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OPENING SERMON

for the

Fifty-seventh Annual Convention

of the

CONCORDIA LUTHERAN CONFERENCE

delivered by

The Rev. Edward J. Worley, Conference President

Text: **Amos 8:1-14**

Grace, mercy and peace from God our Heavenly Father and Jesus Christ our Lord and only Savior!

Dear fellow sinners, rescued from death and damnation in the sin-atoning, wrath-quenching, holy and precious shed blood of God's Only-Begotten and Well-Beloved, His Son, our Only Savior, Jesus Christ:

Our text was chosen to support our Convention Motto, "*Redeeming the Time*" (Ephesians 5:16), with specific application in both the essay and in the sermon to the urgency of training and supporting a future ministry — well-trained and faithful pastors, genuine shepherds to lead, feed and protect the flocks entrusted to their care by God Himself, our Chief Shepherd, Jesus Christ. To this end our keynote sermon this morning declares to our ears, minds and hearts:

A People RIPE for God's Terrible Judgment: A FAMINE of GOD'S WORD!

under two main questions: **I.** When does God consider a people ripe for judgment? and **II.** What judgment does God send upon such a people?

By the way of brief introduction, consider the opposition the prophet Amos faced in his day. Amos was attacked personally. Often when someone cannot refute what you proclaim (God's Own Word!) they resort to personal attacks. Remember how our dear Lord was slandered as being mentally unstable, a drunk, a one possessed by a demon. Prior to our text, in Amos Chapter 7, after giving three visions of God's judgment against Israel and mentioning the royal family of Jereboam II by name, Amos is also slandered. Amaziah, the high priest in charge of the royal sanctuary of idolatry in Bethel, slanders Amos with conspiracy against the state, causing public disturbances and for doing so just to make money (cf. Amos 7:10, 12). How does Amos respond? Unmoved by the fear or favor of men he speaks as the oracle of God in these words: "*Then answered Amos, and said to Amaziah, I was no prophet, neither was I a prophet's son; but I was an herdman, and a gatherer of sycamore fruit. And the Lord took me as I followed the flock, and the Lord said unto me, Go, prophesy unto My people Israel. Now therefore hear thou the word of the Lord: Thou sayest, Prophesy not against Israel, and drop not thy word against the house of Isaac. Therefore thus saith the Lord: Thy wife shall be an harlot in the city, and thy sons and thy daughters shall fall by the sword, and thy land shall be divided by line; and thou shalt die in a polluted land; and Israel shall surely go into captivity forth of his land*" (Amos 7:14-17).

A true and faithful prophet stands fast to the Divine Call that gave him the office and the Lord who issues the call, seeking the praise of God no matter what the personal cost. God alone gives a man this moral courage. God alone makes a man a faithful steward (cf. II Corinthians 3:4-5). Amos is such a man — God made him a faithful, fearless prophet, unmoved by the fear or favor of men!

In our text Amos continues to announce God's impending justice. May God bless this message in our midst today.

Let us pray: Dear Heavenly Father, preserve us in the truth, in the love of the truth, by Thy Word which is the truth, that we may die in the saving Christian faith. May the love of the truth ever move us to support the Holy Ministry in our midst that, present and future, we may never lack faithful shepherds in our congregations. To these ends, bless the preaching of Thy Holy Word this morning. In Jesus' saving Name, Amen!

Our text begins: *“Thus hath the Lord God showed unto me; and behold a basket of summer fruit. And He said, Amos, what seest thou? And I said, A basket of summer fruit. Then said the Lord unto me, The end is come upon My people of Israel; I will not again pass by them any more. And the songs of the temple shall be howlings in that day, saith the Lord God; there shall be many dead bodies in every place; they shall cast them forth with silence”* (Amos 8:1-3).

In our first verses we have a play on words (*paronomasia*) between *Kayitz*, “summer fruit,” and *Ketz*, “(the) end.” The point is clear: As soon as summer fruit is harvested, it must be eaten, being ripe and ready; even so the time of judgment has come and cannot be put off. God will no longer pass by them; instead, judgment will be executed; punishment will now come down upon their heads; the Northern Kingdom of Israel will cease to exist.

God's longsuffering is great but not indefinite. There comes a point in time when the limit is reached and judgment can no longer be put off. Noah preached for 120 years, and then the flood destroyed the first world. God put up with Sodom for only so long, and then the fire and brimstone consumed it. Jerusalem received nearly four decades more of grace after our Lord's ascension but was leveled by the Roman juggernaut in 70 A. D. The final cataclysmic judgment will devour the entire planet in fire at the end of the world. *When* are a people *ripe* for judgment? When past privileges are abused, when past warnings are ignored, when past calls to repentance are not heeded. God only puts up with so much.

Judgment will come to Israel. As long as the fruit still hangs on the tree, there is opportunity for a natural preservation. But once it is picked this opportunity is gone—irrevocably ended. When it comes, the songs in the Temple themselves “howl” like shrieks of terror and despair! The Hebrew text is striking, for the literal translation is: “Many the carcasses, into any place throw—hush!” God's judgment calls for silence amidst the strewn corpses! It is a horror show, a terror-reality, that takes your breath away. And well it should.

Perseverance in unbelief leads to ruin beyond human imagination and description. Look at the bodies! ...the silence ordered by God is the proper response to such devastation. As you hear this, you are not only to think about Judgment Day, the time when God's longsuffering for the planet will come to an abrupt end; you are also to consider that the day of grace also comes to an end in the lives of individuals when their appointed time arrives in death. To die in unbelief is to be damned; and there is no second chance, no reprieve, no appeal. Death ends a person's time of grace. And death can come upon you at any time. Are you ready to meet God *today*? *“For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord”* (Romans 6:23).

Sadly, tragically, the vast majority of Israel died in unbelief. They failed to heed the last admonition given in our text: *“Hear this, O ye that swallow up the needy, even to make the poor of the land to fail, saying, When will the new moon be gone, that we may sell corn? And the sabbath, that we may set forth wheat, making the ephah small, and the shekel great, and falsifying the balances by deceit? That we may buy the poor for silver, and the needy for a pair of shoes; yea, and sell the refuse of the wheat? The Lord hath sworn by the excellency of Jacob: Surely I will never forget any of their works”* (Amos 8:4-7).

As a nation, the Northern Kingdom is described as a people determined to make money at the expense of the poor “by hook or by crook,” as it were. The rich and the power-elite ate the poor for breakfast. Like great white sharks cruising around an island of seals, they couldn't wait to sink their teeth into the poor. These predators sought easy prey; and, as soon as their hypocritical observance of holy days was over, they employed their tricks making the measure of wheat small and the weights used to measure the payment large, thereby greatly increasing their profits upon the backs of those who could least afford it. They made money

also by false scales. Debtors were sold into slavery for small debts by these rapacious predators as if they had no conscience regarding the untold suffering they were causing by their fraud. God was not in their thoughts. Godless people have no real love for their fellow-man and abuse others without one thought of remorse. The nation of Israel as a whole was filled with such people.

As in the account of the rich man and poor Lazarus (Luke 16:19-21) the rich man's godlessness was evident in his total disregard of others, no matter how needy and afflicted. He regarded neither God nor man until it was too late. At the end of the world, many souls will be just like him (cf. Revelation 6:15ff.). If a person remains impenitent, he shall be damned in his unbelief, as Paul declares, Romans 1:28-32, 2:2-11: *"And even as they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, God gave them over to a reprobate mind, to do those things which are not convenient, being filled with all unrighteousness, fornication, wickedness, covetousness, maliciousness, full of envy, murder, debate, deceit, malignity, whisperers, backbiters, haters of God, despiteful, proud, boasters, inventors of evil things, disobedient to parents, without understanding, covenantbreakers, without natural affection, implacable, unmerciful, who knowing the judgment of God, that they which commit such things are worthy of death, not only do the same but have pleasure in them that do them... But we are sure that the judgment of God is according to truth against them which commit such things. And thinkest thou this, O man that judgest them which do such things and doest the same, that thou shalt escape the judgment of God? Or despisest thou the riches of His goodness and forbearance and longsuffering, not knowing that the goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance? But after thy hardness and impenitent heart treasurest up unto thyself wrath against the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God, who will render to every man according to his deeds: To them who by patient continuance in well doing seek for glory and honor and immortality, eternal life; but unto them that are contentious and do not obey the truth but obey unrighteousness, indignation and wrath, tribulation and anguish, upon every soul of man that doeth evil, of the Jew first, and also of the Gentile; but glory, honor, and peace, to every man that worketh good, to the Jew first, and also to the Gentile; for there is no respect of persons with God."* *"He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned"* (Mark 16:16).

In our text the Lord swears by the excellency of Jacob. The excellency of Jacob is the Lord, so that the Lord is swearing by Himself. God swears an oath of judgment upon Israel, vowing not to forget any of their ungodly works. (This should remind us of what Enoch prophesied about the end of the world, as the Apostle Jude recorded it in vv. 14-15 of his brief epistle.) The Law offers no mercy, no forgetting of sins, no relief from God's just wrath and eternal curse — none!

The believers in Christ can take great comfort in the fact that one day the persecutors shall receive the due reward of their unbelief, as Paul says in II Thessalonians 1:7-10 — *"And, to you who are troubled, rest with us, when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with His mighty angels, in flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God and that obey not the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ, who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of His power when He shall come to be glorified in His saints and to be admired in all them that believe (because our testimony among you was believed) in that day."* We shall look up to see the fulness of our redemption drawing nigh (*"to wit, the redemption of our body,"* Romans 8:23c) (Cf. also Luke 21:28 and Hebrews 9:28).

In our text we now hear what judgment God sends upon such people as those described in the Northern Kingdom: *"Shall not the land tremble for this, and every one mourn that dwelleth therein? And it shall rise up wholly as a flood; and it shall be cast out and drowned as by the flood of Egypt. And it shall come to pass in that day, saith the Lord God, that I will cause the sun to go down at noon; and I will darken the earth in the clear day; and I will turn your feasts into mourning and all your songs into lamentation; and I will bring up sackcloth upon all loins, and baldness upon every head; and I will make it as the mourning of an only son, and the end thereof as a bitter day"* (Amos 8:8-10).

God's judgment is so great that the land itself is quaking and rolling like the waters of a Nile flood; and the sun sets at noon, sending darkness when there are no clouds. The joy departs for mourning, the songs become dirges, the festive clothing is exchanged for sackcloth, and every head is shaved. The mourning is like that of a parent losing his or her only child — the end is a bitter day. For the judgment of God is far more devastating than any which has come before it, way beyond any physical plague or famine: *“Behold, the days come, saith the Lord God, that I will send a famine in the land, not a famine of bread, nor a thirst for water, but of hearing the words of the Lord. And they shall wander from sea to sea, and from the north even to the east; they shall run to and fro to seek the Word of the LORD and shall not find it. In that day shall the fair virgins and young men faint for thirst. They that swear by the sin of Samaria and say, Thy god, O Dan, liveth; and, The manner of Beersheba liveth, even they shall fall and never rise up again”* (Amos 8:11-14).

The people, from the leaders on down, had trodden under foot God's covenant, wiping their idolatrous feet on the Word of God like a doormat. They ordered God's prophets to shut up and persecuted and slew them. So God sent upon them a famine of the Word nationwide. They died of spiritual thirst, no matter how young and vital they had been. Without the Word they were doomed to eternal pain. Their idols could not help them, no matter how fervently they called upon them. As one commentator puts it: *“Thinking oneself wiser than God, tampering with God's revelation, changing, contaminating, falsifying His Holy Word, substituting man's ideas, man's philosophy, for the eternal wisdom of the Lord is ruinous, suicidal. Here their judgment is pronounced by the Lord, from whose tribunal there is no appeal: they shall fall and never rise up again. He that hath an ear, let him hear!”* (Dr. Theo. Laetsch, *The Minor Prophets*, p. 182). Dr. Kretzmann comments: *“History shows that this judgment of the Lord has repeatedly gone into effect upon such as first rejected His message, His Gospel. The word of Luther that the Word of God is like a rainstorm which quickly passes over may well be heeded in our day”* (*Popular Commentary*, O. T. Vol. II, p. 667).

Stephen preached this message in these words: *“Ye stiffnecked and uncircumcised in heart and ears, ye do always resist the Holy Ghost; as your fathers did, so do ye. Which of the prophets have not your fathers persecuted? And they have slain them which showed before of the coming of the Just One, of whom ye have been now the betrayers and murderers, who have received the Law by the disposition of angels and have not kept it. When they heard these things, they were cut to the heart; and they gnashed on him with their teeth”* (Acts 7:51-54). Paul preached this message in these words: *“And the next Sabbath day came almost the whole city together to hear the Word of God. But when the Jews saw the multitudes, they were filled with envy and spake against those things which were spoken by Paul, contradicting and blaspheming. Then Paul and Barnabas waxed bold and said, It was necessary that the Word of God should first have been spoken to you; but seeing ye put it from you, and judge yourselves unworthy of everlasting life, lo, we turn to the Gentiles”* (Acts 13:44-46).

Dr. Luther reminds us: *“God's wrath is greatest when He removes His Word or permits people to despise it. When the Greeks despised His Word, He took it away and gave them the Turk and Mohammed; to us Germans and to the Italians He gave the Pope and with him all sorts of horrible things —the denial of the faith, for example, and the entire papacy”* (E. Plass, *What Luther Says*, Vol. III, p. 1557, #5060).

What about North America (the U.S. and Canada)? Rationalism, enthusiasm, existentialism and a host of other “isms” permeate the hearts of the people amidst hypocrisy and worldliness. What our Lutheran forefathers fled Europe to escape is now reigning on our own shores. How long shall God suffer this? Has the fruit been picked already? Can Judgment Day be far off? And, if it arrives today, are *you* prepared for it? Scripture records God's message to you. Will you, by God's grace and power alone, *heed* it; or will you *despise* it? St. Paul writes: *“We then, as workers together with Him, beseech you also that ye receive not the grace of God in vain. (For He saith, I have heard thee in a time accepted, and in the day of salvation have I succored thee. Behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation)”* (II Corinthians 6:1-2).

And what about the Concordia Lutheran Conference? Shall we also experience, firsthand, a famine of hearing God's Word in our midst? "Now wait just a minute, Pastor Worley. You aren't going to say we deserve God's judgment, too?! Are we not better than they? Oops! We already know the answer to that one! It is a resounding "No!" St. Paul in Romans chapter three spells it out in no uncertain terms!" (Cf. Romans 3:9-20.)

Beloved, what we *deserve* is obvious...eternal damnation in hell, the due reward of our original and actual sin (Romans 6:23a). Specifically, we also *deserve* a famine of hearing God's Word because of our sin, neglect and ingratitude. Moreover, the sad fact that so few of our men have entered our seminary program over the last 50+ years is also telling. Now that we have three men enrolled for this coming academic year, we have an opportunity to show our genuine repentance for past neglect, ingratitude and selfishness by doing all we can to support them in their studies. If we continue in our sins of the past, refuse to repent of them, and fail to bring forth the fruits thereof in amendment of life, we will have only ourselves to blame when we "reap what we sow" (Galatians 6:7). God has graciously blessed us with faithful pastors, who, unmoved by the fear or favor of men, preach and practice the Word of God rightly divided. They have prepared you for the day of your death or Judgment Day, whichever comes first! "The Water of Life is [still] flowing for thee. No price is demanded! The Savior is here! Redemption is purchased! Salvation is free!" (TLH 278, 1). "*For all have sinned and come short of the glory of God, being justified freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in His blood, to declare His righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God*" (Romans 3:23-25).

