalm 116:12).

The September-October issue marked our grateful recognition of the Lord's grace to us and to our fathers in Luther's mighty work of the Reformation and in both the formal and material principles upon which his work still stands today as a testimony to Him who governs and protects His Church and works all things to the benefit of His believing children.

In November we shared in the celebration of Good Shepherd, Tucson, as they dedicated their new house of worship to the glory of God; we remembered Luther's birth on November 10th; and we rendered a truly Christian thanksgiving to our gracious God and Lord. We then topped off the November-December issue with Scriptural meditations on the threefold significance of Advent, on Christmas as the feast of God the Father, and on what constitutes a glad new year, savoring by faith the peace and joy of Christmas.

Our January-February issue took note of the Savior's Epiphany in His appearance to the wise men, in His manifestation as our Divine Prophet, in His wondrous transfiguration, and in our mission work to His glory, as well as the practical *fruit* of His Epiphany in the work of our seminary and in welcome news from our Russian brethren.

The suffering, death and resurrection of our Savior filled the March-April issue with articles on messianic prophecies fulfilled in His passion, the significance of His Gethsemane prayer, the universal comfort of His vicarious satisfaction, His descent into hell to declare victory over Satan, and the comfort of His mighty resurrection. Also included was a brief article on the significance of the "common cup" in the Lord's Supper.

And finally, the May-June issue, which appeared just prior to our convention, contained an edifying article on the Trinity as a fundamental doctrine, a meditation on the ascension of Christ, the comfort we derive from Christ's session at the right hand of the Father, and the evidence of the power of God's Word in the spiritual harvest on Pentecost Day. In the same issue we read another report on our seminary program and the happy announcement of the impending graduation of Student Bloedel.

It has been your editor's deliberate challenge and the fulfillment of his pledge upon his election to fill each issue of our *Concordia Lutheran* with a variety of shorter doctrinal articles of timely application throughout the church year — articles that could be easily "digested" in one sitting — and at the same time articles of substance: Informative, instructive, devotional and edifying. We were gratified by the enthusiastic response of all the pastors to the assignments asked of them; and we herewith express our thanks to them for their diligent and faithful efforts. Our readers provided much positive feedback over the course of the year about our "new" *C. L.*, and we are genuinely encouraged by their support of our endeavors. May the Lord of the Church continue to bless abundantly all of our efforts and sacrifices rendered to His glory and for the welfare of His kingdom!

Your chairman wishes at this time to recognize gratefully the contributions of Pastor Natterer, our Book and Tract Editor, who, besides his careful evaluation of proposed publications for that “market,” also served as a “second pair of eyes” in the editing of the *Concordia Lutheran*. Likewise special thanks to Mr. Paul Natterer, the lay member of our committee, for his helpful suggestions and willing readiness to be of assistance in our work, as well as to Mr. Phillip Martin, the Business Manager of *Scriptural Publications*, for his invaluable help in the formatting and printing of the issues. This has truly been a team effort — to the glory of God!

Respectfully submitted,

Rev. David T. Mensing, *Concordia Lutheran* Editor
Rev. M. L. Natterer, Book and Tract Editor
Mr. Paul Natterer, Lay Member

REPORT OF SCRIPTURAL PUBLICATIONS BOARD OF CONTROL

Dear Brethren:

The Board of Control of *Scriptural Publications* is humbly grateful to the God of all grace for His abundant blessings upon the publishing arm of our beloved Conference to His glory! In this annual report, we can only briefly summarize the ongoing success that the Lord has continued to bestow upon our efforts, and we stand ready immediately following the report to answer specific questions regarding any facet of our operation.

Though a small operation by business standards, we want to remind all our people and particularly our pastors that *SCRIPTURAL PUBLICATIONS* is truly a “full-service” publishing house in every sense of the word. Quite literally, like a twenty-four hour emergency clinic, “we never close.” It operates generally during the evening hours when its business manager and your chairman can devote blocks of time for printing, stapling, scanning, and invoicing. Our main office here in Oak Forest, Illinois, occupies secure facilities provided by Peace Congregation, including both office and warehousing space. These headquarters house our entire local publishing operation, and we encourage you to visit us during the convention in the lower level of the church’s Christian Education Facility. We are grateful to the congregation here for this quiet, comfortable, and climate-controlled space. We have also co-opted space in the home of our dear Print Shop Manager, Ray Kusumi, in Seattle, where he works with two Conference-owned laser printers but from his own computers.

Printing at the main office is limited to regularly stocked tracts, booklets, certificates, forms, and our Sunday School materials, as well as such occasional jobs as the convention *Prospectus*, agenda, and *Proceedings* and any custom printing requested by our congregations or their pastors. Our remote location in Seattle laser-prints, assembles, and mails out the *Concordia Lutheran* under the supervision of our Print Shop Manager, although this present year we printed and mailed out several issues from this location. In order to streamline our operation and at the same time make it more resource-effective, *Scriptural Publications* intends this coming year to adjust its internal division of labor. We presently envision the Print Shop Manager being

responsible for printing and shipping the *CONCORDIA LUTHERAN* to the western congregations, and the printing and shipping of the convention Proceedings, the pre-convention Prospectus, the convention Agenda, and also selected Sunday School materials. The main office will print and distribute the *midwest*-bound copies of the *CONCORDIA LUTHERAN*, booklets, tracts, and image-file books approved for publication.

By God's grace and with His neverfailing help, the combined brotherly efforts of the Editorial Committee and of *Scriptural Publications* have resulted in the production of an extremely sharp-looking *CONCORDIA LUTHERAN* again this year. Most of the "flukes" have been eliminated as far as formatting problems are concerned, and the operation has been running smoothly. The fact that the *CL* Editor and your chairman have been the same person this year, we have been able to hold quite well to a production schedule that got the *CL* out on time, that is, at least during the first week of the second month named on the issue cover. An exception was the November-December issue which came out rather late. The whole undertaking has been a labor of love, motivated by the Savior's love for us and fruited by the Holy Spirit, who worked in us poor wretched mortals both to will and to do of His good pleasure to the glory of His grace!

As to the printing of books—particularly those "old reliables" of by-gone days, now out of print and found only occasionally in used book stores—we are grateful to Pastor M. L. Natterer, the Editorial Committee's *Book-and-Tract-Editor*, for having carefully reviewed several titles for their soundness and for having promptly returned galley proofs to us with his suggestions and comments, as well as authorization to proceed with reprinting. Because of personal burdens at home, resulting from illness in the family, his time was not his own this past year; but we look forward, God-willing, to his resumption of that work now that his dear wife is on the mend to the praise of God's grace.

Scriptural Publications continues to manage and maintain the Conference web site utilizing the capable expertise of Brother Phil Martin, our Business Manager. Those of you who regularly "hit" on the site know that it has been expanded this year to include more of our published materials; and we hope to add still more resources to the site as time and space permit. Suggestions are always welcome (as well as corrections when mistakes are noted); and these can be left on the site itself in a message to the Webmaster OR they may be e-mailed to Brother Martin at scrippub@orbitel.com, the address of *Scriptural Publications* in Oak Forest. This coming year we intend to co-opt the help of other Conference brethren who have considerable experience in the design and maintenance of web sites; and this should significantly upgrade our page both functionally and attractively.

Scriptural Publications has continued this year to manage also the Seminary Bookstore on behalf of the C. T. E. *Scriptural Publications* will continue to buy up used books, otherwise known among us as "treasures," and it will continue to give the C. T. E. priority on selecting titles for seminary use. The C. T. E. will determine which titles should go where, and the cost of such books will be passed on to the Conference Treasurer on a voucher slip to be debited from the "miscellaneous" account on the General Fund Budget.