Yes, today you can *still* quench your spiritual thirst, but tomorrow may be too late! "*The Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say, Come. And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the Water of Life freely*" (Revelation 22:17). God would have all men turn "*to God from idols to serve the living and true God, and to wait for His Son from Heaven, whom He raised from the dead, even Jesus, which delivered us from the wrath to come*" (I Thessalonians 1:9-10).

The Psalmist admonishes: "*Kiss the Son, lest He be angry and ye perish from the way when His wrath is kindled but a little. Blessed are all they that put their trust in Him*" (Psalm 2:12). The Savior's blood is your only hope! (I Peter 1:18-19). "*He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life; and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life but the wrath of God abideth on him*" (John 3:36). For unlike the Law, the Gospel is all about Christ's propitiation of divine justice by His vicarious active and passive obedience (I John 2:2), about God's reconciliation of the world unto Himself for Christ's sake (II Corinthians 5:19), about His putting all our sins behind His back and remembering them no more (Isaiah 38:17; Hebrews 10:17), the imputation of Christ's righteousness to poor sinners (Romans 10:4). For the sake of the holy and precious, propitiating blood of God's Son, He says in His sweet, life-giving Gospel: "*Come now, and let us reason together, saith the Lord: Though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool*" (Isaiah 1:18). "*I, even I, am He that blotteth out thy transgressions for Mine own sake and will not remember thy sins*" (Isaiah 43:25). "*The blood of Jesus Christ, His Son, cleanseth us from all sin*" (I John 1:7b). "*Having made peace through the blood of His cross, by Him to reconcile all things unto Himself... in the body of His flesh through death to present you holy and unblameable and unreprouvable in His sight*" (Colossians 1:20, 22).

May the unfathomable grace of God in Christ Jesus, manifested to us in His precious Gospel, motivate and enable us to guard our priceless heritage of faithful Christian preaching in the congregations of our beloved Conference, that we be spared the famine of hearing the words of the Lord which He threatens upon all who despise His grace and scorn His Word of Life! On the contrary, let us do everything in our power, while it is yet day, to foster and support the study of workmen that need not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the Word of Truth, so that by His grace we may never lack a faithful shepherd's leading, preaching and teaching to the salvation of our souls! In Jesus' name, Amen!

Soli Deo gloria!

SERMON DELIVERED AT THE SUNDAY COMMUNION SERVICE

by

The Rev. David G. Redlin • Good Shepherd Ev. Lutheran Church • Tucson, Arizona

Text: Matthew 9:36-38

In Christ Jesus, the Lord of the Harvest, dear members and friends of the Concordia Lutheran Conference:

Most all of you are familiar with the sermon-text we just read. Those of us who are older will recall that we often heard these words of the Bible proclaimed when we attended a so-called “mission festival.” This was a special gathering of the congregation, usually in the fall, where a guest preacher would speak about the need for more mission work and for more pastors. This was usually done in a special afternoon service, and it was often followed by delicious food. Today “mission festivals” are mostly a thing of the past.

However, in a special sense this morning’s service is a “mission festival,” for the need for pastors is as great or greater than it ever has been, especially in our Concordia Lutheran Conference.

Therefore, on the basis of the words of our God in Matthew 9:36-38, let us consider this morning

The Dire Prospect of Sheep Having No Shepherds

emphasizing these four parts, namely, that **I.** The need for faithful pastors is obvious with the potential harvest so plenteous; **II.** The supply of qualified laborers is short, particularly among us in these latter days; **III.** The training of pastors is *our* responsibility to the glory of God’s grace, and **IV.** The sending of them is *the Lord’s* office (business) for the welfare of His church.

I.

First let us consider the need with the potential harvest so plenteous. “*Jesus went through all the towns and villages,*” the Bible tells us in Matthew nine verse thirty-five. And as He traveled up and down Judea and Galilee, He saw throngs of people everywhere. And beyond the boundaries of His native land lay the surging pagan world. “*He saw [these] multitudes [or crowds],*” for even though He traveled in a comparatively small area of the world, in His divine omniscience He knew exactly what conditions were in other parts of the world. He knew that teeming millions of souls were walking in darkness, ignorant of the way to salvation, and that they had no one to bring them the everlasting Gospel.

And as He viewed these multitudes of people, the countless ears of grain in the harvest-field came to His mind. Therefore, He called His disciples to Him to inform them that “*the harvest, truly, is plenteous*” or plentiful.

The situation is no different today. There are millions that are marching to the valley of death without their Savior. Think of the crowds of people that we see at times. At sporting events, at music concerts, at political rallies, even in one shopping center on a Friday night there are masses of unconverted souls. While the claim is often heard that *ours* is a “Christian country” and that the majority of our citizens are “church-going” folks, the facts show otherwise. Besides, attendance “at church” — whatever the church — says nothing about what they are hearing, what they believe, whether they are even *professing* believers! Many (if not most) do not believe in Jesus Christ as the Son of God and their Savior from sin; and their lack of concern for religion in general does not really surprise us. In any case, most fulfill the prophecy of St. Paul in that they will not tolerate sound doctrine (II Timothy 2:4) — if any doctrine at all.

Then think of the waving fields white for the harvest in *other* nations. There is hardly a country in the world that has not heard the Gospel. Especially in the last one hundred years

has mission activity increased. Yet in some nations the true Gospel of the Bible has scarcely made a dent in the population. The vast majority of people still cling to their idols of wood and stone, or to the gods of materialism and self-service. In our Conference we would think especially of two nations – Russia and Nigeria – where we have from the pastors we support firsthand information about the godlessness there. In Nigeria we see and hear of rampant lawlessness that threatens our brethren and endangers their safety, were it not for God’s gracious protecting hand over them. In Russia it is corruption in both church and state inherited from 70 years of Marxist atheistic communism that hampers the free course of the Gospel – the one thing that the country really needs.

It is upon the multitudes of people that the Savior looked in His day, and upon which He still looks today, with the thought, “*The harvest, truly, is plenteous.*” And what rejoicing there would be in heaven among the angels, and on earth among Christian reapers, if this harvest could be safely gathered into the barn. The farmer breathes a sigh of relief and rejoices when the harvest is safely in for another year. How much more does God rejoice over one sinner who repents! St. Luke says in chapter fifteen, verse ten, “*Likewise, I say unto you, there is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner that repenteth,*” and we know from Scripture that it is God’s earnest desire that all men be saved and come unto the knowledge of His saving truth (I Timothy 2:4).

II.

But, while the Savior made the announcement of the bountiful harvest, a truly positive situation for its potential, He also noted that “*the laborers are few!*” There was a worker shortage. Of course, Jesus was not speaking of the availability of laborers in general for the economic prosperity of that time. Nor was He referring to the labor force even in our own country working “*for the meat which perisheth*” (John 6:27). The Savior was lamenting the shortage of *church*-workers. And, in fact, when we think of the shortage of laborers in the Savior’s vineyard and harvest-field, particularly among us, it is sad to note that many Christians will labor for years to be able to sing, to play a musical instrument, to play sports, to paint pictures, and to be able to speak in public, especially when it enhances their earthly occupation. Yet, many do not regard laboring as a harvest-hand for Christ in His Church to be a desirable life’s work or occupation. Thus, there continues to be a labor shortage in the harvest-field, which Christ Himself urgent calls to our attention.

And, in times past, when only men and not machines were used in the harvest, it was a frightening situation not to have enough workers on hand when the crop was ripe for harvest. Today it might be the unavailability of machines, or parts to fix them, that would produce the frightening situation. And in our Conference at this time, the shortage of faithful pastors, both for the present and for the future, is not only of urgent concern to all of us, but the prospect of finding and training dedicated students to prepare for the Holy Ministry, sooner rather than later, is a challenge that we dare not ignore!

And what is the labor, the hard work, that counts in the kingdom of Christ? We can learn what this is from the Lord of the harvest, whose Holy Spirit prompted St. Paul to write down by divine inspiration the job description for a Christian harvest-hand: “*Preach the Word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine*” (II Timothy 4:2). That is the work, the labor, that Christ expects His workmen to study and prepare for and then to carry out in the fields.

Thus the first and most important work is preaching and teaching the Gospel. And, while personal Christian mission work is properly the task and should be the privilege of every believer, as by word and example he bears witness to the love of Christ for sinful men, the task of public preaching and teaching in the local congregation is, according to Christ’s own institution, vested in the pastoral office — the office with very specific qualifications and specified responsibilities.

But how many such workers are there in the harvest-field today? And how many are truly faithful in their preaching, teaching, and practice according to the Word of God? There are

many *wolves* (false prophets) *in sheep's clothing* (Matthew 7:15) who howl that the work is not getting done, when in reality they are not feeding their sheep at all. They are devouring them (Ezekiel 34:2). There are others that say, "*Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in Thy Name??*" (Matthew 7:22), and the Lord of the harvest will say to them, "*I never knew you! Depart from Me, ye that work iniquity!*" (v. 23). The Lord is not satisfied with "belly-servers" as workers in His harvest, nor with ravening wolves who devour the "crop" of sheep and lambs before they can be gathered in! He wants us to prepare faithful, dedicated, and diligent workers, who themselves are the sheep of His pasture, to undertake this important work. And that preparation, as we now see in the next part of our sermon, is *our* responsibility.

III.

The situation today is equally as alarming as it was in when our Savior walked visibly among men. Something must be done about the shortage of qualified workers, especially in our Conference. May the words of our Savior here in our text move us to realize this and stir us to prompt action for His Name's sake and for the sake of His anticipated harvest.

"But what are we to do?" First and foremost there is a need for more earnest and steadfast prayer in our daily devotions. Our Lord says in our text, "*Pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that He will send forth laborers into His harvest.*" And although many of us have prayed, and are still praying, that a son or another young Christian brother known to us would prepare for work in the Lord's harvest, yet it sometimes seems that our prayers have not been answered, or that they have been answered with a "no." In such a moment of weakness, we dare not ascribe the shortage of workers to the Lord Jesus, as if He does not care about our plight, just because we do not immediately observe His helping hand. We know better than that when He teaches us to pray *unconditionally* for spiritual gifts that are according to His revealed will to grant us. But we are not to be filled with worry. The Holy Ghost through the Apostle Paul said in Philippians 4:6, "*Be careful for nothing; but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God.*" For Jesus promises: "*If ye abide in Me, and My words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you*" (John 15:7).

But we must also pray with "*confidence*," James tells us, "*nothing wavering*" (James 1:6); and our confidence is made evident by our willingness, under God and with His blessing, to do our own part faithfully according to His directives and then to rely upon Him to bring it to pass (Psalm 37:5). At this time, when our Conference has a dire need for pastors, a call to *action* is also in order. In the past there have been willing and able instructors to teach men who have answered God's call for workers. And the Conference has in recent years been able to compensate as "*worthy of his hire*" (Luke 10:7) its one active instructor for his extra service to the Conference and to the Lord's Church. Also, under our peripatetic system of the last decade, a full-time student received some subsistence support for living expenses. But to what extent will the Conference be willing to go today to fulfill its responsibility of training future pastors? Will it not only supply them with competent instructors and a well-designed curriculum, but will it assume the present challenge of supporting them financially while they study? Will our people generally recognize these needs and stand able and willing to sacrifice as necessary to meet them — all according to the ability which God's abundant grace affords them (II Corinthians 9:8)? That question has been answered to a certain extent by the resolution of this convention; and the dire prospect of sheep having no shepherds surely influenced that decision. Many in the Conference ask the question: "What will happen in Conference churches if there are no trained men to take the place of older pastors who may no longer be able to do the work due to ill health or even death?" And younger pastors are not immune to these occurrences either. We know that all situations are in the hands of God (Psalm 31:15), and He knows best what is good for our Conference churches. He assures us in Romans 8:28 that "*all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to His purpose.*" The love of Christ constrains us to do according to His will (II Corinthians 5:14), and our love for Him who first loved us compels us as true believers and as members of the Concordia Lutheran Conference to do all in our power to train pastors, including the giving of monetary gifts to the Lord for that very purpose and

encouraging young and even older men to train for the ministry in our seminary where they are prepared to undertake the pastoral office at the call of the Holy Ghost (Acts 20:28).

There is an important word in our text that we have not yet considered – it is the word “*compassion.*” “*But when He [Christ] saw the multitudes, He was moved with compassion on them, because they fainted, and were scattered abroad, as sheep having no shepherd.*” When Christ saw those straying sheep, bruised, famished, and a sure prey of ever-present wolves, lacking a diligent and faithful shepherd’s leading, He was “*moved with compassion*” on them in their plight. They needed to hear His loving voice; they needed to have Him to follow instead of some hireling; they needed to be fed on the pastures of His Word; they needed to be guided with His comforting rod and staff in the paths of righteousness for His Name’s sake. They needed shepherds. And so do we; so do our children; and so do countless thousands of other fragile sheep just like ourselves. Would that our hearts were filled with compassion like unto that of our Savior for sheep without a shepherd! For that would surely move us to “*go forward*” like the Children of Israel at the Red Sea, even though obstacles seem to discourage us (Exodus 14:15).

IV.

It is the responsibility of the congregations of our Conference, in their joint efforts, to provide for the training of future pastors; but it is God who will send them out for the welfare of His Church. It is the Lord Himself who recruits laborers for His harvest and works in them the desire to serve as His ambassadors. And those who answer His call, “*Who will go for us?*” as did Isaiah, saying, “*Here am I; send me*” (Isaiah 6:8), will cheerfully dedicate themselves to the task of studying to show themselves approved unto Him, well-trained workmen that do not need to be ashamed, rightly dividing the Word of Truth. But the call of the Holy Spirit into the incumbency of the Pastoral Office will have to await His own good time, when prepared candidates are made overseers over Christ’s local flocks and are charged with their feeding and oversight (Acts 20:28; I Peter 5:2ff.). That is God’s office, and we leave that to Him.

Many young men feel inadequate for this calling and are reticent to commit themselves to the task. They are not alone in this. Christ’s own disciples, the chosen Twelve, to whom the Lord made the remarks of our text, showed some hesitancy when Christ called them to serve; but once they took up the yoke for Him and realized that it was He that would make them able servants and stewards of His mysteries (I Corinthians 4:1), they never surrendered it but plowed the missionary fields of the world with all diligence as long as God gave them the power to do so. And it has been the same with many chosen thousands since that time. Once they submitted themselves to the Lord of the harvest, determined to follow His Word as faithful stewards, they never looked back, but continued to make full proof of their service to Him for the salvation of mankind.

But aside from the fact that “employment” under the Lord of the harvest offers spiritual “job satisfaction” and “security” under the shadow of the Lord’s protecting wings (Psalm 91), there is the added incentive that the world needs the conscientious labor of ministers that preach and teach the whole counsel of God. At this stage of the world’s history many may think that doctors, teachers, and scientists are what the world needs most. And people in these fields of labor certainly bring many temporal benefits to their fellowmen. But laborers for the Lord of the Harvest are God’s lowly instruments to bring to the world the greatest gifts and benefits, namely, the remission of sins and everlasting salvation! “*For what is a man profited if he shall gain the whole world and lose his own soul*” (Matthew 16:26)? And what was the cost of these invaluable gifts? The cost was the blood of the Son of God, as the holy writer states in I Peter 1:18-19, “*Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain conversation received by tradition from you fathers, but with the precious blood of Christ, as a Lamb without blemish and without spot.*”

The cost to us of preparing future pastors is not “small change,” to be sure; but when we who “*know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ*” (II Corinthians 8:9) and what it cost Him to redeem us, consider the alternative, namely, “*a famine of hearing the words of the Lord*”

(Amos 8:11), what cost would **you** consider **too great**? What cost would be a “**deal-breaker**” for **you**? Would **you** put a “price-tag” on having a faithful Christian pastor in the future for yourself and your children? “*What shall a man give in exchange for his soul?*” Jesus asks us (Matthew 16:26). May the Lord of the harvest bring us to realize the dire condition of our harvest-field and the need to prepare reapers at virtually ANY price! Every soul of man needs the Gospel; but there is a worker shortage, especially in our Conference. Will you have compassion on souls groping about in the darkness of ignorance and despair? Will you pray that God will lead you to proper action in helping alleviate the shortage? And when He answers in and through the clear directives of His Word, will you take the action He suggests or even demands? Will you answer like Isaiah did in the Old Testament (Isaiah 6:8), when God asked him, “*Whom shall I send, and who will go for us?*” Will you willingly answer, “*Here am I; send me*”? God grant you, by the power of His Gospel, the faith and determination to do so, “*for it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of His good pleasure*” (Philippians 2:13). Amen.

Soli Deo Gloria!

ESSAY DELIVERED AT THE 58th ANNUAL CONVENTION

by

The Rev. Edward J. Worley, Pastor • St. Luke’s Lutheran Church • Seattle, Washington

Redeeming the Time with Respect to the Training of Future Pastors

Introduction

This introduction is going to be a little different. Normally, we are loathe to cite personal anecdotes in doctrinal essays; but this example is particularly relevant and telling. So here it is: The time? Thirty-three years ago. The place? A Voters’ Assembly meeting in Tinley Park, Illinois, Gloria Dei Lutheran Church, the home of my seminary program. I was a new voter and seminary student (20 years old). My professor was the pastor of this independent Lutheran congregation. My fellow students and I had just finished initial sermon writing and delivered some of those rookie sermons during the Lenten season at this very place. A motion was offered: “I move that only ordained Lutheran pastors be allowed to preach in our pulpits.” It was seconded. My heart ached and my stomach followed with that sick feeling one gets when terrible news arrives. I had never spoken in a Voters’ meeting to that point in time. But I had to speak. I did. “Gentlemen, if this motion passes, where do you expect the seminary students to learn to preach?” The emotion in my voice was obvious to all. One man quickly spoke: “Mr. Worley, we weren’t thinking about excluding you!” Huh? Immediately the light bulb went on over my head. Some of the men were very unhappy with some of the students and hoped to relay that message this way. Their “respect of persons” was thus revealed. The motion was soundly defeated shortly thereafter without a single “aye” vote. I was very relieved. By the grace of God, the Godly men were moved both to will and to do of God’s good pleasure for the sake of the future ministry in their midst. God had used us “to redeem the time,” to buy back from the power of the sinful flesh the opportunity for God’s work to continue in our midst. The men were willing to endure “rookie” sermons and “rookie” student preachers. It *cost* them, because you always *pay a price* to *redeem* the opportunity. They would “put up” with our struggles in the pulpit for the sake of the greater good, the long-term gain, the future benefit: trained *c.r.m.’s* [*candidati reverendi ministerii*, candidates of the reverend ministry].

Obviously, your essayist has a personal, emotional connection to this incident. But it is important for each of *you* to become invested, personally and emotionally, with heart and mind, in our vital subject matter here presented on the basis of God’s own Holy Word. I

implore you to “redeem this time” for yourself and your children, to buy back this opportunity, lest the devil, the world and your own sinful flesh steal it away. It will cost you, but it is worth it. Redeem this precious opportunity to hear what God has to say to all of us about the task set before us, namely, “*Redeeming the Time with Respect to the Training of Future Pastors.*”

The essay will be divided into two main sections:

I. The Scriptural Doctrinal Imperative of Ephesians 5:16

II. The Scriptural Application to the Training of Future Pastors under three points:

A. **Training them both qualitatively and efficiently** -- making the most of their time without sacrificing solid preparation (Isaiah 6:8; II Timothy 2:15)

B. **Providing for the temporal needs of our students** -- recognizing their sacrifice by sharing their burden with our support (I Corinthians 9:11; II Corinthians 8:13-14)

C. **Setting them (and our people) the example of wise priority-setting** -- giving *first* consideration to the nourishment of our *souls* in the hearing of God’s Word (Galatians 6:7-9; Amos 8:11-12; Romans 10:14-15).

Let us ask our Lord to bless our study. We pray: Dear Savior, open our hearts and minds to Thy Word and the cogent applications thereof, that each of us may be moved to will and to do of Thy good pleasure in redeeming the time for Thy glory and to the spiritual and eternal benefit of Thy Church. To this end, bless this opportunity to our souls for Thy gracious Name’s sake. Amen.

I. The Scriptural Doctrinal Imperative of Ephesians 5:16

Our theme verse and basis for our Convention motto is also our chief text upon which this entire essay is based, namely, Ephesians 5:16. We shall also consider the context, Ephesians 5:15-17: “*See then that ye walk circumspectly, not as fools, but as wise, redeeming the time, because the days are evil. Wherefore be ye not unwise but understanding what the will of the Lord is.*” At once we see how the Holy Ghost, through the Apostle, calls upon us to do a spiritual assessment, a critical self-examination, a real inspection, regarding our Christian life. “*See then,*” Paul begins. These mild words are actually words of warning: “*Take heed, therefore!*” This is the same word we find in such verses as I Corinthians 10:12: “*Wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall.*” (cf. Hebrews 3:12). In other passages this word is used of a very stern warning and is translated “*Beware*” (cf. Philippians 3:2; Colossians 2:8). In our text it has the meaning that we find in II John 8 where John exhorts and warns: “*Look to yourselves, that we lose not those things which we have wrought, but that we receive a full reward.*” John then goes on to warn against false teachers and against becoming partakers of their evil deeds. So every use of this word contains the element of warning. Jesus Himself uses it in this manner: “*Take heed therefore how ye hear; for whosoever hath, to him shall be given; and whosoever hath not, from him shall be taken even that which he seemeth to have*” (Luke 8:18). Here Jesus warns against hypocrisy, warning us not only to hear God’s Word but to hear it mixed with faith and then to act accordingly.

In each use of this word of warning, we find that we are exhorted to be concerned about our spiritual welfare; such is the case in our text where we are exhorted and warned to see to it that we take heed to “*walk circumspectly.*” We are to maintain a certain walk of life, a specific type of conduct and behavior, namely a *circumspect* walk. “*Circumspectly*” is an adverb which modifies the verb “*walk;*” it tells us how we are to conduct ourselves in this life. And since the verb “*walk*” is a present imperative, we are exhorted to maintain a continuous walk that is, always and ever, circumspect. What then does “*circumspect*” mean? Our English word is derived from the Latin and literally means “*to look around,*” to be careful and on guard, watching every direction. As such it is a good word to use to

translate the Greek word found in our text; it is derived from a root word meaning “accurate or exact.” Therefore Paul exhorts us to inspect ourselves to see how exactly, accurately, diligently and strictly we are walking. How careful are you in your walk in life? Paul says: *“Be constantly taking heed how accurately you are conducting yourselves.”*

To do so we need a standard to go by, something we can use to check if we deviate from the norm. The only objective standard Christians have is that one given by God: the perfect, immutable and infallible Law of Almighty God. It is also interesting to note that sin, by definition, is *deviation from God’s norm, lawlessness*; sin is the *transgression of God’s Law*. We see this in the literal meanings of the words for sin, such as: *transgression* = “to overstep legal bounds;” *trespass* = “to stray into forbidden territory,” for the narrow path is clearly marked by “thou shalt” and “thou shalt not.” Iniquity is “in-equity,” literally “unevenness.” God’s Law gives us the straight path and reveals our crooked ways; the plumb line of God’s Law clearly reveals every moral deviation from God’s true line. The most common verb used for sin is simply translated “*to sin*” and literally means “to miss the mark;” sin then is “a missing of the mark.” The target of God’s Law demands an accurate shot, for the bull’s-eye is nothing less than absolute perfection. How accurate are we in our lives? How often we miss the entire target of God’s Law, let alone hit the bull’s-eye of perfection? We don’t even come close! This little three-letter word, “sin,” is an accurate assessment of our walk in this life in every thought, word and deed. S-I-N. We should stress the only vowel, yea, capitalize it, because each and every one of us has to admit “**I** sin” in thoughts, words and deeds. *Every mouth* is stopped by God’s Law, and *all the world* becomes guilty in His sight. So the result of applying God’s Standard, His Holy Law, to our life to see how carefully, accurately, and exactly we walk brings us to acknowledge the absolute truth of I John 1:5-10: *“This then is the message which we have heard of Him and declare unto you, that God is light, and in Him is no darkness at all. If we say that we have fellowship with Him, and walk in darkness, we lie, and do not the truth. But 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. If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. If we say that we have not sinned, we make Him a liar, and His Word is not in us.”*

There is not a single Christian in this world then who can say, “I don’t need constantly to inspect my life; I don’t need to walk more carefully and accurately according to God’s Holy Law.” We all need this exhortation of Paul to walk circumspectly; and, as Paul explains, this means to walk *“not as fools.”*

What *is* a fool? In our text the word is simply the word for “wise” with a negative in the front, literally “un-wise,” “not wise.” A fool, by God’s definition, is one destitute of *Christian wisdom*. This is seen in a fool’s thoughts, words and deeds. How does a fool walk? Knowing that our heart controls our thoughts, words and deeds, let’s first examine a fool’s heart: God tells us, *“The fool hath said in his heart, There is no God”* (Psalm 14:1a). A fool is more than a philosophical atheist; he is a practical atheist; he not only believes there is no God; he lives as if there were no God. *“They are corrupt, they have done abominable works, there is none that doeth good”* (Psalm 14:1b) (cf. 2-3). A fool therefore lacks spiritual perception and understanding, lives for himself alone, and is too proud to allow anyone to instruct him, although he certainly is ready to teach all others their business (cf. Psalm 92:6, Proverbs 18:2 and 12:15).

We do not have to search far in the New Testament to see examples of fools. Turn to Luke 12 with me, Luke 12:16-21 — *“And He spake a parable unto them, saying, The ground of a certain rich man brought forth plentifully. And he thought within himself, saying, What shall I do, because I have no room where to bestow my fruits? And he said, This will I do: I will pull down my barns and build greater; and there will I bestow all my fruits and my goods. And I will say to my soul, Soul, thou hast much goods laid up for many years; take thine ease, eat, drink, and be merry. But God said unto him, Thou fool, this night thy soul shall be*

required of thee; then whose shall those things be which thou hast provided? So is he that layeth up treasure for himself and is not rich toward God."

A fool considers that a man's life consists in the abundance of the things he possesses, and he puts his trust in those things, not realizing, understanding, or even thinking about his Creator, his God! God is not in all his thoughts! He lives his life as if this were all there is; his concerns are for this life and temporal pleasure, his family, his job, and, most of all, himself (Romans 1:22). He often works hard and plans for his immediate future, striving to improve his lot in life, and may even be a model citizen. Only one main thing is missing in his heart and life: God. So when he comes to die, the one thing needful is missing, with no Word of God in his heart, no Good News of his Savior, and therefore, no faith; he dies a fool's death and is damned for his unbelief; the wrath of God abides upon him, body and soul, forever. Paul warns us to take heed to ourselves, lest we become such a fool and walk as he does.

Here we see why Jesus was not afraid to call a fool a fool; He did this for the sake of the fool and for *our* sakes because He *loves* us. He not only called the hypocritical and work-righteous scribes and Pharisees fools (Matthew 23:17,19; cf. Romans 2:20, Luke 11:40); He even called some of His disciples "fools," so much did He love them, so much did He desire to deliver them from their foolhardy and soul-endangering ways, saying: "*O fools, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken.*" (Luke 24:25). We act the fool every time we neglect our spiritual welfare and are slow of heart to believe God's Word. These disciples did not become fools overnight; instead they slowly allowed their human reason to judge their faith and forgot the words of their Lord; being caught up with carnal thoughts and cares of this world, their faith became past history. We too are made of the same flesh and blood as these two disciples. How often do we follow their foolish example?

Instead of walking as fools, Paul exhorts us to walk "*as wise.*" We are to live as those taught by God, furnished with Christian wisdom; we are to be wise in a practical sense: Using our knowledge of God's will and applying it to all our thoughts, words and deeds, always governed in any decision by our devoted service to God, asking ourselves, "Is this the best way I can serve Him?" James expounds this wisdom in his third chapter, saying: "*Who is a wise man and endued with knowledge among you? Let him show out of a good conversation his works with meekness of wisdom. But if ye have bitter envying and strife in your hearts, glory not, and lie not against the truth. This wisdom descendeth not from above but is earthly, sensual, devilish. For where envying and strife is, there is confusion and every evil work. But the wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, and easy to be intreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality, and without hypocrisy*" (James 3:13-17).

This is essentially what Paul says to the Roman Christians: "*I would have you wise unto that which is good, and simple concerning evil*" (Romans 16:19b). God would not have us wise, as the world is wise, wise in *evil* (cf. I Corinthians 1:18-20), but as He is wise, in that which is good. And since we are God's children, we should be wise in this regard; for He is the only-wise God, our Savior (Jude 25) (cf. Romans 16:27, I Timothy 1:17). God's wisdom is seen in the fact that He forms the best plans and uses the best means for their execution. This is especially seen in how He wrought our salvation in history. "*For what the Law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh*" (Romans 8:3). "*But when the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth His Son, made of a woman, made under the law, to redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons*" (Galatians 4:4-5).

The Father sent His Son as our substitute under the Law. He, by His holy life, perfectly kept the Law for us and by His holy death paid the penalty of our guilt by offering the perfect sacrifice: the holy and precious blood of God (cf. Ephesians 5:2). This blood forever blots out our sins from God's memory, so that before God each and every one of us stands holy and unblameable and unreprouvable for the sake of Jesus' blood and righteousness. And, as God formed the best plan and used the best means for the execution of our salvation, we shall do the same, by Gospel grace, in our Christian life, out of thankfulness and gratitude to Him

who redeemed us for all eternity, washing us from our sins in His own blood. We shall walk as wise, as verse 16 tell us, “*redeeming the time, because the days are evil.*” The Holy Ghost tells us basically the same thing in Colossians 4:5, “*Walk in wisdom toward them that are without, redeeming the time.*” Applying Christian wisdom, we are ever to be “*redeeming the time.*” The Greek verb (*exagoradzo*) means “to recover from the power of another by paying a price.” It is used only four times in this exact form, in the Colossians passage above and these two in Paul’s letter to the Galatians: “*Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us: for it is written, Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree*” (Galatians 3:13); “*But when the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth His Son, made of a woman, made under the Law, to redeem them that were under the Law, that we might receive the adoption of sons*” (Galatians 4:4-5).