We also intend to explore in the near future the acquisition of a binding machine to enable us to produce and bind books in our own location and thus to save the hundreds and thousands of dollars required to out-source the binding operation. This will also reduce significantly the cost of books to our own people in a large discount not available to the general public. I am happy (and in fact deliriously ecstatic) to report that, by the grace of God and motivated by the love of

their dear Savior, our cherished brethren of the *Fellowship of Lutheran Congregations* delivered to us this morning a check for \$ 8,000.00 to cover the cost of this equipment. We are indeed humbled by this generous outpouring of love and Christian cooperation and service, and we thank them sincerely for this gift.

Proposed for the coming year is another capital outlay, namely, for a computer for the exclusive use of the Print Shop Manager, so that his work for *Scriptural Publications* can be made more efficient and technologically seamless.

We also propose that the convention approve the publication of a second devotional book by Alfred Doerffler, his *The Yoke Made Easy*, — again in a “sight-saving edition — specifically targeted for hospitalized, infirmed, and home-bound readers.

In conclusion, some words of special thanks are in order. We have found out this past year that, unlike other standing committees whose work tends to run in spurts and whose responsibilities are chiefly concerned with oversight, the Board of Control of *Scriptural Publications* consists (and must necessarily consist) of men who are able to devote at least ten hours of their time each and every week to every facet of the publishing work —to everything from business administration to the production line. Since we have no production staff, *all* of us are involved to some extent or other with scanning, editing, proofing, printing, collating, stapling, trimming, mailing, bookkeeping, inventory management, correspondence, and so on, as the need arises, helping one another to get the job done. The lights burn late in our offices; we’ve even had some “all-nighters” both in Oak Forest and in Seattle; and, to the best of my knowledge, no request for our services has been denied. Make no mistake, however. We do not consider this work to be a burdensome task. This service to the brethren of our beloved Conference is a *pleasure in the Lord* for all of us, and the Lord has graciously “*established the work of our hands upon us*” (Psalm 90:17). But it would be practically impossible from a purely human standpoint, were it not for the ongoing support of you brethren with your prayers, with your gifts, with your encouragement, and with your constant solicitude; and we thank you all from the bottom of our heart! May the Lord of the Church continue graciously to bless abundantly your faithful labors and co-labors, as well as your gifts and your prayers to the glory of His Name!

Respectfully submitted,

Rev. David T. Mensing, Chairman
Phillip R. Martin, Business Manager
Raymond S. Kusumi, Print Shop Manager

SCRIPTURAL PUBLICATIONS

(Concordia Lutheran Conference)

Financial Report

6/1/02 - 5/31/03

Cash Balance, June 1, 2002 **\$ 6,757.95**

RECEIPTS—*Concordia Lutheran:*

Subscription Renewals	\$ 745.00
New Subscriptions	46.00
Conference Subsidy	0.00

Publishing House & Bookstore:

Sunday School Materials	374.63
New Book Sales	2,514.76
Used Book Sales	164.78
Booklet and Tract Sales	3.83
Conference Subsidy	3,000.00
Convention Proceedings Sales (2001)	852.00
Miscellaneous Donations	1,389.00
Miscellaneous Receipts	362.95

Total Receipts **\$ 9,606.31**

Total Cash Available **\$ 16,364.26**

EXPENSES—*Concordia Lutheran:*

Postage	350.85
Printing and Supplies	730.70
Printing Hardware	0.00
Miscellaneous	0.00

Publishing House & Bookstore:

Postage and Shipping	848.83
Printing Supplies	2,256.59
New Book Inventory (Acquisitions)	5,248.42
Out-of-Print Books (Acquisitions)	593.50
Printing Hardware and Capital Expenditures	997.73
Outsourced Printing	0.00
Miscellaneous	419.24
Telephone	120.00
Web Page Fees and Expenses	473.80
“Endangered Books” Purchases	0.00

Total Expenditures **\$ 12,039.66**

Cash Balance, May 31, 2003 **\$ 4,324.60***

*Note: Included in this cash balance is \$1664.86 set aside for “endangered book” purchases per 1999 resolution.
Note: Accounts Receivable/Open Invoices as of 5/31/2003: \$ 2,169.62

Respectfully submitted,
Phillip R. Martin, Business Manager

REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE ON MISSIONS

Dear Brethren:

“Go ye into all the world, and preach the Gospel to every creature.” God has determined to bring sinners to faith in Jesus Christ through the Means of Grace (the Gospel and Baptism) and has given all Christians the duty and privilege of taking the Word of the Gospel to the world in which they live.

Our Conference has been busy this past year helping spread the Gospel in various areas and providing information concerning our Conference. Our Conference Website contains a wealth of information on our doctrinal position that is available at the click of a button to millions of people around the world. We are blessed with orthodox Sunday School materials along with our bookstore and publishing house, *Scriptural Publications*, that continue to provide our churches with helpful books and teaching tools for our congregations. Our bi-monthly official organ, *The Concordia Lutheran*, has gone out across the country providing examples of faithful exposition of Scripture from the pastors of our Conference. Along side all of the *official* mission outreach is the individual evangelism of our members as they faithfully speak the Word of the Gospel to those with whom they work or live nearby.

The past couple of years our Conference has helped support the work of Pastor Roman Schurganoff in Ekaterinburg, Russia. I have attached his report to our Conference of his pastoral work in that city. We are currently sending him \$550.00 per month for pastoral support along with \$150.00 for the rental of a place for worship. We also collected a special offering this past year of \$2,549.00 to help defray the costs of heart surgery for his wife, Elena.

In recent years the Conference has also provided a monthly subsidy of \$600.00 to St. Stephen's Congregation toward the salary of its pastor since, due to a schism in 1996, it has been unable fully to support him. St. Stephen's Congregation has requested an increase of \$100.00 per month for the this purpose. The Missions and Finance Committees jointly recommend the granting of this increase for the coming year provided the congregation actively review its viability in light of Scripture and the Lord's ordinance that the hearers owe support to their Pastor (Galatians 6:6,7; Luke 10:7; I Timothy 5:17-18). We are requesting that St. Stephens Congregation report back to the committee within four months of the next convention in 2004 with their conclusions.

Pastor Schurganoff has also requested a \$100.00 increase in their monthly support for the coming year in light of irregular exchange rates between the dollar and the Ruble. Your committee also recommends that this increase for Ekaterinburg be granted for the coming year.

The Board of Directors requested the Missions and Finance Committees to devise a financial information form for our mission congregations to complete that would allow us to understand their financial situations more thoroughly. We are particularly interested in the percentage of pastoral support provided by the congregations themselves and the average monthly income of their wage earners. It is our hope that this information from both subsidized congregations during the next few months will help us better to understand their respective situations and enable us to establish proper procedures and policies for future requests.

Respectfully Submitted,

Rev. Ross A. Mahan, chairman
Mr. Ron Lake
Mr. Brett Swinney
Mr. Aaron Dierking

REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE ON THEOLOGICAL EDUCATION

[**Pastor Mark W. Dierking**, the chairman of the Committee on Theological Education, left the convention on Sunday afternoon immediately following the conclusion of the Doctrinal Essay and just before he was scheduled to present his report. In his absence, Pastor Ross Mahan read the report to the assembled delegates; but neither Pastor Dierking nor Pastor Mahan provided an electronic copy of that report to the Conference Secretary for inclusion in the PROCEEDINGS. A “hard copy” was included with all other hard copies of reports and documents in a file which was submitted to President Stallings by mail in the late winter of 2004 for the customary review of the *praesidium* before publication, but he never returned that file. Later that same year, just prior to the opening of the 2004 Convention in Seattle, Pastor Stallings suddenly left our Conference in rejection of our long-standing orthodox teaching and Scriptural practice regarding Sixth Commandment principles. In spite of repeated written requests to return that file to the Conference, Pastor Stallings never so much as replied to our urgent pleas. Three documents in particular are therefore missing from these PROCEEDINGS: a) **The Annual Report of the Conference President**, b) **The Report of the Committee to Review the President’s Report**, and c) **The Report of the Committee on Theological Education**. Readers are directed to the MINUTES of the Convention (above, p. 51) for the Secretary’s contemporaneous *synopsis* of the Committee’s report as it was read. Unfortunately that is our only extant record of the **Report of the Committee on Theological Education**. —Ed.]