Obviously, Christ paid the full price to redeem us out of the power of the curse of the Law, eternal damnation. His work is finished! His work is our salvation, received by God-wrought faith alone. How, then, do we “*redeem the time*”? The Greek verb is comprised of the root “to buy up,” literally, “to go to the market (*agora*),” and the preposition (*ek*) “out of,” giving us “to purchase (with a price) or redeem out of” the power of another. We are to “buy up” something lest it be lost to the power of another, to “rescue from loss.” What are we redeeming lest it be lost? “*Time*,” not chronological time (Greek = *chronos*), clock time, the “tick-tock” progression of seconds, minutes, hours and days, but “**the time**” (*kairos*), the fixed, set, proper time viewed as opportunity for good. The word translated “*time*” here refers to the opportunities God gives us throughout our earthly lives when decisions must be made for the Lord, or this time will be lost to the world, the devil and our own sinful flesh. It is not merely “don’t waste your clock time” (*chronos*), nor simply “make the most of your day” (i.e. *carpe diem*, “seize the day”), not even “recognize when opportunities come calling,” but “*buy back into God’s exclusive use*” the opportunities God presents to you *constantly* before the night comes when no man can work! Pay the price to consecrate your life to God’s will and work! Matthew Henry comments: “Time is a talent given by God, and it is misspent and lost when not employed according to His design.” (*Commentary on the Whole Bible*, Vol. VI, Acts to Revelation, p. 713, F. H. Revell Co., Old Tappan, New Jersey, undated printing).

Yes, we must by God’s grace and power ever be redeeming or buying up time for our Lord’s sake and advantage by the payment of a price and so recover the time from the power of the devil, the world and the flesh, which steal every moment and opportunity in the interest of sin. We are always to make wise and sacred use of every opportunity for doing good, so that our zeal and well-doing are, as it were, the ransom payment by which we make time our own to be used by our Lord. Paul writes to the Colossians: “*Walk in wisdom toward them that are without, redeeming the time*” (Colossians 4:5). Remember that the word for time in our text is not the general word for time as such, but time regarded as to its strategic importance, an opportunity we might say. The point is not simply to make the best use of time as such, which everyone knows we should do in the sense of not wasting it, but of taking advantage of **opportunities** as they present themselves. God often either places us in situations or allows us to end up in circumstances where we have opportunities to do good that might never occur again. We are to make the most of them.

Look at our Lord as He hangs on that wretched tree. He took that time to pray and preach a man into Paradise (Luke 23:43), not thinking of Himself but the welfare of someone who had blasphemed and mocked Him to His face! Look at Paul and Silas in Acts 16, after having been beaten with countless lashes of the Roman scourge and thrust into the worst dungeon in the prison and fastened into torturous stocks, we read of them: “*And at midnight Paul and Silas prayed and sang praises unto God; and the prisoners heard them*” (Acts 16:25). God used their testimony of God’s Word to convert the very jailer that kept them, together with his entire family (v. 34). These examples should put us to shame for all the times God opened the door for us to preach His Word and to testify to others at very special opportune times, and we failed because we could only think of our own personal welfare in self-pity or fear. God presents us with numerous times and seasons, golden opportunities to apply the Golden Rule: “Do unto others as ye would have them do unto you” (cf. Matthew 7:12); but

how often do we make the most of them? Where is our Christian care and concern for the welfare of precious redeemed souls? What if no one had taken the time to care about *your soul*? Say to yourself, “But for the grace of God, that unbeliever is *I myself!*”

Make the most of your time by setting the right priorities: God first; family second; job third. For if God is first, you *will* make the most of every opportunity to do good also for the sake of your family and in your job, too! It’s not simply a matter of spending your time *wisely*, but determining the *best* way to use every opportunity that comes along. That was the question in controversy one day in a suburb of Jerusalem, in the little town of Bethany, when Jesus came to call: “*Now it came to pass, as they went, that He entered into a certain village; and a certain woman named Martha received Him into her house. And she had a sister called Mary, which also sat at Jesus’ feet, and heard His Word. But Martha was cumbered about much serving, and came to Him, and said, Lord, dost Thou not care that my sister hath left me to serve alone? Bid her therefore that she help me. And Jesus answered and said unto her, Martha, Martha, thou art careful and troubled about many things. But one thing is needful; and Mary hath chosen that good part, which shall not be taken away from her*” (Luke 10:38-42).

Martha was not *wasting* her time nor using it *foolishly*. She did a good work by cooking dinner for the Lord. But she failed to follow the example of her sister Mary and to make the *most* of this *opportunity*, using the time to the *best advantage* for her *soul’s welfare*, for the *one thing needful* that shall endure beyond the grave, the Lord’s holy and precious Word. We often get caught up in the “*many things*” which in and of themselves may be good works and God-pleasing endeavors. But when we allow these to take precedence over hearing God’s Word, we walk as fools and are in need of the same divine reprimand Martha received for our own sake. Jesus was so concerned and grieved at Martha’s misguided priorities that He repeated her name twice. Even so, we must often hear *our* name echo from His lips because we often fail to redeem the opportunities He gives *us*. Think twice then when your pastor exhorts you to attend church and Bible class, and your excuse fits the category of family or job or recreation; and remember that “*one thing is needful*” (Luke 10:42).

We are especially to be redeeming the time, Paul says, for this very reason: “*...because the days are evil.*” The word evil here is not evil in the abstract sense of the word, but evil in active opposition to the good: Evil which is pernicious, malignant and corrupting, the positive activity of evil that radically affects and afflicts this life, the author of which is called “*that wicked one*” (I John 2:13, 3:12, 5:18) who rules this planet through deceit. The whole world lies in wickedness (I John 5:19); for every human being, *by fallen nature*, is filled with the malignant cancer of evil (Romans 1:29; Mark 7:22-23). Paul tells us in Ephesians 6:11-12: “*Put on the whole armor of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places.*”

In order to redeem the time, we must pray “*deliver me from evil*” every day and live according to God’s Law, by His grace, comforted in the forgiveness of our sins. We are to “*abhor that which is evil (and) cleave to that which is good*” (Romans 12:9). We are to make the most of our time, knowing that Jesus prays for us in this regard: “*Father...I pray not that Thou shouldest take them out of the world, but that Thou shouldest keep them from the evil*” (John 17:15). Knowing that He “*gave Himself for our sins, that He might deliver us from this present evil world according to the will of God and our Father*” (Galatians 1:4), we also know that, if God be for us, who can be against us? His promise is sure: “*The Lord is faithful, who shall stablish you and keep you from evil*” (II Thessalonians 3:3).

But *how* shall the Lord do so? What *means* does He employ? How shall He continue to create and preserve faith in our hearts? Romans 10 gives us the answer: “*For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation. For the Scripture saith, Whosoever believeth on Him shall not be ashamed. For there is no*

*difference between the Jew and the Greek, for the same Lord over all is rich unto all that call upon Him. For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved. How then shall they call on Him in whom they have not believed? And how shall they believe in Him of whom they have not heard? And how shall they hear without a preacher? And how shall they preach, except they be sent? as it is written, How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the Gospel of peace and bring glad tidings of good things! But they have not all obeyed the Gospel. For Esaias saith, Lord, who hath believed our report? So then faith cometh by hearing and hearing by the word of God” (Romans 10:10-17). Yes, “how shall they hear without a **preacher**” (v. 14c)? Here is where the application comes in!*

II. The Scriptural Application to the Training of Future Pastors

How best can we as believers use Christian wisdom to buy back the present opportunity in training men for the pastoral office? Remember that this is our God-given duty and privilege, as question #186c of our *Catechism Exposition* reminds us: “We use the doctrine of the Church properly — C. when we do all in our power to *maintain, promote, and extend* this Church by *prayer, personal service, and financial support*” (Acts 8:4, Matthew 28:19, I Corinthians 9:14). But how to do this *wisely*, to make the *best use* of what God has given us, to *redeem* the present *opportunity*? One of the chief purposes of the Concordia Lutheran Conference is: “The adequate training of pastors for the work of the ministry in our midst, and of parochial school teachers and other helps to the ministry (II Timothy 2:2; 2:15; 4:1-5; Titus 1:9; I Timothy 3:1-7; 4:12; II Kings 2:3-5)” (Article III: Objects of the Conference, #5; *Constitution* of the Concordia Lutheran Conference).

Today the Lord still asks: “*Whom shall I send, and who will go for Us?*” (Isaiah 6:8a). Today the Lord still enjoins the congregations to call only those fit or qualified for the office and work based on God’s clear standards (see I Timothy 3:1-7; Titus 1:6-9). Today we need to train and examine men who may meet these requirements under God’s blessing and grace, without whom we can do nothing and who alone makes able ministers of the New Testament (cf. Acts 1:24-25; John 15:4-5; II Corinthians 3:4-6 and II Corinthians 4:7). In the beginning of the Apostolic Church, the apostles used men like Timothy to train others. St. Paul writes to him: “*Thou therefore, my son, be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus. And 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*” (II Timothy 2:1-2). To become what Timothy had become, an able minister of the New Testament, a man needed ever to “*study to show [himself] approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the Word of Truth*” (II Timothy 2:15).

Only under God’s blessing, having learned the doctrine and how to inculcate it, could a man fulfill these injunctions as pastor: “*Holding fast the faithful word as he hath been taught, that he may be able by sound doctrine both to exhort and to convince the gainsayers*” (Titus 1:9); “*in all things showing thyself a pattern of good works; in doctrine showing uncorruptness, gravity, sincerity, sound speech that cannot be condemned; that he that is of the contrary part may be ashamed, having no evil thing to say of you*” (Titus 2:7-8). The time required is obvious, as Paul told Timothy: “*Till I come, give attendance to reading, to exhortation, to doctrine. Neglect not the gift that is in thee, which was given thee by prophecy, with the laying on of the hands of the presbytery. Meditate upon these things; give thyself wholly to them, that thy profiting may appear to all. Take heed unto thyself and unto the doctrine; continue in them, for in doing this thou shalt both save thyself and them that hear thee*” (I Timothy 4:13-16).

When your essayist was a young man of 19, he began seminary studies while still enrolled full time in college (1974), continued through two full-time jobs (Harlem Enco and American Motors Corporation), got married (1976), and then did all the work of a pastor for more than two straight years at St. Mark’s, Sauk Village, Illinois, as a vicar, finally finishing up in June of 1979. His seminary training was not nearly as complete nor as thorough as it should have been. He made many mistakes because of his lack of adequate training and still plays “catch-up” in some areas today more than thirty years since he was ordained! What he would have

given to attend the seminary program now extant in our midst! What he would have given to study full-time! To be able to concentrate on seminary work exclusively without the distraction and exhaustion of other work entering in, now that would have been something else! “But Pastor Worley, you survived!” someone might say. That is a good way of putting it. But should we employ a “survival of the fittest” scenario for our seminary students and professors? Should we make it as difficult as possible to “keep them humble”? Surely we may cause some to become “extinct,” but “the strongest” will survive. We can make it so daunting a task that only a few would even dare to try, and many of them might fail. But is that *wise*? Is that *redeeming the opportunity* set before us? But what if we were willing and able, by the enabling grace of Christ’s empowering Gospel (Philippians 2:13), to change the *future* for the better by changing what we are doing *today*? We do not *need* to continue to have seminary students divide their time between their studies and secular jobs, making the professor’s job even harder and less efficient due to interrupted and long-extended programs! We dare not change *what* we teach; we cannot sacrifice solid preparation of our future *c.r.m.*’s! But we *could*, if God so moved and blessed us, change for the better *how long* it will take to prepare them. God wants your *heart*, first and foremost, and then also your *support* by prayer, personal service and financial support. St Paul writes to the Corinthians: “*But this I say, He which soweth sparingly shall reap also sparingly; and he which soweth bountifully shall reap also bountifully. Every man according as he purposeth in his heart, so let him give, not grudgingly, or of necessity; for God loveth a cheerful giver. And God is able to make all grace abound toward you, that ye, always having all sufficiency in all things, may abound to every good work (as it is written, He hath dispersed abroad; He hath given to the poor; His righteousness remaineth forever. Now He that ministereth seed to the sower both minister bread for your food and multiply your seed sown and increase the fruits of your righteousness) being enriched in everything to all bountifulness, which causeth through us thanksgiving to God. For the administration of this service not only supplieth the want of the saints but is abundant also by many thanksgivings unto God, whiles by the experiment of this ministration they glorify God for your professed subjection unto the Gospel of Christ, and for your liberal distribution unto them and unto all men, and by their prayer for you, which long after you for the exceeding grace of God in you. Thanks be unto God for His unspeakable gift*” (II Corinthians 9:6-15). What should move and motivate us? Paul exhorts us: “*I speak not by commandment but by occasion of the forwardness of others and to prove the sincerity of your love. For 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. ...Now therefore perform the doing of it, that, as there was a readiness to will, so there may be a performance also out of that which ye have. For if there be first a willing mind, it is accepted according to that a man hath, and not according to that he hath not. For I mean not that other men be eased and ye burdened, but by an equality; that now at this time your abundance may be a supply for their want, that their abundance also may be a supply for your want, that there may be equality, as it is written, He that had gathered much had nothing over; and he that had gathered little had no lack*” (II Corinthians 8:8-9, 11-15). Be as the Macedonian believers, of whom the apostle testifies: “*Moreover, brethren, we do you to wit of the grace of God bestowed on the churches of Macedonia, how that, in a great trial of affliction, the abundance of their joy and their deep poverty abounded unto the riches of their liberality. For to their power, I bear record, yea, and beyond their power, they were willing of themselves, praying us with much intreaty that we would receive the gift and take upon us the fellowship of the ministering to the saints. And this they did, not as we hoped, but first gave their own selves to the Lord, and unto us by the will of God*” (II Corinthians 8:1-5).

Obviously, we need wisely to consider how to redeem our opportunities *now* in providing for the temporal needs of our seminary students, as we recognize what they are willing to do for the Lord’s cause, namely, to devote themselves entirely to the work of the Lord for *our* sakes! Truly an investment in their present training is an investment in the future of soul-care for ourselves, our families, and our congregations. The Gospel moves us to *want to give* ourselves, our prayers, our time, our support in word, deed and pocketbook out of thankfulness for God’s grace in Christ. The apostle reminds the Corinthians: “*If we have sown unto you spiritual things, is it a great thing if we shall reap your carnal things?*” (I Corinthians 9:11).

In redeeming our present opportune time to support the men enrolled in our seminary, we are to set a good example in wise priority setting. First consideration must be the nourishment of our souls in the hearing of the Word, the wholesome milk of our gracious God. “*As newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the Word, that ye may grow thereby, if so be ye have tasted that the Lord is gracious*” (I Peter 2:2-3). Our theme verse tells us to walk as wise men, always “*redeeming the time*” for the Lord’s use “*because the days are evil.*” As the world rushes headlong toward Judgment Day, evil men will grow worse and worse, and deception will abound (II Timothy 3:13); and we will need faithful shepherds to feed, lead and protect our precious flocks of Christ’s sheep and lambs (I Peter 5:2-3; Hebrews 13:17). In many ways the famine of hearing the Word (Amos 8:11-12) is already extant in most of the world. We need good soldiers of Jesus Christ, able to endure hardness (II Timothy 2:3). The apostle reminds Timothy how good soldiers must fight: “*No man that warreth entangleth himself with the affairs of this life, that he may please Him who hath chosen him to be a soldier*” (II Timothy 2:4). If we can support our seminary students so they can devote their full attention and energy to their studies and can avoid becoming entangled with the affairs of this life, why wouldn’t we? For we should love a good pastor and highly esteem him in love for his work’s sake (I Thessalonians 5:12-13); and, out of love for future pastors, we should support our seminary students in love.