INTEREST REPORT OF THE SEMINARY CO-INSTRUCTOR (Prof. Robert J. Lietz)

“O give thanks unto the Lord, for He is good, for His mercy endureth forever” (Psalm 136:1). We owe unending thanks to our dear heavenly Father, our faithful Savior, and our never-failing Comforter, the Holy Ghost, for giving us the gift of our seminary and the gift of a student, Paul E. Bloedel. This duty and privilege of thanks and praise to our God are a result of His perfect goodness and His everlasting compassion toward us unworthy (Genesis 32:10) sinners on account of the marvelous, completely satisfactory work of the God-Man, Christ Jesus, *“the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world”* (I John 2:2). Can we ever sufficiently thank God for His great goodness and marvelous mercy in Christ Jesus toward us sinners who, by nature, are no good, wretched, and undeserving human beings?

In James 1, we have this message conveyed to us: *“Do not err, my beloved brethren. Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above”* (v. 17). Our system of passing on to *“faithful men”* (II Timothy 2:2) the sound, pure, right doctrine and practice (consistent application) of God’s Word by having them move from location to location during the course of their studies is called the “peripatetic” method of training men for the work of the ministry. This system provides the theological student with the wonderful opportunity of studying and working under five different pastors and to pursue a *practicum* of on-going internship in their respective local congregations. While the **system** itself is not commanded by God, it has excellent advantages not only for the student but also for the congregation where he is taking a specific year of training. Why? The people in that congregation actually “experience” the training themselves. They see the training before their very eyes. For example, the members of St. Mark’s, plus those in the Adult Instruction Classes, “experienced” the training of Student Bloedel this past year.

They regularly were able to talk with him (and he with them), which is an important part of his training; every month they had the opportunity to hear him preach, both in the regular Sunday Worship Service and in the Monday morning Chapel Service for the children and teachers of the Christian Day School. The parents, with their children, as well as all others in the congregation, became personally acquainted with what is involved in the training of a pastor.

I particularly mention the parents because they are a vital “cog” as God’s instruments in, first of all, encouraging their own sons to “leave the door *open*” for consideration of, under the Lord God’s direction (Proverbs 3:6), the vocation of being a pastor. Parents are so valuable in training their sons to pray, “Thy will be done,” concerning their future vocation. Furthermore, parents may need to warn their sons **not** to “*close* the door” on training to be a pastor by saying: “I want to be a lawyer and nothing else,” or “I want to have a career in the military and nothing else.” Who is left out in the planning of our future vocation when we set down such inflexible plans ourselves? From my youngest years until I graduated from high school, **my only** desire was to be a farmer. Fortunately, my gracious God overruled **my** desire and carried out **His** desire by leading me to be a pastor.

Secondly, the parents are also a vital “cog” with their own sons in this area by the way they treat, talk about, and conduct themselves toward their own faithful pastor, how they gladly place themselves under the teaching of God’s Word as their pastor instructs them and their children in Bible Class, Sunday School, Confirmation Class, the Voters’ Assembly, and whenever else he, as an ambassador of Christ, gives them instruction from Holy Scripture. Will a son give a lot of thought and consideration to the office of being a pastor if he sees and hears his parents constantly fighting with and complaining about their faithful pastor, neglecting the public preaching and teaching of God’s Word of their faithful pastor, and doing as little as possible to help and encourage their faithful pastor in his work? **Or** will a son give a lot of thought and consideration to the office of being a pastor when he sees and hears his parents speak with much appreciation for the faithful teaching and preaching of God’s Word by their faithful pastor, showing such appreciation by their regular attendance in the Public Worship Service, Bible Class, and all other opportunities to grow through the pure milk of God’s Word, as their faithful pastor feeds their souls with this precious milk, and as he (the son) sees his parents work with their faithful pastor and make his work among them as pleasant as possible by their submission to God’s Word? And let us remember that sons also see the conduct of others —beyond their parents— in the congregation and hear what they say about their faithful pastor. All of this is so important for us as being faithful instruments in encouraging, not discouraging, students of any age to be open to the leading of the Lord God, through His Word, for the needed study to be a faithfully-prepared candidate for the pastoral office.

This fifth year of theological training for Student Bloedel has been an awesome academic year in many ways. God’s strength and help have wonderfully sustained all three of us through both semesters. I have “worn out” during this past year the priceless words of Isaiah 41, verses 10 and 13: “*Fear thou not, for I am with thee; be not dismayed, for I am thy God; I will strengthen thee; yea, I will help thee; yea, I will uphold thee with the right hand of My righteousness. ...I, the Lord thy God, will hold thee by My right hand, saying unto thee, Fear not; I will help thee.*” To the praise of God alone, Student Bloedel, to the best of my knowledge, did not miss a single class or an assignment (such as teaching a class or preaching) due to sickness. Brother Mensing, once again to the best of my knowledge, missed only one class (that was a *Pastoral Theology* class) due to sickness. By the great mercy of God, I did not have one sick day during the entire year. “*The hand of the Lord hath done this*” (Isaiah 41:20).

I would like to take this opportunity to thank the dear members of Trinity, Oak Park, for granting me permission to accept the invitation of the Conference to be one of the two profs for the just-completed fifth year, to “fill in” for our faithful brother, Pastor Paul R. Bloedel, whom the Lord last June, in His mercy, took to Himself in heaven. Pastor Bloedel was scheduled to teach this fifth year. The understanding and cooperation of the members of Trinity are very much appreciated by me. Also, the members of St. Mark’s, Sauk Village, where I serve as vacancy pastor, have also been very understanding and cooperative in my “different” schedule during Student Bloedel’s last year of theological training. St. Mark’s also cheerfully provided its parsonage as a home for Student Bloedel and his family, and Trinity, Oak Park, contributed toward the parsonage utilities during the academic year. I also want to express gratitude to Peace, Oak Forest, for giving Pastor Mensing the permission and privilege to help in this vital work of passing on to Student Bloedel what has been passed on to us from the inerrant, faithful Word of God.

We also would be amiss if we did not extend our deepest thanks to Pastor Mensing’s wife, Alison, to Student Bloedel’s wife, Laura, and to my wife, Donna, for their great understanding and wonderful cooperation during a very hectic academic year for their husbands.

Christian Dogmatics was a three-credit course which was part of my teaching assignment. We used the third volume of Pieper’s *Christian Dogmatics* and Mueller’s *Christian Dogmatics* as textbooks. During the first semester, we covered Church and Ministry. The second semester covered the Election of Grace and Eschatology (the Last Things). This class was scheduled on Mondays, from 1:00 – 4:00 p.m., in the basement of St. Mark’s church.

Comparative Symbolics was also a three-credit course assigned to me. We mainly used as textbooks Mayer’s *Religious Bodies of America* and *Popular Symbolics* by Engelder, Arndt, Graebner and Mayer. In this class, we evaluated, alongside of God’s Word, various church bodies and religions which are not completely in line with the Scriptures, such as the Roman Catholic Church, the Eastern Orthodox Church, the Reformed churches, and then various non-Christian and non-Trinitarian religions. Student Bloedel wrote some very helpful articles which we printed (and will, in the future, print) in our church bulletins at St. Mark’s and at Trinity.

Pastoral Theology (three credits) was a “team-teaching” experience, taught by both Brother Mensing and me, with Pastor Mensing coming over to St. Mark’s on Tuesdays from 1:00 – 4:00 p.m. The textbook employed for this course was *Pastoral Theology*, written by John H. C. Fritz. This class covered a wide scope of topics: The Pastor himself, his wife, his children; the local congregation; the Pastoral Office (as distinct from the priesthood of believers); the actual call to the Public Ministry; the beginning of a pastorate; the work of public preaching and diligent teaching; the administration of Baptism and the Lord’s Supper; Confirmation, Marriage, and Christian Burial; Pastoral calls and counseling; Christian Church Discipline; Christian Stewardship; the Voters’ Assembly; etc. Some of the practical aspects of this class were the making of a sick call (by Student Bloedel) to the two of us, counseling of a couple with marital problems (the “couple” being Brother Mensing and me), the preparation for a complete funeral service (bulletin, obituary, sermon, etc.), with a set day and time for the “funeral,” with the “mourners” consisting of Student Bloedel’s two professors, and the sermon actually preached to us, the “people in the pew.”

The Practicum (two credits) involved such things as doing the bulletin at St. Mark's for one month, teaching the Adult Instruction Class, teaching the Sunday Bible Class at Peace, St. Mark's, and Trinity once a month, accompanying me on sick calls, and sitting in on "actual" funerals. Both Pastor Mensing and I tried to involve him in as many experiences as possible closely connected with a Pastor's work, and provided appropriate guidance and supervision while he was learning "on the job."

Homiletics was a three-credit course, which provided the unique privilege of preaching in **three** congregations. The normal schedule was once-a-month preaching at Peace, St. Mark's, and Trinity, with sermon outlines and the actual sermon manuscripts examined and discussed by both Pastor Mensing and me, whenever possible in advance of their delivery. Furthermore, all of Student Bloedel's sermons (with the exception of the School Chapel sermons) were "preserved" on video tape, which was a valuable tool for evaluation.

As we began this report, so we end it: "*O give thanks unto the Lord, for He is good, for His mercy endureth forever*" (Psalm 136:1).

Respectfully submitted,

Rev. Robert J. Lietz
Fifth Year Co-Instructor

INTEREST REPORT OF THE SEMINARY CO-INSTRUCTOR (Prof. David T. Mensing)

Dear Brethren:

With all glory to God for His abundant, enabling grace toward our Conference, toward our student, toward my congregation, and toward me personally, I rejoice greatly in the privilege of having been permitted, in conjunction with my beloved brother, Pastor Lietz, to commit what I once learned to a faithful young man in our Conference, who now is, having completed his formal training in our seminary, properly equipped and able to teach others also (II Timothy 2:2) and to undertake the ministry of the precious Word of God and the Holy Sacraments, "*that the generation to come might know them, even the children which should be born; who should arise and declare them to their children, that they might set their hope in God*" (Psalm 78:6-7).

I would, of course, be remiss if I did not express my personal gratitude to my congregation for having generously "shared" me with the Conference in the undertaking of this challenge and for bearing with the rather compact schedule that we followed over the course of the year. We truly bore one another's burdens in this endeavor (Galatians 6:2) and, at the same time, reaped mutual benefits from the experience. I am also grateful to my wife and children for bearing with my rather chronic "absence" from the family circle; but over the past twenty years, including my service out of state in Midland, Michigan, they have become somewhat acclimated to that as a kind of necessary routine. Finally, I wish to express profound thanks to my dear brother and cherished friend, Pastor Lietz, for his constant solicitude, patience and forbearance during arduous time, and to his dear Donna, who, like Luther's Katie, was always at his side and ready to take on any task and bear any burden for the sake of our mutual work. But it was only

through Christ, who strengthened us (Philippians 4:13), that we were able to accomplish anything at all, as He did for us “*exceeding abundantly*,” above all that we asked in our fervent prayers or could even have imagined (Ephesians 3:20) to make possible our service to His glory and for the welfare of His kingdom among us, who strengthened us, helped us, and upheld us with the power and comfort of His precious Word. “*To Him be glory both now and forever*” (II Peter 3:18)!

As one of the two fifth-year instructors on our peripatetic rotation, I was privileged to teach over the past two academic semesters two courses prescribed in the Seminary Curriculum for fifth-year students and to co-teach two others. This work, while arduous in the amount of personal study required and sometimes staggering in the time necessary for preparation of lessons and appropriate materials, was also gratifying to me personally and the source of so much joy in the Lord. It was at one and the same time a *daunting challenge* and a *great privilege*.

An unforeseen difficulty arose almost at once, particularly with *Church History IV* (The 20th Century), because I had prepared specifically to teach that limited time period but found that, in the third year course, the 17th through the 19th Centuries had not been completed. I therefore had to cover those three centuries in the *first* semester without the benefit of prior preparation and had to study and prepare my material just a few “leaps,” as it were, ahead of our student. This is quite frankly, an instructor’s “worst nightmare” simply because of the obvious dangers inherent in shallow or hurried preparation. In this case, however, I had no choice since much of 20th Century history truly leans on and flows out of what developed, especially in *Lutheranism*, and what transpired particularly in the 19th Century. Thus both the student and his instructor were forced to compress the 20th Century in Lutheranism, with all of its leaven, apostasy, indifferentism and ecumenism, into one short semester instead of the anticipated two. And that was a tall order for *both* of us. Sharply accelerated courses are never what might be called “fun.”

I also taught *Liturgics and Hymnology*, devoting approximately one full semester to a detailed study of the history and forms of the *liturgy* or worship service, and approximately one semester to the history, forms, authors, and composers of the *hymns* in our Lutheran heritage of hymnody. There were no surprises in this course, since I had been well-prepared in this area during my own years in our seminary here, still had a fairly complete syllabus of notes, and was able to add a considerable amount of authoritative material to give Student Bloedel much better than I had received. In both *Church History IV* and *Liturgics and Hymnology*, however, we were constantly fighting the calendar because of the late start we got in the fall of the year, not actually beginning instruction until the first week in November instead of the middle of September because of the delay in Student Bloedel’s relocation. Once we got going, however, it was a non-stop express train for everyone aboard.

One of the most gratifying courses —from the standpoint of the pastor as a shepherd and caretaker of souls— is *Pastoral Theology*. This course concerns itself with the application of the doctrines of Holy Scripture in the context of the local congregation, particularly in its *personal* application to individuals and in individual (and sometimes *difficult*) cases. What was so rewarding about this course was that Pastor Lietz and I “team-taught” it in a three-hour session each Tuesday afternoon. It was like a “three-way pastoral conference” or consultation in which the student was a participant, able to engage in problem identification and solutions, and, at the same time, as an auditor, able to gain the best from TWO experienced pastors from different backgrounds, of different temperaments, and having had different experiences. Among the topics covered were the administration of *official acts* (Baptisms, the Lord’s Supper, marriages,

and even burials), as well as Christian Church discipline, the Christian Congregation (particularly the function of the Voters' Assembly), marriage and family counseling, visiting the sick and the dying, and the instruction of prospective members. It is in this course that the student gains a lot of judgment and does a lot of "hands-on" work, in OUR seminary "coached" through it all by TWO pastoral mentors. Both Pastor Lietz and I wistfully wished that we had had a similar opportunity before being literally dropped into the ministry with little practical experience. The team-teaching approach in this course (as well as in the next to be discussed) provided many advantages; and the two pastors learned from one another, as the student learned from them.

Homiletics III, the preparation and delivery of sermons, was also "team-taught," making it possible for the student to preach in as many as five pulpits in the first semester, and in three during the second. All of the sermons delivered by the student were video-taped, not only for the "record," but in order to give him opportunity to observe himself deliver those sermons and to measure his growth. We not only helped him develop appropriate, textual, and functional outlines, but we carefully monitored his exposition of Scripture, his division of Law and Gospel, and his application of doctrine, both in the outline and in the manuscript. Both Pastor Lietz and I evaluated the sermons, even those preached in the other's pulpit, made constructive suggestions, and worked with the student in the analysis of his delivery to make it not only *natural* but also *effective*.