One final thought: When Gehazi asked Naaman, the Syrian general healed of his leprosy by the Lord through Elisha, to gift two young men of the sons of the prophets, he out of gratitude freely gave (II Kings 5:21ff.). We have even *greater* reasons to gift our students with the support they need and require, having been delivered from deadly *spiritual* leprosy. Is it time to solicit and receive money for the support of the future pastoral ministry in our midst? Is it time to redeem the opportunity set for us? Or should we neglect the pressing need and fail to do good while we can, by God’s grace?

The apostle tells Titus: “*Bring Zenas, the lawyer, and Apollos on their journey diligently, that nothing be wanting unto them. And let ours also learn to maintain good works for necessary uses, that they be not unfruitful*” (Titus 3:13-14). Will **you** not redeem the time by using what **you** have to bring *our students* on *their* journey diligently, that nothing be wanting unto *them*? Will **you** not learn anew to maintain good works for necessary uses, to engage in good deeds for pressing needs, that **you** be not unfruitful? God grant it, for the dear Savior’s sake! Amen!

MINUTES OF THE 58th ANNUAL CONVENTION

of the

CONCORDIA LUTHERAN CONFERENCE

June 26, 27, and 28, 2009

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FRIDAY, JUNE 26

THE MORNING SESSION

THE OPENING SERVICE:

The 58th Annual Convention, held at Trinity Ev. Lutheran Church, Oak Park, Illinois, officially began at 9:30 a.m. with a Divine Worship Service of Convocation in which the local pastor, the Rev. Robert J. Lietz, served as the liturgist and the Conference President, the Rev. Edward J. Worley, delivered the keynote sermon. He chose as his text Amos 8:1-14, taking

as his theme: *A People “Ripe” for God’s Terrible Judgment: A Famine of God’s Word*, and dividing it into two parts, namely, **I.** When does God consider a people “ripe” for judgment? and **II.** What judgment does God send upon such a people?

Following the service, the first session of the convention was called to order by the President at 11:22 a.m. according to the customary usages with an exhortation and a prayer together with the singing of Hymn 157 and the reading of Zechariah 13:1.

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. Tom Fedor (Trinity)
Mr. Dan Cooper (St. Mark’s)

B. Committee on Registration and Excuses: Pastor Paul E. Bloedel, Chairman
Mr. Stephen Richter (St. Luke’s)
Mr. Jon Worley (St. Luke’s)*

*appointed by the chairman since there were no lay delegates from Good Shepherd

C. Committee on Nominations and Elections: Pastor Robert J. Lietz, Chairman
Mr. David J. Mensing (Peace)
Mr. Mark Fitzwater (St. John’s)

D. Resolutions Committee: Pastor David T. Mensing, Chairman
Mr. Raymond Kusumi (St. Luke’s)
Mr. Daniel Mensing (Peace)

INITIAL REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE ON REGISTRATION AND EXCUSES:

The committee, through its lay delegate, Mr. Stephen Richter, reported the following delegates present and seated for this convention:

From **GOOD SHEPHERD, Tucson:** Rev. David G. Redlin, Pastoral Delegate; no Lay Delegates — 2 votes.

From **PEACE, Oak Forest:** Rev. David T. Mensing, Pastoral Delegate; Mr. David J. Mensing and Mr. Daniel P. Mensing, Lay Delegates; Mr. John P. Mensing and Mr. Karl P. Mensing, Alternates — 3 votes.

From **ST. JOHN’S, Lebanon:** Mr. Ted Fitzwater and Mr. Mark Fitzwater, Lay Delegates; no Pastoral Delegate and no Alternates — 2 votes.

From **ST. LUKE’S, Seattle:** Rev. Edward J. Worley, Pastoral Delegate; Mr. Raymond Kusumi and Mr. Stephen Richter, Lay Delegates; Mr. Jon Worley, Alternate — 3 votes.

From **ST. MARK’S, Sauk Village:** Rev. Paul E. Bloedel, Pastoral Delegate; Mr. Dan Cooper and Mr. James Bielefeldt, Lay Delegates; Mr. Erik Roe, Alternate — 3 votes.

From **TRINITY, Oak Park:** Rev. Robert J. Lietz, Pastoral Delegate; Mr. Tom Fedor and Mr. John Breinig, Lay Delegates; Mr. John Swanson, Alternate — 3 votes

Total number of votes to be cast: **16**. The total attendance at the opening service was approximately **60**. The thank-offering received to benefit the General Conference Treasury was \$ **1,157.05**. 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:

In reviewing the Conference fiscal year 2008–2009, President Worley thanked the Lord for His gracious blessings bestowed upon our Conference and briefly summarized what would be presented in the doctrinal essay and Sunday sermon as well as the various reports to be delivered during the convention. It was moved and seconded to accept this report subject to the usual review. The motion was unanimously carried. The Vice President appointed as the Committee to Review the President's Report: Pastor Robert J. Lietz and Mr. John Breinig. This committee will file its report later on in the convention, according to our *Agenda* on Saturday morning.

THE CONVENTION AGENDA:

The President then laid before the convention for its consideration the official agenda. It was moved, seconded, and carried to adopt the agenda as printed.

REPORT OF THE PRESS COMMITTEE:

This committee, composed of the local pastor and the Conference Secretary, reported that, as has usually been the case in recent years, no special advance announcements were given to the press. It was also noted that it might be a good idea to change this practice in the future and issue even just a small announcement of the convention to the local 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 11:48 a.m. for the noon meal.

THE AFTERNOON SESSION

The afternoon session was opened at 1:15 p.m. with a devotion conducted by Pastor Paul E. Bloedel. Hymn 400 was sung, followed by the reading of Psalm 90:1–12, and a prayer. The devotion concluded with the singing of Hymn 417 and the Apostolic Benediction.

RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS:

The President mentioned three specific actions of the Board of Directors from this past year which needed to be ratified during the convention: 1) \$ 2,500.00 was sent to help our Nigerian brethren, particularly the congregation in Elem Sangama; 2) \$ 200.00 was sent to cover the customs fees for those items brought back by Pastor Fyneface when he returned home after last year's convention; and 3) \$ 20,000.00 was transferred from the General Fund to *Scriptural Publications* for the purchase of a Xerox copier/printer. A motion was made, seconded, and carried to approve all these expenditures. At the recommendation of the chairman, it was moved, seconded, and carried to defer the remaining recommendation of the Board of Directors until it would be explained during the report of the Committee on Theological Education.

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 2008–2009. The report showed a beginning cash balance of \$ 68,019.72 in the General Fund plus total receipts of

\$ 38,829.10, yielding total cash available of \$ 106,848.82. Expenditures totaled \$ 57,618.78, leaving an ending cash balance as of May 31, 2009 of \$ 49,230.04. The report also showed an increase in the Student Aid Fund from \$ 42,731.15 at the beginning of the fiscal year to an ending balance of \$ 56,437.98 on its closing date, May 31, 2009. Total cash in all funds as of May 31, 2009: \$ 105,668.02. It was then moved and seconded to receive, subject to audit, the *Financial Report* of the Treasurer concerning the past fiscal year and to thank him for his faithful work on behalf of our Conference. This motion was carried.

The Treasurer then distributed the Finance Committee's *Budget Worksheet* for the new fiscal year, June 1, 2009 through May 31, 2010. It showed a beginning cash balance of \$ 49,230.04 and anticipated receipts (including the pledges of our congregations) of \$ 23,817.05 for expected total cash available of \$ 73,027.09 in the General Fund. Projected budgetary expenditures totaled \$ 36,925.00 divided among the following items: *Scriptural Publications* — \$ 3,500.00; Ekaterinburg Subsidy — \$ 9,600.00; Ekaterinburg Facilities Rental Subsidy — \$ 2,400.00; Archival Subsidy — \$ 500.00; Telephone Expense — \$ 100.00; Convention Expense — \$ 1,000.00; General Travel Expense — \$ 5,000.00; Seminary Instructors' Salaries — \$ 12,825.00; Miscellaneous Expense — \$ 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:

Pastor Mensing, chairman of the *Editorial Committee* and Editor of the *C. L.*, first reminded the delegates that our *Concordia Lutheran* is the **official organ** of the Conference and, as such, the official testimony of our church body concerning our doctrine and practice (Cf. *Brief Statement*, ¶29). It is the Editor's responsibility to make sure not only that its doctrinal content is sound, but that even the words and expressions used are clear and unmistakable. Pastor Mensing stressed the desire to get the *C.L.s* printed and distributed to the congregations in a timely manner, but this is greatly impacted by how punctual the pastors are in submitting their articles. Special thanks was expressed to Pastor Lietz, the *Book and Tract Editor*, and to Jason Mabe, the lay member of the Committee, for their help in proofreading and making suggestions for wording. Finally, thanks was also given to Mr. Phil Martin, the *Print Shop Manager of Scriptural Publications*, for his invaluable assistance in readying copy for printing. To everyone involved, the Editor expressed his gratitude in the Lord for the loving service and diligent hard work expended and for the success of their efforts under the Lord's blessing. It was moved and seconded to adopt the report; and the motion was unanimously carried.

REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE ON MISSIONS:

Pastor Robert J. Lietz, the chairman of the *Committee on Missions*, divided his report into two main sections: 1) concerning our brethren in Russia, and 2) concerning our brethren in Nigeria. He mentioned the Committee's work of receiving regular information from Pastor Schurganoff relating to the weekly details of his services (Scripture readings, sermon texts, Bible Class topics, etc.). For the information of the delegates, the chairman included the reports from April and May as attachments to his report. The Committee is strongly urging Pastor Schurganoff to become more familiar and even proficient with English—using the *Rosetta Stone*® software that was donated by an anonymous member of the C. L. C. Pastor Lietz also included copies of correspondence between Pastor Mensing and Pastor Schurganoff, as well as between Pastor Schurganoff and our Conference Treasurer. The chairman recommended maintaining the current level of subsidy (for Pastor Schurganoff's salary and the rental facility), and paying for the translation and printing of two instructional papers dealing with Christian giving and the support of the Pastoral Office.

With regard to Nigeria, the chairman mentioned some of the generous gifts sent to the Nigerian congregations from various sources within the C. L. C., as well as the ongoing

troubles that have been caused by “militants” particularly in Elem Sangama. In response to the needs that resulted from the militant disturbances, the Board approved the sending of monetary assistance (\$ 2,500) in May of this year. Pastor Lietz briefly mentioned the passing of Pastor Robinson Dodo into Paradise and the trials endured by Pastor and Mrs. Ekele, whose first child died just shortly before birth. Pastor Fyneface’s goiter is acting up again; he is currently checking into the medical options that are available to him since his trusted doctor of many years has now retired. The Committee is recommending 1) that the situation with Pastor Fyneface’s goiter be closely monitored by asking him for regular updates; 2) that laptops be acquired for the other Nigerian pastors (one or two a year); and 3) that the Conference look into covering the cost of Pastor Fyneface’s internet service—\$ 1,032 a year at present.

At the suggestion of President Worley, a motion was made and seconded to accept the report; but discussion and action upon this motion would be taken up after a brief recess, which began at 2:57 p.m.

At 3:30 p.m. the convention reconvened to discuss the Mission Committee’s report. Pastor Worley briefly reviewed the situation of the congregations in Russian and Nigeria; and the motion to accept the committee’s report was carried. The specific recommendations were then addressed one by one: A motion was made, seconded, and carried to hire a translator for putting the above mentioned instructional papers into the Russian language —budgeting \$ 1,000 for this project. A motion was made, seconded, and carried to keep the subsidy for the Russian congregation at its current level. And a motion was made, seconded, and carried to ratify the prior expense of the Conference approved by the Board of Directors back in May for the sending of six sets of Pieper’s *Christian Dogmatics* to the Nigerian Pastors.

REPORT OF THE PUBLISHING HOUSE BOARD OF CONTROL:

Pastor Lietz, the chairman, began by mentioning the purchase of a new Xerox printer/copier. Mr. Philip Martin, the Print Shop Manager, was given the floor to discuss the capabilities and benefits of this new machine. He mentioned that the old Ricoh machine was unreliable and not designed for the capacity demanded by the projects undertaken by *Scriptural Publications*. It was decided to acquire the Xerox machine as a long-term solution for the needs of our publishing house. Pastor Lietz went on to mention some of the projects completed by *Scriptural Publications* over the past year; and he thanked various people—both from within and from outside of the Committee—who donated their time and energy to help with the work. Finally, Pastor Lietz mentioned as projects for the coming year the reprinting of the *Advanced Bible History*, as well as flashcards for the study of the questions and prooftexts of the Catechism. It was moved and seconded to adopt this report, and the motion was carried.

REPORT OF THE BUSINESS MANAGER OF *SCRIPTURAL PUBLICATIONS*:

Mr. David J. Mensing, *Business Manager*, presented his report, which consisted in his detailed balance sheet summarizing the finances of our publishing house. The report showed a beginning cash balance of \$ 5,315.59; total receipts of \$ 27,253.65; total expenditures of \$ 31,125.79; and an ending balance of \$ 1,443.45. It was moved and seconded to adopt the report subject to audit, and the motion was carried.

REPORT CONCERNING THE CONFERENCE ARCHIVES:

Mr. David J. Mensing, on behalf of the Conference Secretary, who is constitutionally the custodian of the Conference records (*Constitution*, Art. VIII, 3, b), reported that \$ 500.00 was received from the Conference General Fund, but that nothing was done with these funds. In fact, nothing was done at all with the Conference archives this last year. A motion was made, seconded, and carried to accept this report.

REPORT CONCERNING THE SEMINARY BOOKSTORE:

Pastor Mensing reminded the delegates and visitors of the purpose of our “Seminary Bookstore,” in reality a collection of books kept secure in a locked cabinet, namely, to stockpile and then make available, particularly to theological students and new pastors in our midst, theological books which should be in every pastor’s working library. These books are available to both students and pastors at “cost.” It was mentioned that the C. T. E. chairman is responsible for evaluating new books to be added to this bookstore. It was moved and seconded to receive the report, and the motion was carried.

In order to give the Secretary time to polish the minutes, the chairman gave a brief overview of the business for the next day. The reading of the minutes of the Friday sessions then followed. It was moved and seconded to adopt the minutes as read, pending polish and final review by the *praesidium*; and the motion was carried.

The agenda for the day having been completed, the Friday sessions adjourned at 5:00 p.m.

SATURDAY, JUNE 27

THE MORNING SESSION

The session was opened at 9:05 a.m. with a devotion led by Pastor David G. Redlin. Hymn 540, verses 1–4, was sung, followed by the reading of Revelation 3:7–13, and a prayer. The devotion concluded with the last stanza of the hymn (verse 5) and the Apostolic Benediction.

THE ESSAY: “*Redeeming the Time with Respect to the Training of Future Pastors*”

—**Part I: The Scriptural Doctrinal Imperative of Ephesians 5:16**.....Pastor Edward J. Worley

In his brief introduction, the essayist mentioned a personal anecdote from his seminary days, which dealt both with redeeming the time and the importance of thoroughly training seminary students. The focus of *Part I* of this two-part essay was an examination of Ephesians 5:16 together with the immediate context (verses 15–17). Pastor Worley focused on what it means to walk “*circumspectly*”—accurately and correctly according to God’s Law. Those who refuse to walk in accordance with the Word of the Lord are called spiritual “*fools*”—ignorantly striving after worldly gain while completely neglecting the one thing needful for their salvation, the Gospel of their Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Being spiritually wise means not only trusting in the Gospel but also allowing the Lord to guide and direct our steps in life according to the perfect “rule” of His Law. As the children of God, who appreciate the redemption of Christ Jesus, we should certainly want to *redeem* the time—taking advantage of the opportunities to do good that God has given us, living our lives according to His will, buying back, as it were, the time from the service of sin and the devil. The discussion from the floor included many exhortations from the Scriptures that highlight the fact that God demands 24/7 obedience, and how important it is to use our time better than we do when we allow the devil, the world, and our flesh to influence our actions.