As Brother Bloedel now awaits the pleasure of God's Holy Spirit in calling him to the work of the pastoral ministry, I wish him the Lord's continued blessings both upon his service and upon his life, as he continues to "*show [himself] approved unto God,*" as a well-qualified candidate for the Office of the Holy Ministry. And may the Lord of the Church, without whom we can do nothing, plentifully endow him with His grace and bless abundantly all his faithful labors.

Respectfully submitted,

Rev. David T. Mensing
Fifth Year Co-Instructor

INTEREST REPORT OF THE SEMINARY STUDENT

Dear Brethren:

With all praise and thanks to God for His abundant grace in Christ Jesus, my seminary training has now been completed. Thank you all so very much for your continued prayers in my behalf and for the ongoing Christian encouragement that you gave to me throughout these past five and a half years.

My professors during this last year of the seminary, Pastors Lietz and Mensing, had busy schedules even before they took on the responsibility of teaching me. As was the case with all of the pastors who instructed me over the years, their work load was dramatically increased when they became active seminary professors. At this time, I would like to thank again all of my seminary professors for the labor that they bestowed upon me over the years. Of course, all

thanks ultimately belongs to our gracious God for strengthening them and blessing their work as pastors and professors during their time of active instruction.

I was very blessed to be able to start this final year of training as a married man; my virtuous wife, Laura, has been a tremendous help and comfort to me. Our housing was very generously provided by St. Mark's Ev. Lutheran Church in Sauk Village, Illinois. The brethren at St. Mark's have consistently gone out of their way to make us feel right at home. We greatly appreciate all that they have done for us.

About three weeks ago, on the 6th of June, God blessed my wife and me by giving us our first child—a healthy baby boy. Since the time of his Baptism on June 8th, he has joined us in the true Christian faith as a believing child of God. Please pray for Laura and me that we bring this child up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord. And may God, through the power of the Gospel, strengthen and preserve our son steadfast in the true faith until his death.

With the completion of this fifth and final year, our Conference seminary now stands empty. We currently have no seminary students; and I am unaware of any prospective students who might enroll in our seminary in the near future. So I would encourage everyone in the Conference to make it a point earnestly to pray that God would move the hearts of able men to desire to serve the Lord and their fellow men in the pastoral office and to be trained for such service in our seminary, to the end that the Word of God may be preached and taught in the congregations of our Conference for generations to come.

*Preserve this ministry
While harvest-days are keeping;
And since the fields are white
And hands are few for reaping,
Send workers forth, O Lord,
The sheaves to gather in
That not a soul be lost
Which Thou art come to win.*

(TLH 485, 4)

Respectfully submitted,

Paul E. Bloedel, c. r. m.

SERMON DELIVERED AT THE SEMINARY GRADUATION SERVICE

Friday, June 27, 2003

Delivered by the Rev. Robert J. Lietz, Oak Park, Illinois

Text: II Timothy 2:2

In the name of Christ Jesus, the Head of the Church (Ephesians 5:23), dear Student Bloedel, your dear wife, Laura, your infant son, Joshua, fellow members of the faculty, other fellow brethren in the pastoral office, and all the other precious members of the congregations of the Concordia Lutheran Conference and of the Fellowship of Lutheran Congregations:

The words of Scripture which will serve as the foundation for this evening's homily are from II Timothy 2, verse 2: *"The things which thou hast heard of me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also."*

"It is written" (Matthew 4:4)! We do not use these words enough; we can **never** use these words too much. However, we dare not **just** say, *"It is written,"* as if those words were some sort of magical formula by themselves. Rather, we need again and again, in all of our earthly life, to connect those three words with the appropriate words of Scripture for the situation with which we are dealing, whether that situation applies to us as individuals, to others as individuals, to our own families, to our own congregations, or to our own church body.

So, this evening, we connect, *"It is written,"* with the words of II Timothy 2, verse 2: *"The things which thou hast heard of me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also."* These clear words of God, written down by the Apostle Paul, show us

The Importance of Sound Theological Training for Continuing Orthodoxy in Our Midst.

Such training

I. Calls for faithful teachers, given by God's gracious providence (v. 2a),
and, furthermore, it

II. Calls for faithful students, given by God's gracious providence (v. 2b).

In this epistle or letter, the Apostle Paul is writing to Timothy, whom he calls *"my dearly beloved son"* (1:2). The apostle, in the first chapter of this epistle, gives this counsel to Timothy: *"Hold fast the form of sound words, which thou hast heard of me, in faith and love which is in Christ Jesus"* (v. 13). Timothy is told to hold on tightly to the words of God, those words which are always good, faithful, trustworthy, and changeless. However, Timothy is not only told to stick with the pure Word of God, but he is also counseled to share it with others, to set it before others, to distribute it, that is, the same Word of God which the Apostle Paul had shared with him, set before him, and distributed to him. Pastor Timothy was faithfully to teach others the Word of God as he himself had been publicly, faithfully taught that Word of God by the apostle. Listen once again to the apostle's words to Timothy: *"The things which thou hast heard of me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men."*

Now what are some of those *"things"*? They are so many that we cannot possibly expound on all of them in this one sermon. But we will focus on some of those *"things."* In the first chapter of this second epistle, the apostle said to Timothy: *"Be not thou therefore ashamed of the testimony of our Lord, nor of me His prisoner, but be thou partaker of the afflictions of the Gospel according to the power of God"* (v. 8). Timothy is not to be ashamed of being in agreement with the testimony of the Lord God, as that testimony is set forth and revealed in the Holy Scriptures. Furthermore, Timothy is not to be embarrassed because of his teacher, the Apostle Paul, who was in prison on account of and because of Christ and His Gospel. Let us remember that Noah was not ashamed of the testimony that God had passed on to him concerning the great wickedness in the world, the building of an ark, what he should take into the ark, and the tremendously destructive flood that He was about to send upon the earth (Genesis 6:13-21).

In our sermon text, the words of the apostle were originally written to Timothy. But these words also apply to all of us. We are not to be ashamed of being in agreement with the testimony of

our Lord as He reveals it to us in His Word. Furthermore, we are not to be embarrassed because we are a lone voice many times, possibly in our neighborhoods, or at work when we are eating lunch with some of our co-workers; we are not to be ashamed or embarrassed by what we have been taught, by what we know, by what we understand (Mark 8:38, Psalm 25:2-3; 119:104). Let us not forget that we are “*the salt of the earth*” (Matthew 5:13) and “*the light of the world*” (Matthew 5:14). It is only by the grace of God in Christ Jesus, who is “**THE** *Light of the world*” (John 8:12), that we have been “*called... out of darkness into His marvelous light*” (I Peter 2:9). Now to all who, through Christ Jesus, are most certainly “*the light of the world,*” the Savior Himself says: “*A city that is set on a hill cannot be hid. Neither do men light a candle and put it under a bushel, but on a candlestick; and it giveth light unto all that are in the house. Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father which is in heaven*” (Matthew 5:14-16).

The faithful teacher of God’s Word, the Apostle Paul, had not only, by God’s grace alone, taught the Word of God, but he confessed that he “*would endure all things for the elect’s sake*” (II Timothy 2:10); he would suffer and go through whatever was necessary, even death, to preserve, defend, and support the sound doctrine of God’s Word for the spiritual benefit and profit of God’s elect. So we ought, as children of God, to be willing, by God’s marvelous and powerful grace, to remain faithful to God’s Word, bearing witness to it, preserving it, defending it, and supporting it, even if we have to suffer abuse and possibly death as a result.