A brief recess was observed at 10:30 a.m.

At 10:56 a.m., Pastor Worley continued with the conclusion of *Part I*. Citing the example of Mary and Martha, the essayist made the point that, even when we are not doing those things that are in and of themselves sinful, we may not be redeeming the time as good and faithful stewards. We are exhorted to redeem the time particularly because these days in which we live are so very evil. Thankfully, the Lord promises to preserve and strengthen us in the faith—and in our God-given ability and desire to redeem the time in the face of temptations to do the contrary. This spiritual strengthening is accomplished in us by the power of the Spirit

through His Word; and this point paved the way for *Part II* of the Essay, which will be delivered on Sunday afternoon.

REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE ON LUTHERAN UNION:

At 11:15 a.m. the chairman of the *Committee on Lutheran Union* gave his report, in which it was mentioned that Mr. Ross Pounders, a man in Texas who had expressed interest in C. L. C. and had sent money to our Conference in the past, had not heeded the exhortation of Pastors Lietz and Mensing in particular to relocate closer to and pursue membership in one of our congregations, and had, instead, joined a congregation of the Church of the Lutheran Confession, even though he recognizes that they teach incorrectly on the doctrines of the Church and Ministry. An update was then given on the situation with Pastor Nathan Diers, a former pastor of the L. C. R. who left that church body for doctrinal reasons and is presently independent. Pastor Diers and his congregation have been virtually silent to all of our overtures this last year. One last effort will be made to get Pastor Diers to respond and let us know where he and his congregation stand in relation to our Conference and doctrinal position. Next, the chairman read a letter from Pastor Kent A. Heimbigner, whose congregation (a former L. C. M. S. church) seemed to be interested in finding an orthodox fellowship. After receiving a letter sent by Pastor Mensing addressing his basic questions, Pastor Heimbigner responded with a “thank you” and a follow-up question about what objections our Conference has to modern social dancing. The chairman responded forthrightly and was thanked by Pastor Heimbigner for his “no-nonsense” response; but since that time he has made no more contact with us. The latest information gleaned from the internet is that Pastor Heimbigner and his congregation have joined fellowship with Pastor (now also “Bishop”) James Heiser in the so-called “Evangelical Lutheran Diocese of North America.” The chairman also briefly reported on his contacts with Pastor David Boisclair in St. Louis, a long-time personal friend of our brother, Warren Malach of Seattle. The pastor had expressed concern about the heterodoxy of the Missouri Synod and had shown interest in our Conference; but, in the course of the correspondence and telephone conversations with him, it became evident that he disagreed with our Scriptural application of Romans 16:17 over against persistent errorists, took exception also to other Scriptural positions of our Conference both in doctrine and in practice, wanted to explore the theology of modern theologians, and ultimately chose to pursue the “stay-in-and-fight” stance of so-called “conservatives” who become leavened by the heterodox and finally consciously decide to be “*partakers with them*” (Ephesians 5:7). Pastor Boisclair therefore withdrew his original expression of interest and declined even to attend our convention to learn more about us.

A motion was made and seconded to accept the report; but the discussion was tabled until after the lunch break. The convention then stood in recess at 12:00 noon for lunch.

THE AFTERNOON SESSION

Following the noon meal, the afternoon session began at 1:15 p.m. with a devotion conducted by Pastor David T. Mensing. Hymn 483, verses 1–4, was sung, followed by the reading of Scripture in II Timothy 2:1–7, 15 and a prayer. The devotion concluded with the last stanza of the hymn (verse 5) and the Apostolic Benediction.

In the discussion following the report of the *Committee on Lutheran Union*, the chairman was thanked for his thorough work in following up with those from the outside who have expressed interest in our Conference; and it was mentioned that the lack of good fruit from all our work in this area only underscores the importance and wisdom of training men for the ministry in our own seminary and not relying upon an influx of pastors into our fellowship of pastors who separate themselves from heterodox bodies. According to our experience, these are few and far between.

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

The committee found the President's annual report to be concise and complete. It was moved and seconded to accept this report, and the motion was carried.

REPORT OF THE AUDITING COMMITTEE:

The committee reported that, in an audit of the Treasurer's books and those of the Business Manager of *Scriptural Publications*, everything was found to be in good order. The committee thanked both Robert G. Bloedel, the Treasurer, and David J. Mensing, the publishing house Business Manager, for their diligent service to the Conference. A motion was made, seconded, and carried to accept the report.

REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE ON THEOLOGICAL EDUCATION:

The chairman, Pastor Worley, set forth the on-going need for future pastors. If God would take even only *one* of our current pastors home to heaven, there would be no one, at this present time, who is trained and prepared to take his place. Mention was made of our current student, Mr. Jason Mabe, as well as two new students, Mr. David Mensing and Mr. Daniel Mensing, who will begin their seminary studies, the Lord willing, this fall and on a full-time basis. The chairman noted that certain suggested curricular revisions were being recommended for adoption by the delegates in convention assembled, namely, **1**) to restructure the first year courses so that they can be completed in *two* semesters (instead of the current *three*); **2**) to place Liturgics and Hymnology in the fourth year (instead of the fifth), thus balancing the credit load better between those two years; and **3**) to reflect the importance of German, Latin, and Hebrew by removing their current status as "electives." Next, Pastor Worley read the text of a PowerPoint presentation entitled, **"URGENT! 'Redeeming the time...' with respect to the training of future pastors in our Conference."** This presentation was displayed on a large screen for the benefit of the assembled delegates and visitors. It outlined the scarcity of candidates since none are currently available, the time needed to prepare replacements for our current pastors, and the committee's recommendation of a plan for the ongoing subsistence support of theological students so that they can study on a full-time basis unencumbered by secular work. The text of the entire presentation will be included as part of the committee's report printed in the *Proceedings*. A motion was made and seconded to accept the report. A number of questions from the floor were asked about what, if anything, could be done to fill a need sooner if one or more of our pastors would be called out of this life prior to the graduation of a seminary student; and it was agreed that none of the possible options are really good ones. The need to support with generous financial contributions the work of the seminary students that the Lord has provided us was stressed strongly. The committee's report pointed out that the cost of supporting the two full-time students over the next two years can already be defrayed by the *Student Aid Fund* at its current balance of \$ 56,437.98, but that, when the third student goes full-time in 2011, the cost is estimated at approximately \$3.50 a week per communicant member in our Conference, a figure that represents, according to the C. T. E., "expenditures that are made out-of-pocket routinely and even impulsively with little or no regard to their 'economic impact.'" If all the congregations begin this level of support now, the impact in two years will be even less. The Conference Treasurer was encouraged to solicit pledges from the congregations now already in recognition of this important need. After further discussion, the motion to accept the report was carried.

Following the acceptance of the report, the specific recommendations of the C. T. E. were set before the convention. A motion was made, seconded, and carried to adopt the suggested curricular recommendations (detailed above). A motion was then made, seconded, and carried to approve the class structure for the new year—Pastor Lietz teaching the second year courses to Student Mabe on a part-time basis, and Pastor Mensing teaching the first year courses to David and Daniel Mensing on a full-time basis. Finally, a motion was made and seconded to approve the full support of our two new students, as this was detailed in the C. T. E.'s report. A proposed amendment to the motion was made by Pastor Bloedel to ask the congregations of the Conference to submit their pledges for the *Student Aid Fund* to the Conference Treasurer within the next month and that the full support of the married student at \$1,600 a month be contingent upon sufficient funding being pledged by the congregations. The motion died for

lack of a second. In final discussion of the unamended motion, it was pointed out that the Student Aid Fund at its present level is more than sufficient to sustain the committee's recommendation for two consecutive years. The unamended motion was then unanimously carried.

A recess was then declared by the chairman at 3:30 p.m.

FURTHER REPORT OF THE FINANCE COMMITTEE:

On the basis of actions taken by the convention, the Finance Committee adjusted its initial budget proposal to include subsidy for the Russian congregation at the same level as last year—\$ 9,600 toward Pastor Schurganoff's salary and \$ 2,400 for the rental subsidy; \$ 1,000 was budgeted for the translation and printing of instructional materials for the Russian congregation (as detailed under the Mission Committee's report); and the expenditure of \$ 22,800 was added to the budget under the Student Aid Fund. It was moved and seconded to accept this interim report, and the motion was carried.

ELECTION OF OFFICERS AND STANDING COMMITTEES:

OFFICERS...

PRESIDENT: Nominated—Pastor Mensing, Pastor Bloedel, and Pastor Lietz.
Elected—Pastor David T. Mensing

VICE PRESIDENT: Nominated—Pastor Lietz, Pastor Bloedel, and Pastor Worley.
Elected—Pastor Edward J. Worley

SECRETARY: Nominated—Pastor Bloedel, Pastor Lietz, and Pastor Redlin.
Pastor Redlin asked to be removed from consideration for the reason of physical infirmity.
Elected—Pastor Paul E. Bloedel

TREASURER: Nominated—Mr. Robert Bloedel, Mr. Tom Fedor, Mr. Stephen Richter, Mr. Jon Worley.
Elected—Mr. Robert G. Bloedel

BOARD MEMBER-AT-LARGE from the Far West: Nominated—Mr. Mark Natterer, Mr. Stephen Richter, Mr. Raymond Kusumi, Mr. Paul Natterer, Mr. Joshua Redlin, Mr. Stephen Bloedel.
Elected—Mr. Raymond Kusumi

BOARD MEMBER-AT-LARGE from the Middle West: Nominated—Mr. Karl Mensing, Mr. Erik Roe, Mr. Tom Fedor, Mr. Mike Danyluk, and Mr. John Swanson.
Elected—Mr. Erik Roe

STANDING COMMITTEES...

EDITORIAL COMMITTEE:

SLATE A—Pastor Mensing, Pastor Lietz, Mr. Jason Mabe
SLATE B—Pastor Mensing, Pastor Bloedel, Mr. Jim Bielefeldt
SLATE C—Pastor Mensing, Pastor Bloedel, Mr. Jason Mabe
SLATE D—Pastor Mensing, Pastor Worley, Mr. Jason Mabe
SLATE E—Pastor Mensing, Pastor Worley, Mr. Stephen Bloedel
Elected—SLATE A

COMMITTEE ON LUTHERAN UNION:

SLATE A—Pastor Worley, Pastor Bloedel, Pastor Lietz, Mr. Jason Mabe

SLATE B—Pastor Worley, Pastor Bloedel, Pastor Lietz, Mr. Erik Roe
Elected—SLATE A

COMMITTEE ON THEOLOGICAL EDUCATION:

SLATE A—Pastor Worley, Pastor Natterer, Mr. Erik Roe, Mr. Phil Martin

SLATE B—Pastor Worley, Pastor Bloedel, Mr. Phil Martin, Mr. John Swanson

SLATE C—Pastor Worley, Pastor Bloedel, Mr. Paul Natterer, Mr. Stephen Bloedel

SLATE D—Pastor Worley, Pastor Natterer, Mr. Stephen Bloedel, Mr. Daniel Bloedel

Elected—SLATE B

COMMITTEE ON MISSIONS:

SLATE A—Pastor Lietz, Pastor Redlin, Mr. Stephen Richter, Mr. Erik Roe, Mr. Mike Malley

SLATE B—Pastor Lietz, Pastor Redlin, Mr. Stephen Richter, Mr. Mark Natterer, Mr.

Dale Ellis

Elected—SLATE B

FINANCE COMMITTEE:

SLATE A—Mr. Robert Bloedel, Mr. Paul Natterer, Mr. John Swanson, Mr. Joseph Martin

SLATE B—Mr. Robert Bloedel, Mr. Paul Natterer, Mr. Mark Fitzwater, Mr. Joseph
 Martin

SLATE C—Mr. Robert Bloedel, Mr. Mark Fitzwater, Mr. Daniel Cooper, Mr. John
 Swanson

Elected—SLATE C

PUBLISHING HOUSE BOARD OF CONTROL:

SLATE A—Pastor Lietz, Mr. David J. Mensing, Mr. Phillip R. Martin

SLATE B—Pastor Bloedel, Mr. David J. Mensing, Mr. Phillip R. Martin

Elected—SLATE A

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

The Saturday minutes were then read by the Secretary in their entirety. A motion was made, seconded, and carried to adopt the minutes as read, subject to polish and final review by the *praesidium*.

President Worley suggested that, especially because of the content of the prayers offered by the pastors in their opening devotions, these be included in the Proceedings when they are printed. This suggestion was taken under advisement.

The convention stood in recess at 5:37 p.m. for the supper hour.

SUNDAY, JUNE 28

SUNDAY MORNING — The Divine Worship Service with Holy Communion

The *pastor loci*, the Rev. Robert J. Lietz, again served as liturgist, while Pastor David G. Redlin of Tucson, Arizona, preached the sermon based on Matthew 9:36–38. His theme was: *The Dire Prospect of Sheep Having No Shepherds*, divided into four parts: **I.** The *need* for faithful pastors is obvious with the potential harvest so plenteous; **II.** The *supply* of qualified laborers is short particularly *among us* in these latter days; **III.** The *training* of pastors is *our* responsibility to the glory of God's grace; and **IV.** The *sending* of them is *the Lord's* office for the welfare of His Church.

Delegates and visitors from the congregations of our Conference then partook of the Lord's Supper together as guests of Trinity Ev. Lutheran Church—for the remission of their sins, for

the strengthening of their faith and their walk of sanctification and in testimony of their blessed unity in the Word of their Savior. Immediately following the service, delegates, visitors, and the local members enjoyed the noon meal provided in the basement of the church.

THE AFTERNOON SESSION

The afternoon session began at 1:33 p.m. with a devotion conducted by Pastor Robert J. Lietz. Hymn 127 was sung, followed by the reading of Scripture in Psalm 103:1–4, and a prayer. The devotion concluded with Hymn 97, verses 1–3, and the Apostolic Benediction.

As he assumed the chair, Pastor Mensing, the newly-elected President, besought the prayers of the brethren for himself and the rest of the Conference officers for the coming year.

The convention then heard the remainder of the essay: ***“Redeeming the Time with Respect to the Training of Future Pastors”*** by Pastor Edward J. Worley — **Part II: The Scriptural Application [of Ephesians 5:16] to the Training of Future Pastors.**

This portion of the essay focused on the importance of making the best use of the opportunity that our Conference has right now for training the three men currently enrolled in our seminary. The essayist referred to what he called his “lack of adequate training” in his own seminary experience and mentioned that the opportunity for our seminary students to study full time is a wonderful thing, which he would have loved to have had. Providing for the full support of our students will certainly require generosity on the part of the Conference brethren. But we have all the motivation required to accomplish this in the powerful Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ, whose example of selfless generosity to redeem us by His blood should provoke us generously to invest our *temporal* blessings to support our seminary program, which is designed to safeguard invaluable *spiritual* blessings for ourselves and our children for generations to come.

A motion was made and seconded to accept this Scriptural and edifying essay with thanks to the Lord for blessing the essayist in the presentation and application of the various doctrines that he treated, subject to the standard review of the *praesidium*. The motion was carried unanimously.