It is a joy and delight to be together at this convention. Together we help, support, and edify one another as we share God’s Word and our trust and confidence in it. What is difficult is when we have to stand alone, whether we are lay-people or pastors.

Let us listen to and consider once again the words of our sermon text: “*The things that thou hast heard of me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also.*” The “*things*” which Timothy had heard from the apostle surely included both Law and Gospel, the holy, powerful Law which repeatedly shows us our sins and brings us to a true knowledge of and sorrow over them (Romans 3:20), and the saving, powerful Gospel, which repeatedly shows us our Savior and His blood-bought pardon for our sins and for the sins of the whole world (I John 2:2), His blood-bought peace and the reconciliation He accomplished and established between our holy God and us and all other sinners (II Corinthians 5:19). It is this Gospel of grace and peace which declares that He “*saved us by the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Ghost, which He [God] 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). Furthermore, the Scriptures teach us that our merciful God, “*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 Timothy 1:9). What an astounding, marvelous thing, that God, already in eternity, before the creation of the world, planned the salvation of all mankind and chose His dear elect, His dear believers, by His grace, out of His good pleasure alone, for Jesus’ sake (Ephesians 1:3-6).

These are some of “*the things*” which need to be faithfully taught from the Pauls to the Timothys, from the Timothys to “*others,*” from those others to still others, doing so from one generation to the next. We spoke of the fact that God uses faithful teachers for the preservation of orthodoxy in His church; this is most certainly a gift of His grace and goodness. The Apostle Paul’s confession is so true: “*By the grace of God I am what I am*” (I Corinthians 15:10). Not only a pastor, but every child of God can surely, honestly, and gratefully confess: “*By the grace of God I am what I am.*”

Our gracious God is not only concerned about preserving and passing on the right teaching from His Word from one generation after another, but He is also concerned about warning against and preserving precious souls from wrong, false teaching. This is why the Savior Himself says to His sheep: “*Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep’s clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves; ye shall know them by their fruits*” (Matthew 7:15-16). Unfaithful teachers, who persist in and stick with their wrong, false teaching, are to be avoided because they cause divisions and offenses contrary to the teachings of God’s Word (Romans 16:17-18). God does not want even one soul to be turned away from Him and kept away from Him through the “*leaven*” (Galatians 5:9) of lies, teachings which are of man and not of God (Jeremiah 23:31).

And so our God, out of His perfect and real love in Christ Jesus for the entire human race, reveals “*the things*” in His Word which He wants to be taught and passed on by the teacher to the student, as has been done for the past five years for our theological student, Brother Bloedel. Our Concordia Lutheran Conference has at present the “peripatetic” system of the theological student traveling from one congregation to another, year-by-year, with the pastor of each congregation teaching the student and passing on to him “*the things*” which are taught in the Scriptures. This provides the student with the rich experience of being in different congregations in our fellowship, but receiving instruction from the same, changeless Word of God by each pastor. Our student, Brother Bloedel, has had this privilege and opportunity for the past five years. In a godly way, I envy him because, much like nurses in their training, Brother Bloedel had the opportunity, during all five years, to work in the field of his future labor. On the one hand, he had to take classes in various areas of Scriptural theology, but on the other hand, he had many experiences and much observation in the actual, day-to-day work of a faithful pastor: Teaching God’s Word in the Sunday School, in Confirmation and Bible Classes, and in adult instruction classes; preaching God’s Word at various times of the church year; accompanying the pastor on sick calls; writing Sunday bulletins; watching the pastor’s ministrations following a death in the congregation; participating in Voters’ Meetings and actually “chairing” such meetings; and so forth. These are some of “*the things*” which have been taught to you, Brother Bloedel, and shared with you.

II.

Now, Brother Bloedel, “*the things*” which you have learned and experienced, you are to pass on, teach, and share with “*others also*,” not only with the members of the congregation to which you are called, but, with the permission of your congregation, also with future students who will be studying to be faithful pastors.

In the Fellowship of Lutheran Congregations, we had the privilege of teaching and training Brother Nimi Fyनेface from Nigeria. Now he has the privilege, with the permission of his congregation in Abonnema, of teaching and training *other* Nigerian natives to be faithful pastors. In Pastor Fyनेface’s on-going work, we see the carrying-out and application of the words of our sermon text: “*The things that thou hast heard of me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also.*”

But the preservation of orthodoxy through sound theological training in our midst also calls for “*faithful men*,” faithful students, who will then, after they are taught, be competent and qualified to teach still others. Another illustration of this “passing on” takes place in the home. Christian parents, by God’s grace and with His help, teach their children the Word of God. As the children grow up, the parents get older and pass away. Then the children teach their children, sharing the same Word of God with them, just as their parents did with them. “Lord God, heavenly Father, in

Thy great mercy and goodness, for Jesus' sake, preserve unto us the sound doctrine of Thy pure Word and the diligent application of such teaching in our midst, for the faithful, future training of students studying to be pastors, so that true, genuine orthodoxy may be preserved and retained among us, for the glory of Thy precious name, and for the eternal blessing of many souls."

At the present time, we have no students who have applied or registered to be theological students for next fall, or for any time in the near future. What should we do about that? We should remember our Gospel lesson for today, where our Savior Himself says to us: "*Pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that He will send forth laborers into His harvest*" (Matthew 9:38). Is He able to find faithful students, to move them to study to be faithful laborers, faithful pastors, and then to send them into the work of teaching and preaching to, feeding of, and watching over precious souls? Yes, most certainly, God is well able to do this important work. "*Is anything too hard for the Lord?*" (Genesis 18:14).

Look at what He did with our sins! He did something far more difficult than **finding** young men, middle-aged men, or even older men, **working in them** the desire to study for the pastoral office, and then **leading them** to His own field of labor! God, through Christ, fully satisfied His demand that all human beings be perfect and holy, as He is perfect and holy (Matthew 5:48; Leviticus 19:2). Jesus Himself declared: "*Think not that I am come to destroy the Law and the Prophets; I am not come to destroy, but to fulfill*" (Matthew 5:17). Furthermore, God, through Christ, **paid the full penalty** and **suffered the full punishment** "*for our sins, and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world*" (I John 2:2). So, it is most certainly true that "*God was in Christ reconciling the world unto Himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them, and hath committed unto us the Word of reconciliation. ... For He hath made Him [who knew no sin], to be sin for us, that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him*" (II Corinthians 5:19, 21). Now, and until the end of this world, it will remain changelessly true: "*He that believeth on Him [Christ, the Son of God] is not condemned, but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God*" (John 3:18). What a great, marvelous, and awesome work God did for our sins and the sins of the whole world! If He did that great work, He can also do the great work of finding faithful men to be pastors in our Concordia Lutheran Conference and wherever else such are needed in this world at any time and at any place.

In the second epistle of Paul to the Corinthians, the apostle declares: "*Ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though He was rich yet for your sakes He became poor, that ye through His poverty might be rich*" (II Corinthians 8:9). What lasting riches we have in and through Christ, riches which we can pass on and share with others, riches which we can take with us to the grave, riches which give us the certain victory over sin, death, and the grave (I Corinthians 15:55-57).

May this great grace of God in Christ continue to constrain and impel us, now and in the future, faithfully to teach what we have been faithfully taught from God's Word, and to keep on supporting such teaching, for the glory of God, for the preservation of orthodoxy in our midst, and ultimately for the everlasting benefit of souls (II Corinthians 5:14). Amen.

Soli Deo gloria!

REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE ON LUTHERAN UNION

Dear Brethren:

The Lord has granted us another year of grace to carry out our purpose "to seek out all who truly

share our Scriptural position in doctrine and practice, and to urge the mutual public acknowledgment of such God-given unity. Thus we shall be able thereafter to practice a God-pleasing fellowship with them” (Statement of Purpose, *The Concordia Lutheran*). We know that we have not done this as we should. While the earnest desire to comply has certainly been and is in our hearts and minds, by no means have we attained perfection in this respect. We have been and are often hindered by the devil who, in these last days, has been loosed in one final attempt to destroy the Church which the Savior purchased and won with His holy precious blood and innocent suffering and death. This sly foe has infested the present-day Lutheran Church with the most abominable false teachings and beguiled ever so many souls with his specious arguments. We thus face a Red Sea of obstacles in reaching out to others. Being a *small* Conference, we have limited resources; but we have the assurance that “*with God all things are possible*” who accomplishes whatsoever He pleases, whether it be with many or with few, as He did in the case of Gideon (Judges 7). He who rules all things according to His good and gracious Will assures us that not even the very gates of hell shall prevail against His Church.

I have been hindered this last year in doing the work assigned to me because of marital responsibilities. As all of you know my wife collapsed after the Fall Pastoral Conference in Tucson, Arizona. By God’s grace, we were able to get her back to our home in Oregon where surgery was promptly performed. Thanks to the intercessions of all of you brethren and our own fervent prayers ascending to the Throne of Grace, the Lord mercifully spared her life. However, she required constant care during her recuperation, which meant that my activities were greatly curtailed. With the full knowledge and approval of our Conference President, Pastor Stallings, I requested Pastor Mahan’s assistance during this time. He graciously offered his help and will be able to elaborate in detail what has transpired this last year. I am also deeply appreciative of the assistance given to me by the pastors of our Conference who made various contacts and will be able to make them known to us on the floor of the Convention.

May the Lord continue to grant us the necessary wisdom and strength as we strive to find others who take their puny reason captive, willingly submit to the Word of God, and then walk with us in the unity of the Spirit.

Respectfully submitted,

Rev. M. L. Natterer, Chairman
Rev. David T. Mensing
Rev. Mark W. Dierking
Mr. Phillip R. Martin

REPORT CONCERNING THE SEMINARY BOOKSTORE

Dear Brethren:

Besides keeping on hand copies of the “standard texts” still available from their publishers for use in our seminary, we are always looking for copies of out-of-print “treasures” and acquire these for *Scriptural Publications* when they are reasonably priced. We then inform the chairman of the Committee of Theological Education of newly-acquired titles, so that the C. T. E. has the first opportunity to purchase any of these for the inventory of the Seminary Bookstore. Since the original purpose of the Seminary Bookstore included the desire to make available to theological students volumes that should be in the working library of every pastor, it is Conference policy that the inventory of the Seminary Bookstore be kept under lock and key, and that volumes be made available for purchase only by current seminary students and by members of the Seminary faculty. Only as a rare exception, and only with the express permission of the C. T. E., will *others* be permitted access to the collection. We also accept donations of books, acquired by others and/or generously contributed by pastors from their own shelves; and we are always eager to hear of such willingness to help our future pastors build up their libraries with books that are truly profitable to read and study.

Respectfully submitted,

Mr. Phillip R. Martin, Business Manager
Scriptural Publications

REPORT CONCERNING THE CONFERENCE ARCHIVES

Dear Brethren:

On behalf of Pastor Mensing, our Conference Secretary and constitutionally the Conference’s archivist, I want to report very briefly about the archives of the Conference. One of the repositories of valuable archived material, now available to every interested individual, is the two CD set containing image files of fifty years of the *Concordia Lutheran*. This set, available from *Scriptural Publications* for under twenty dollars, puts literally at one’s “fingertips” a half century of edifying articles that can be read on a personal computer and can be printed out as well for individual study or use in a class. A “premium” set is also available which includes a powerful **search engine** with which specific topics, words and expressions can be accessed and located in the various articles. Considering the thousands of hours that went into the production of these electronic archives, not to mention the cost of acquiring back issues of the *C.L.* in their original “hard copy” format, *both* sets are reasonably priced and well worth the investment.

We also encourage the pastors in particular to consider providing copies of correspondence that is of historical significance to safe keeping in the *Conference Archives*, that the generation to come can be authoritatively informed about the early days of our Conference. Such documents may then also be copied in *electronic* format for a permanent file that, like the *Concordia Lutheran* articles, can be easily researched and accessed.

Respectfully submitted,

Rev. David T. Mensing, Conference Secretary
Mr. Phillip R. Martin

FISCAL BUDGET ADOPTED FOR 2003-2004

Cash Balance, June 1, 2003	\$ 36,821.12
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2003-2004 Pledges and Other Estimated Income:

Faith, Jackson	\$ 1,200.00
Good Shepherd, Tucson	500.00
Holy Scripture, San Antonio	2,200.00
Peace, Oak Forest	7,200.00
St. John's, Lebanon	4,800.00
St. Luke's, Seattle	3,600.00
St. Stephen's, Wilmot	0.00
Interest Income	400.00
2003 Convention Collection	1,401.20
Total Pledges and Other Estimated Income	\$ 21,301.20

Total Cash Available for Budgetary Purposes	\$ 58,122.32
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On-Going Expenses:	2002-2003 Expenses	2003-2004 Budget
<i>Scriptural Publications</i>	\$ 3,000.00	\$ 3,500.00
St. Stephen's Subsidy	7,700.00	8,400.00
Yekaterinburg Subsidy (Salary)	6,550.00	7,200.00
Yekaterinburg Subsidy (Rent)	1,650.00	2,400.00
Conference Archives Subsidy	200.00	500.00
Telephone Expense	480.20	600.00
Convention Expense	0.00	1,000.00
Travel Expense	4,793.18	4,000.00
Miscellaneous Expense	1,370.78	2,000.00
Total General Fund Budget Adopted by the Convention:		\$ 29,600.00

RESOLUTIONS PASSED BY THE FIFTY-SECOND ANNUAL CONVENTION**Resolution #1:**

WHEREAS Mr. and Mrs. Oscar E. von Rohr, Jr. of Cedar Vale, Chautauqua County, Kansas, in their respective last wills and testaments dated December 20, 2002, declared the **Concordia Lutheran Conference** to be the beneficiary of their estate, provided that neither spouse survives the other by sixty days; and

WHEREAS they specifically named the **Student Aid Fund** of our Conference as the beneficiary of all their real and personal property, with the exception of their library and all religious books and equipment, which they direct to the **Seminary Book Store**, and several items of personal property specifically bequeathed to another beneficiary; and

WHEREAS the von Rohrs entrusted to the care and keeping of Pastor Mensing, the present Conference Secretary, signed, witnessed and notarized copies of these documents and named him as the first alternate executor of their estate should either spouse not survive the other to serve as executor; and

WHEREAS their bequest was motivated by the Holy Spirit, according to their own statements, as the expression of their concern for a truly orthodox ministry in the years to come and of their desire to support its preparation in a tangible manner as a fruit of their faith and out of appreciation for the truth of God's Word and particularly for the Gospel;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that we thank our dear brethren, Mr. and Mrs. von Rohr, for their generous bequest and express to them, in advance, the appreciation of future students for their kind consideration of their needs, and that we praise the God of all grace for having worked in them this charitable intention to His eternal glory.

Resolution #2:

WHEREAS the Fellowship of Lutheran Congregations, a church body of dear brethren in the faith and of common cause with us in the preservation of the unity of the Spirit by oneness in doctrine and practice on the basis of God's Word alone, recognizes with us the importance of the printing and dissemination of truly orthodox instructional and devotional materials for the edification of our own respective flocks, first of all, and for a consistent witness also to others; and

WHEREAS the Fellowship of Lutheran Congregations at its recent convention resolved to contribute to and to underwrite significantly the purchase of binding and trimming equipment by *Scriptural Publications* for the production of paperback books and other documents, and delivered to the Business Manager of *Scriptural Publications* at this present convention a check in the amount of eight thousand dollars (\$ 8000.00);

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that we extend out heartfelt thanks to our dear brethren in the Fellowship of Lutheran Congregations for this generous contribution which will enable our publishing house soon now to acquire much-needed equipment for its operation and will make possible the timely production of valuable books and other instructional materials for the benefit of our people and to the glory of God's grace in Christ Jesus, our Savior.