INTEREST REPORT OF THE THEOLOGICAL PROFESSOR:

In his report Pastor and Professor David T. Mensing summarized the course-work covered during the past year by Mr. Jason Mabe, who finished the first year curriculum of 46 credit hours with German, New Testament Isagogics, Introduction to the Old Testament Scriptures, and Exegesis, maintaining a 4.0 GPA by the grace and with the help of God. He noted some of the difficulties involved in the delicate balance of secular and academic work for a married student and expressed praise to God for His grace in having provided Jason with an exemplary Christian helpmeet in his wife, Gina. Their joy was amplified this past year with an addition to their family, a daughter, Selah Janelle. Professor Mensing also mentioned the matriculation of two new students—David and Daniel Mensing—who will begin full-time study, the Lord willing, this coming fall. The plan is for Pastor Mensing to teach the full complement of first-year courses to the two new students, and for Pastor Lietz to teach two second-year courses to Student Mabe, who will still be studying part-time. The brethren were exhorted to pray for the students and the professors, that the Lord richly bless their endeavors to His glory, that a famine of God’s Word may be averted among us. It was moved and seconded to receive the report; and, after some discussion, this motion was carried.

INTEREST REPORT OF THE SEMINARY STUDENT:

Mr. Jason A. Mabe, our current student, then gave his report, in which he thanked the Lord for the blessing of his new daughter, Selah, and reviewed what he covered in the past year of his seminary studies. He expressed his gratitude for the prayers of the Conference brethren, for the support of his wife, and for the diligent work of his pastor/professor. He also reminded us to pray for the two new seminary students—David and Daniel Mensing. In response to a

question from the floor, Jason gave a description of his schedule during a typical week—balancing his responsibilities toward his family, work, and seminary studies. A motion was made, seconded, and carried to accept the report.

A brief recess was observed at 3:15 p.m.; and sessions resumed again at 3:31 p.m.

FINAL REPORT OF THE FINANCE COMMITTEE:

The Conference Treasurer noted that there was only one small change to be made on the *Budget Worksheet* for the new fiscal year—adding \$10.00 to the figure for the convention collection. This brief report was accepted. It was moved and seconded to accept the budget proposed by the Finance Committee as the *Final Fiscal Budget for 2009-2010*, and this motion was unanimously adopted. (That budget in its entirety is printed out as adopted in the *Proceedings*.)

REPORT OF THE CONFERENCE STATISTICIAN:

Mr. Raymond S. Kusumi delivered the statistical report for fiscal year 2008–2009. A motion was made, seconded, and carried to receive this report. 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 RESOLUTIONS COMMITTEE:

The *Resolutions Committee* submitted drafts of six resolutions to the convention for its consideration and moved their adoption. In short, the following resolutions were presented and unanimously adopted:

- #1: Exhortation generously to support our theological training program;
- #2: Thanks to God for His gracious blessings toward our Conference and an exhortation to remember to pray the Lord of the harvest that He would move the hearts of more men to enroll in our seminary;
- #3: Thanks to last year's officers for their service and an exhortation to pray for the newly elected officers;
- #4: Thanks to Mr. Lloyd E. Martin and the augmented choir of Peace Ev. Lutheran Church for the beautiful organ and choir music that enhanced the worship services;
- #5: Thanks to the pastors who provided devotions opening the various sessions of the convention, as well as to Pastors Worley and Redlin for their sermons, and to Pastor Worley for his essay;
- #6: Thanks to Trinity Ev. Lutheran Church and its pastor for hosting the convention and for their loving and generous hospitality.

FINAL REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE ON REGISTRATION AND EXCUSES:

As noted in detail in the committee's initial report, six congregations were represented at this convention by 5 pastoral delegates, 10 lay delegates, and 5 alternate lay delegates. The total number of votes to be cast on any measure was 16. The total attendance at the Sunday service was 136. The total offering at the Sunday service was \$ 3,386.34, and 82 souls communed either as members or as guests of Trinity Ev. Lutheran Church. A motion was made, seconded, and carried to receive the report.

TIME AND PLACE OF THE 59th ANNUAL CONVENTION:

St. John's Lutheran Church of Lebanon, Oregon, through its lay delegate, Mr. Ted Fitzwater, extended to the Conference its invitation to host the 59th 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, 2010.) It was moved and seconded to accept this kind invitation with thanks; and the motion was carried.

The minutes of the Sunday sessions were then read by the Secretary. It was moved and seconded that the minutes be adopted subject to polish and review. This motion was carried.

After several brief announcements, the chairman entertained a motion to adjourn the convention. This motion was made, seconded, and carried at 4:25 p.m.

ADJOURNMENT AND CLOSING DEVOTION:

The Conference President concluded the 58th Annual Convention of the Concordia Lutheran Conference with a devotion that included the singing of Hymn 500, a prayer and the Lord's prayer, followed by the singing of Hymn 53, the closing formula, and the Apostolic Benediction.

Respectfully submitted,

Rev. Paul E. Bloedel, Secretary

ANNUAL REPORT OF THE CONFERENCE PRESIDENT

Dear Brethren:

We thank our God on the behalf of our conference of orthodox congregations for His abundant grace freely bestowed upon us through His Word for the sake of our dear Lord and only Savior Jesus Christ during this past year as, once again, our flocks were faithfully shepherded and fed with the wholesome Word (I Peter 5:2, 2:2) and defended against our adversary the devil (I Peter 5:8). We have been lovingly chastened by our Lord for the purification of our faith (I Peter 1:6-7; James 1:2-4) as both pastors and sheep have suffered various physical problems due to accidents, disease or age degeneration. We count these as great blessings as we view them with the eyes of faith in the new man!

Over the past year we have been able to keep current with the publication of the 2008 Proceedings, and we pray that the Lord will use this valuable resource for the edification of our dear people.

As far as committee work is concerned, the Committee on Theological Education will report on the current progress of our Seminarian Jason Mabe and his recent colloquy. The Missions Committee will report on the status of Pastor Roman Schurganoff and of our Nigerian brethren in the F.L.C.N. Our Vice-President, Pastor Mensing, will also be giving a report of the work of the Committee on Lutheran Union over the past year. The report of the Editorial Committee will review the past year of the *Concordia Lutheran*. Other printed work, both finished and proposed for the future, will be included in the report of the Publishing House Board of Control. And finally, the report of the Finance Committee will review the past fiscal year and propose an operating budget for the coming one.

The motto of our 58th Annual Convention is “**Redeeming the Time**” with *specific application* in both the essay and in the sermons to the *urgency of training and supporting* a future ministry (Ephesians 5:16). The Keynote Sermon text for the opening service on Friday is Amos 8:1-14 under the theme “A People RIPE for God’s Terrible Judgment: A *FAMINE* of GOD’S WORD!” In the Convention Essay, Pastor Edward J. Worley of St. Luke’s Lutheran Church, Seattle, Washington, will present “**Redeeming the Time with Respect to the Training of Future Pastors.**” The Sunday Sermon text is Matthew 9:36-38. This sermon

will be delivered by Pastor David G. Redlin of Good Shepherd Evangelical Lutheran Church, Tucson, Arizona, who has chosen as his theme: “The Dire Prospect of Sheep Having No Shepherds.” The Sunday worship service is a Holy Communion service as we have the opportunity not only to receive the Lord’s Supper for our spiritual health but also to bear public testimony that we are indeed of one faith with our fellow communicants (I Corinthians 10:17; Acts 2:42).

May our gracious heavenly Father continue to grant us His blessings in Christ Jesus and establish our work to His glory and the praise of His grace according to His promise in Holy Writ: I Thessalonians 5:23-24: “...*the very God of peace sanctify you wholly; and I pray God your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. Faithful is he that called you, who also will do it.*”

Respectfully submitted,

Edward J. Worley, President

REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE TO REVIEW THE REPORT OF THE PRESIDENT

Dear Brethren:

The Committee to Review the President’s Report is pleased to say that it found the report given by President Worley to be concise while, at the same time, presented in a very charitable recognition of each committee that was mentioned, without presenting just a cursory overview for the sake of brevity alone.

Respectfully submitted,

Rev. Robert J. Lietz

Mr. John Breinig

INITIAL REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE ON REGISTRATION AND EXCUSES

From GOOD SHEPHERD, Tucson: Rev. David G. Redlin, Pastoral Delegate; no Lay Delegates. — 2 Votes

From PEACE, Oak Forest: Rev. David T. Mensing, Pastoral Delegate; Mr. David J. Mensing, Lay Delegate; Mr. Daniel P. Mensing, Lay Delegate; Mr. John P. Mensing, Alternate Lay Delegate; Mr. Karl P. Mensing, Alternate Lay Delegate — 3 Votes

From ST. JOHN'S, Lebanon: Mr. Ted Fitzwater, Lay Delegate; Mr. Mark Fitzwater, Lay Delegate; no Alternates — 2 Votes

From ST. LUKE'S, Seattle: Rev. Edward J. Worley, Pastoral Delegate; Mr. Raymond Kusumi, Lay Delegate; Mr. Stephen Richter, Lay Delegate; Mr. Jon Worley, Alternate Lay Delegate — 3 Votes

From ST. MARK'S, Sauk Village: Rev. Paul E. Bloedel, Pastoral Delegate; Mr. Daniel Cooper, Lay Delegate; Mr. James Bielefeldt, Lay Delegate; Mr. Erik Roe, Alternate Lay Delegate — 3 Votes

From TRINITY, Oak Park: Rev. Robert J. Lietz, Pastoral Delegate; Mr. John Breinig, Lay Delegate; Mr. Tom Fedor, Lay Delegate; Mr. John Swanson, Alternate Lay Delegate — 3 Votes

Pastor Natterer has asked to be excused from attending the Convention this year, and has requested that the following letter be read and admitted into the records:

Dear Brethren,

Once again I must regretfully inform you that I shall not be able to attend the Convention this year. I am going to be 83 years old in September. By God's grace. I still have most of my mental abilities—my physical have deteriorated which is to be expected with advancing age. So whatever strength the Lord still allows me to have must be used for the welfare of my little congregation over which He has made me the overseer. I am reminded of the words which Isaiah spoke to the good king, Hezekiah, "Set thine house in order; for thou shalt die, and not live" (II Kings 20). May the Lord grant us His help in these last evil days and keep all of us steadfast in the one true faith until our end. The Lord bless your meetings to His honor and the welfare of our Conference!

Sincere brotherly greetings,

Pastor M. L. Natterer

The maximum number of votes that can be cast at any time during this Convention of the *Concordia Lutheran Conference* is **16**.

The total attendance at the opening service was approximately **60** souls.

The offering received at the Friday Worship Service to benefit the General Conference Treasury was \$ **1,157.05**.

Respectfully submitted,

The Committee on Registration and Excuses

FINAL REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE ON REGISTRATION AND EXCUSES

As was noted in greater detail in this committee's initial report, there was a total of **5** pastoral delegates, **10** lay delegates, and **5** alternate lay delegates registered at this convention. The maximum number of votes that could be cast at any time was **16**.

The attendance at the Friday service was approximately **60**; and at the Sunday service there were **136** in attendance.

82 souls communed either as members or as guests of Trinity Ev. Lutheran Church.

The offering received at the Sunday Worship Service to benefit the local congregation was \$**3,386.34**.

Respectfully submitted,

The Committee on Registration

Pastor Paul E. Bloedel, Chairman
Mr. Stephen Richter
Mr. Jonathan Worley

and Excuses



FINANCIAL REPORT for 2008-2009

	----General Fund----		----Student Aid Fund----
	Balances	Pledged	Balances
Cash Balance, June 1, 2008:	\$ 68,019.72		\$ 42,731.15
Add Cash Receipts:			
Good Shepherd, Tucson, AZ	1,130.00	650.00	0.00
Peace, Oak Forest, IL	7,200.00	7,200.00	0.00
St. John's, Lebanon, OR	7,160.00	4,800.00	0.00
St. Luke's, Seattle, WA	8,200.00	4,200.00	4,400.00
St. Mark's, Sauk Village	0.00	0.00	0.00
Trinity, Oak Park, IL	4,000.00	4,000.00	0.00
Seminary Tuition Payments	1,000.00	950.00	
Interest Income	2,326.79	1,200.00	1,812.33
2008 Convention Collection	1,264.31	1,264.31	
Special Nigeria Aid	6,048.00		
Pounders Gift	500.00		
Donna Lietz Memorials			7,494.50
Total Receipts	\$ 38,829.10		\$ 13,706.83
Total Cash Available	\$ 106,848.82		\$ 56,437.98
Less Disbursements:	Expended	Budgeted	
<i>Scriptural Publications</i> Subsidy	\$ 3,500.00	\$ 3,500.00	
Ekaterinburg Salary Subsidy	9,600.00	9,600.00	
Ekaterinburg Rental Subsidy	2,400.00	2,400.00	
Conference Archives Subsidy	500.00	500.00	
Convention Expense	0.00	1,000.00	
Telephone Expense	13.26	500.00	
Travel Expense	1,268.00	5,000.00	
Seminary Instructor's Salary	4,725.00	4,725.00	
Nigeria Debt Relief Grant	5,000.00	5,000.00	
Nigeria Comm. Package (Supplemental)	1,085.00	1,085.00	
Miscellaneous Expense	979.52	2,000.00	
Special Nigeria Aid Disbursement	8,548.00	0.00	
Copier/Printer for <i>Scrip. Publications</i>	20,000.00		
Total Expenditures	\$ 57,618.78		\$ 0.00
Cash Balance, May 31, 2008	\$ 49,230.04		\$ 56,437.98
Total Cash, All Funds:	\$ 105,668.02		

Respectfully submitted,
Robert G. Bloedel, Treasurer

REPORT OF THE AUDITING COMMITTEE

Dear Brethren:

We, the select Auditing Committee, after careful review, found the Treasurer's books for the Concordia Lutheran Conference and the Business Manager's books for *Scriptural Publications* for the year ending May 31, 2009 to be in good order.

We extend our sincere thanks to Mr. Robert G. Bloedel, Treasurer of the Concordia Lutheran Conference, and to Mr. David J. Mensing, Business Manager of *Scriptural Publications*, for their dedicated work over the past year and their diligent service to the Conference.

Respectfully submitted,

Rev. David G. Redlin, Chairman
Mr. Tom Fedor
Mr. Dan Cooper

REPORT OF THE EDITORIAL COMMITTEE

Dear Brethren:

Our *Concordia Lutheran* continues, by God's grace, to be a beacon of the truth in the world, witnessing with unvarnished clarity the light of our Lord's precious Word (Psalm 119:105) and of the doctrine which is according to Godliness (I Timothy 6:3). Even though "*sound doctrine*" is barely tolerated in these latter days of sore distress, even among professing Christians (II Timothy 4:3), that fact should neither surprise us nor discourage us; but we who have been blessed with the knowledge of the truth (John 8:32; I Timothy 2:4) have the great privilege of being *on record* before the apostate world as a truly orthodox Lutheran fellowship in both doctrine and practice, whether anyone likes it or not.

As the **official organ** of our Conference and thus our **public testimony** of what, by the grace of God, we believe, teach and confess in conformity with Holy Scripture, our *Concordia Lutheran* and what appears in its pages establishes and demonstrates "the orthodox character" of our church body, as we confess in the *Brief Statement* of 1932 (§29). It therefore behooves us to exercise scrupulous diligence in making sure that what appears in our *Concordia Lutheran* and on our official Web site is not only **doctrinally sound**, but that even the way things are expressed is **clear** and **unmistakable**. For our words, once they appear in print, are no longer the property of their author (whose initials appear at the end of each article), but are the property and express the **official position** of our Conference. The "*trumpet*" of our words should signal our position with a clear sound; and that means that what we speak and print must always be "*easy to be understood*;" otherwise "*how shall it be known what is spoken?*" (I Corinthians 14:8-9).