Resolution #3:

WHEREAS our brethren of St. Mark's Ev. Lutheran Church in Sauk Village, Illinois, mindful of our need to house our fifth-year seminary student and his wife during the academic year 2002-2003, invested a great deal of time and money in the renovation of its parsonage, in order both to continue to house its own vacancy pastor, the Rev. Robert J. Lietz, and his wife in those accommodations and also to offer comfortable living quarters to our student as well; and

WHEREAS Pastor and Mrs. Lietz kindly consented to share their home in Sauk Village with

Student and Mrs. Bloedel during the past academic year and thus generously and lovingly sacrificed their own privacy out of hospitality to their brethren;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that we express our sincere gratitude to St. Mark's Ev. Lutheran Church and to Pastor and Mrs. Robert J. Lietz for their generosity and labor of love in offering loving Christian hospitality to our student and his family.

Resolution #4:

WHEREAS this convention has elected officers and standing committees to serve during the coming fiscal year; and

WHEREAS the labor of those who faithfully served our Conference this past year has been greatly appreciated by their brethren as having been done to the Lord's glory and for the welfare of His kingdom;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that we express our sincere gratitude for all that the previous officers and members of committees have accomplished in the Lord during the past year for our mutual benefit and to the praise of His grace; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that we beseech the Lord's gracious blessings upon the labors of our elected officers and committees, as they undertake the various tasks for which they have been chosen.

Resolution #5:

WHEREAS our convention delegates and visitors were blessed to hear the second half and conclusion of a most interesting and instructive historical essay by Pastor David T. Mensing entitled "The Split in the Orthodox Lutheran Conference in 1955 and Its Reorganization as the Concordia Lutheran Conference in 1956;" and

WHEREAS the tireless and detailed research and the pursuit of primary source materials (e.g. letters, articles, proceedings and the like) of our history is an important endeavor, that the record of our Conference's orthodoxy may be preserved among us for the years to come to the glory of God; and

WHEREAS we may learn from our brethren before us who stood for the purity of God's Word in teaching and practice, persevered in the faith, and through much personal tribulation established our Conference so that we might enjoy the fruits of their labor and endeavor to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace; and

WHEREAS we heard a thoroughly Scriptural, instructive and edifying doctrinal essay on the convention motto, "*Be not conformed to this world,*" delivered by Pastor Edward J. Worley; and

WHEREAS Pastor Worley showed us through his examination of worldliness its insidious nature to ensnare us and our need for continuous vigilance against the devil, the world, and our sinful flesh by God's grace through the diligent study of and meditation upon His holy Word;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that we convey our sincerest thanks to Pastors Mensing

and Worley for their essays which provided us with such splendid spiritual food for our souls' eternal welfare.

Resolution #6:

WHEREAS we were privileged to hear edifying and instructive sermons from our Conference President, Pastor E. R. Stallings, in the opening service on Friday morning and from Pastor Ross A. Mahan, who preached the sermon in the Divine Service on Sunday morning;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that we express our sincere gratitude for their having fed and nourished our souls with the Bread of Life.

Resolution #7:

WHEREAS each session of our convention was opened with an edifying devotion by Pastors Lietz, Redlin, Mahan and Dierking;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that we thank each of these men for his opening devotion and for providing us with such splendid spiritual food for our souls' meditation.

Resolution #8:

WHEREAS the divine services and devotions conducted during our convention were enhanced by special organ music provided by Mr. Lloyd E. Martin, and choral offerings were rendered to the glory of God by a choir composed of members from various congregations of our Conference;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that we thank Mr. Lloyd E. Martin, the organist of Peace Evangelical Lutheran Church, for his part in beautifying the services and leading us in our hymns and songs of praise, as well as all those who under his direction combined their voices in the choir and thus gave of their particular talents to the glory of God; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that we give all praise, honor, and glory to our Triune God for His continued blessings upon our Conference as He feeds us with His precious Word, strengthens us through the same in the saving faith, and keeps us His own unto life everlasting, through Jesus Christ, our Lord.

Resolution #9:

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 the members of the host congregation; and

WHEREAS Peace Evangelical Lutheran Church of Oak Forest, Illinois, has shown itself to be a most gracious host to our 52nd Annual Convention, with members opening their homes to delegates and visitors and rendering them brotherly Christian hospitality; and

WHEREAS the host congregation so graciously provided the delicious meals served to all those in attendance at the Pastoral Conference, the Board meeting and at this convention, as well as

welcome snacks and refreshments during the recesses between sessions; and

WHEREAS most generous and sacrificial Christian hospitality was demonstrated by the members of this congregation, making the stay of the pastors, delegates and visitors a particularly pleasant and enjoyable experience also by providing wholesome recreational opportunities for guests and their families and, in general, serving their brethren in love with every conceivable comfort and convenience;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that we express our gratitude to Pastor and Mrs. David T. Mensing and the members of Peace Evangelical Lutheran Church for all they did by the grace of God and to His glory to make our convention a success and to contribute to our spiritual edification, our pleasant sociability, and our physical comfort; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that we all lift up our hearts to the Lord in thanksgiving for His abiding grace whereby He has preserved us a true fellowship of brethren who, in the unity of the Spirit, mortify the flesh, fight against the temptations of the wicked world, flee and avoid discord and strife, and continue to be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment on the basis of His precious Word to the glory of His holy Name.

STATISTICAL REPORT for Fiscal Year 2002-2003

MEMBERSHIP	Faith Ev. Lutheran Church	Good Shepherd Ev. Lutheran Church	Holy Scripture Ev. Lutheran Church	Peace Ev. Lutheran Church	St. John's Lutheran Church	St. Luke's Lutheran Church	St. Stephen's Ev. Lutheran Church	Totals
Baptized Members	36	39	56	79	94	105	15	424
Communicant Members	30	30	33	48	46	62	10	259
Voting Members	14	10	13	18	18	24	5	102
Children in Sunday School	5	5	21	18	20	27	0	96
Adults in Bible Class	18	12	33	45	30	57	5	200
Received by Transfer	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1
Received by Confirmation or Profession	4	1	0	5	4	0	0	14
Lost by Transfer	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	1
Lost by Other Circumstance	4	2	1	1	0	1	0	9

OFFICIAL ACTS

Infant Baptisms	1	2	0	2	4	1	1	11
Adult Baptisms	1	0	0	0	2	0	0	3
Confirmations of Children	1	1	0	2	4	0	0	8
Confirmations of Adults	3	0	0	3	0	0	0	6
Marriages Solemnized	0	0	1	2	2	1	0	6
Funerals or Burials	1	1	0	1	0	0	0	3

AUXILIARY STAFF

Sunday School Teachers	2	3	3	5	3	9	0	25
Elected Auxiliary Officers	3	4	10	12	8	9	5	51
Organists	1	1	2	1	1	1	1	8
Choir Members	0	0	0	8	0	15	0	23

PROPERTY

Church Facilities OWNED?	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	
Church Facilities RENTED?	No	No	Yes*	Yes**	No	Yes***	No	Totals
Acreage (with or without buildings)	.75	3.5	.43	3.20	1.47	.67	2.3	12.77
Value (in thousands of \$\$)	\$ 150	\$440	\$150	\$900	\$200	\$908	\$225	\$2,973

Number of Congregations: 7 Number of Pastors: 7 Available Candidates: 1

*Remote chapel, Anaheim, CA
 **Remote chapel, Midland, MI
 ***Remote Chapel, Victoria, BC

Respectfully submitted,
 Raymond S. Kusumi, Statistician