Most of you, hopefully *all* of you, recognize with thanks to God that the pastors of our fellowship spend many hours of their precious time preparing and writing timely and thoroughly Scriptural articles for the *Concordia Lutheran*; and they do so with great care and diligence, as they do also in the preparation of teaching materials for their own people and in the writing their sermons. Thankfully, our pastors do not do sloppy work! Nevertheless, in spite of our best efforts, we who write make typographical errors as well as common mistakes in spelling, syntax, and formatting which we often do not see *ourselves*, even when we proofread our work before sending it in. But the most important accuracy is the accuracy of expressions and sentences to make them say precisely what they must convey *according to Scripture*. And this is the most important function of your Editor, as he carefully reads

through and scrutinizes the drafts of articles submitted to him. This often requires several sets of eyes; and, for that “second look,” your Editor relies upon the other members of our committee, and occasionally even another brother pastor, for help in that effort. I am therefore always particularly grateful for the critical look of our Book and Tract Editor, Pastor Lietz, and of Seminarian Jason Mabe, the lay member of our Editorial Committee, to check for the aptness of words and expressions in the articles that *I myself* submit, and then also to check the *other* articles as well before they become “set in stone.” And we all trust that our brother pastors accept our editing — be it minimal or extensive — not as “pickiness” but as the due diligence that we have been elected to exercise on behalf of the Conference. We appreciate your cooperation and assure you that we are always reticent to make any changes that are not truly necessary.

This year again we endeavored to maintain from issue to issue a consistent balance between articles of a *doctrinal* and of a *practical* nature, occasionally treating topics of historical importance, and even including newsworthy items of interest from our congregations and brethren abroad; but as you are aware, we never “pad” the *C.L.* with “fluff”! We also try to represent in the subject matter and doctrinal content of our articles the various festivals and themes of the church year, particularly during the “festival half.”

Your Editor is always gratified that our pastors cheerfully consent to write on the topics assigned to them, even though some assignments have to be changed at the last minute to fill an issue for which previously assigned articles did not come in; but the mutual cooperation of the pastors enabled us to get the *C. L.* out “on time” this year, that is, at least by about halfway through the two-month cycle of its scheduled appearance. Our pastors generally submit their articles in timely fashion, hold pretty well to the length suggested, and kindly adhere to the formatting protocols which standardize “the look” of the articles and keep the mechanics of spelling, capitalization and punctuation just as uniform as possible. Moreover, by suggesting a maximum length in numbers of words —usually about 2,500, we endeavor to keep the articles pointed and concise and fairly easy to read in one sitting.

In the assignment of articles, we always try to consider first and foremost the workload of our pastors, and then even their state of health and local conditions. It is, after all, their **first** responsibility to carry out the duties incumbent upon them according to their call from the Holy Ghost (Acts 20:28; I Peter 5:2). Occasionally we deliberately give a brother a “pass” and assign him nothing, especially when health is a factor; and this year in particular several of our pastors suffered the ravages of illness, accidents, and debilitation. We also cheerfully grant a time extension here and there, knowing from our own experience how frustrating it is to have everything unforeseen happen at once. Our own adherence to publication dates and concern for timely appearance this year was occasionally thwarted by unusual local conditions on our end; and we appreciate the brethren’s forbearance when extenuating circumstances arise. All of us pastors who write for the *C.L.* want you to know that we have not given up on our determination, with the Lord’s help and blessing, to be diligent in our work and responsible in establishing our priorities, but, at the same time, as shepherds of the Savior’s local flocks, always yielding to our *primary* calling and then that of our *brethren*.

As your Editor I want especially to express my heartfelt thanks to Pastor Lietz, the *Book and Tract Editor*, whose chief responsibility is to solicit and/or receive for review proposed tracts, booklets, and other educational materials for a thorough “look-see” before publication (*Constitution*, Art. IX, 1). But Pastor Lietz also stands ready to help in the editing of the *C. L.*; and both he and our lay member, Mr. Jason Mabe, who is studying in our Seminary program and has also a heavy load in his secular work, cheerfully scrutinize each article before publication and offered helpful suggestions and positive observations along the way. Nevertheless, should something “slip by” in spite of our best efforts, we urge you, as well as any of our readers, to bring it to our attention right away so that an appropriate correction can be made (*The Concordia Lutheran*, Statement of Purpose, last ¶).

Finally, a word of special appreciation is due to our brother, Phil Martin, the Print Shop Manager of *Scriptural Publications*, whose facility in desktop publishing has been chiefly responsible for the clean, attractive and professional “look” of our *Concordia Lutheran*.

When all the articles have been submitted, proofread, and edited, Phil “imports” them all into Microsoft Publisher in rough form, and we then spend an evening together at the computer giving each article a final read-through, correcting formatting errors, and selecting display fonts for the titles and suitable clip-art and illustrations to complete the presentation. Phil himself has become quite the expert in many of these tasks and often has suggested material already in place when we begin. The opportunity for me as the editor to work closely and collaboratively with our publishing house staff in the physical production of the *Concordia Lutheran* is an advantage that should not be underestimated. It’s quite a project, and we trust that our readers are satisfied, yea, even enthusiastic, about our *Concordia Lutheran*—from its truly Scriptural, edifying content to its attractive presentation. They should know that a lot of love and diligent hard work goes into every issue, motivated, enabled, and blessed by the Lord of the Church, who is “*able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think*” (Ephesians 3:20) and to whom all the praise is due for His neverfailing grace to all of us. May He continue graciously to bless our humble efforts to His glory!

Respectfully submitted,

Rev. David T. Mensing, Chairman and
Concordia Lutheran Editor

Rev. Robert J. Lietz, Book and Tract Editor

Mr. Jason A. Mabe, Lay Member



REPORT OF THE SCRIPTURAL PUBLICATIONS BOARD OF CONTROL

Dear Brethren,

The psalmist, “*moved by the Holy Ghost*” (II Peter 1:21), declared to his gracious God: “*Through Thy precepts I get understanding; therefore, I hate every false way. Thy Word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path*” (Psalm 119:104-105). The precious, priceless, and infallible Word of God - “*It is written*” - is and, by God’s grace alone, will remain the sole source and foundation of what is printed and distributed by *Scriptural Publications*.

Because of difficulty which we were having with some of our printing equipment, and because of some larger printing projects planned for the future, we, at *Scriptural Publications*, decided that we needed a bigger, more reliable, and more efficient printer. So, we requested that the Board of Directors would lend us \$20,000.00 from the Conference’s General Fund to purchase the kind of printer which we needed for our on-going work. The Board unanimously responded to our request by *giving* us, rather than lending to us, the amount needed for this equipment. We thank the Board, first of all, and the Conference, secondly, for their generosity in allowing us to buy this machine which has, since its arrival earlier in this fiscal year, been an enormous blessing in so many ways. To share with you some of those many benefits, I am going to now ask Mr. Phil Martin, our Print Shop Manager, to come forward and talk to you about this great gift.

Because of this new printer, we were able to produce the book, *The Three Historical Essays*, essays presented at our 1999, 2000, and 2001 conventions concerning the historical events which brought about the formation of our Conference. This book, of over 300 pages, was a huge project. Also during the past year, a second printing of *The Yoke Made Easy* was made after the first printing was carefully proofed to correct any typos and to make any needed improvements in lay-out, etc.

We want to take note at this time of the proofers outside of our staff. One of those very competent and careful proofers is Mrs. Michelle Pink. Also, Mrs. Anna Trusty has expressed her great interest and willingness to assist us not only in proofing, but in any other area where we need assistance. We thank these two women for their help!

We also appreciate very much the kindness of Peace Congregation, Oak Forest, in providing space for *Scriptural Publications*, and even “walling-in” the area where our machinery is located, providing the lumber, sheet rock, paint, etc. Furthermore, Peace Congregation provides the electricity and heat for *Scriptural Publications*. Thank you, members of Peace!

As chairman of *Scriptural Publications* during the past year, I have seen again and again the hard work and devotion of Mr. Phil Martin, our Print Shop Manager. His service to our Conference in this capacity is invaluable. To share the burden of his work, we would like to have another interested person or two to mentor under Phil for a number of years, so that he not only has a capable back-up, but that he also gains much-needed help. We thank Phil so much for all of his willing labor, given in gratitude for the Savior’s willing service and sacrifice for him and for the whole world. The Savior’s words are so timely: “*Whosoever will be chief among you, let him be your servant, even as the Son of Man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister and to give His life a ransom for all*” (Matthew 20:27-28). We are also grateful to Phil’s wife, Kelly, for her understanding in regard to his efforts for *Scriptural Publications*.

Mr. David J. Mensing is our Business Manager, a job which includes not only writing checks, but checking inventory, ordering supplies, submitting financial reports, etc. We appreciate all of his efforts, as well as the understanding of and help by his wife, Missy.

Thanks are also very much in order 1) to Pastor David T. Mensing, especially in helping to get out the 2008 Convention *Proceedings* and the six issues of *The Concordia Lutheran*, 2) to Mr. Lee Roller, for his assistance with our Conference’s web site during the past year, and, 3) to our Conference for its \$3,500.00 subsidy to *Scriptural Publications* during the past year, funds that take

care of the cost of sending *The Concordia Lutheran* free to all of our congregations, and also help in maintenance and upkeep of our machinery, buying printing supplies, etc.

We want to alert our congregations which use the interleaved 1943 *Small Catechism* that this valuable book is no longer published by Concordia Publishing House. When we were made aware of this fact, Mr. David Mensing vigorously investigated all kinds of sources which might have copies of this book. We now have 50 copies on hand. If your congregation uses this teaching tool for Confirmation Classes, Adult Instruction Classes, etc., place your order as soon as possible.

For this convention, *Scriptural Publications* is “set up” on the far west end of Trinity’s basement. We have sample copies of much of our stock. If you order something today or tomorrow, we will make every effort to fill your order by the next day. This is possible because Davey is traveling back-and-forth to Oak Forest during this convention. This also saves you the cost of shipping. Also, we urge you to examine the “Display Circular Rack,” loaded with books and other materials. Our plan is to offer such a loaded Rack for each of our congregations. We thank Mr. Mark Mensing for providing the laminated “floor” for each of the slots in this rack.

We try to have “Convention Specials” each year. This year it is *The Burden Made Light*, a sound, Scripturally-based devotional book for the homes of the members in our congregations. The price during this convention is \$5.00. (The book is normally \$14.95.) This is also an excellent book to give for birthdays, Christmas, etc., not only for the shut-ins and elderly, but for those of all ages (college students, young married couples, etc.).

For the coming year, we will, by God’s grace and with His help and blessing, continue working on the putting together, proofing, and, hopefully, printing of the *Advanced Bible History*. Phil has even been working on this project during these days in Oak Park. So, if you see him with a laptop on his lap, he is giving attention to this book.

We also have another very practical project which is on “the burner,” and that is, flash cards. First of all, we want to make available flashcards of all the proof texts in the *Small Catechism*, and secondly, of all the questions and answers in the *Small Catechism*, with the proof passages. If you are interested, talk to Dave about this valuable tool --- flash cards.

Now, let us all, today and in the days ahead, remember “*our Savior, Jesus Christ, who gave Himself for us, that He might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto Himself a peculiar [special] people, zealous of good works*” (Titus 2:13-14).

Respectfully submitted,

Rev. Robert J. Lietz, Chairman

Mr. David J. Mensing, Business Manager

Mr. Phillip R. Martin, Print Shop Manager



FINANCIAL REPORT OF SCRIPTURAL PUBLICATIONS*Financial Summary for 2008-2009*

Cash Balance, June 1, 2008 **\$ 5,315.59**

RECEIPTS (Year to Date):*Concordia Lutheran—*

New Subscriptions	\$ 10.00
Subscription Renewals	20.00
Donations	0.00

Book Store/Publishing House—

Sunday School Materials	0.00
New Book/Tract Sales	1,210.89
Used Book Sales	0.00
Proceedings Sales	950.00
Conference Subsidy	3,500.00
Conference Grant for Copier/Printer Purchase	20,000.00
Donations	1,062.76
Fund Transfer from Archives	500.00

Total Receipts **\$ 27,253.65**

Total Cash Available **\$ 32,569.24**

EXPENSES (Year to Date):*Concordia Lutheran—*

Postage/Shipping	\$ 462.87
Printing Supplies	2,914.04
Printing Hardware	0.00
Miscellaneous	0.00

Bookstore/Publishing House—

Postage and Shipping	77.60
Printing Supplies	2,304.37
Office Supplies	115.54
New Book Inventory Purchases	1,797.34
Out-of-Print Purchases	0.00
Printing Hardware/Capital Expense	21,593.01
Software Purchases	79.95
Outsourced Printing Expense	258.96
Website/Internet Expense	559.39
Interest Expense	105.34
Fees and Renewals	325.69
Miscellaneous	31.69
Transfer to Archives	500.00

Total Expenditures **\$ 31,125.79**

Cash Balance, May 31, 2009 **\$ 1,443.45**

Respectfully submitted,

David J. Mensing, Business Manager

REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE ON MISSIONS

Dear Brethren:

Our gracious God, in Isaiah 55, reveals His will in these precious words of truth: *“As the rain cometh down, and the snow from heaven, and returneth not thither, but watereth the earth and maketh it bring forth and bud, that it may give seed to the sower and bread to the eater, so shall My Word be that goeth forth out of My mouth; it shall not return unto Me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it”* (vv. 10-11). We have here three wonderful, very comforting promises from our Triune God, who *“cannot lie”* (Titus 1:2), concerning the constant, continuing, and thorough watering of the seed of God’s Word in the divinely-instituted local congregation by the teaching and preaching *“in season, out of season”* (II Timothy 4:2) of the called, local pastor, whom the Holy Ghost has made the overseer over the flock, *“to feed the church of God, which He hath purchased with His own blood”* (Acts 20:28). These three divine promises are vitally important for us to remember in regard to the on-going, week-after-week, month-after-month, year-after-year teaching and preaching of the Word of God (both Law and Gospel - Luke 24:47) in the congregations of our fellowship here in our United States, as well as those in Russia and Nigeria. This includes not only the regular, continuing Sunday Worship Services as well as the Sunday Bible Classes and Sunday School Classes, but the other weekly Bible Classes, Confirmation Classes, Adult Instruction Classes, etc. Yes, it is most certainly true at all times: When God’s Word of truth is constantly, continually, regularly, and faithfully (Jeremiah 23:28) taught and preached in the local congregation by the called, local pastor (in his divinely-instituted office), God Himself gives us His promises that His living and powerful Word (Hebrews 4:12) **1.** will *“not return ... void,”* **2.** will *“accomplish”* what He pleases, and **3.** will *“prosper”* according to His gracious and good will (Isaiah 55:10-11). Let us not forget these priceless and sure promises of God in the constant, continuous, regular, and faithful teaching and preaching of God’s Word in the fifteen local congregations in our fellowship (one in Russia, eight in Nigeria, and six here in the U.S.A.).

First of all, in this report, we will focus on the local congregation in Russia, Orthodox Lutheran Church of Ekaterinburg, and its pastor, Rev. Roman Schurganoff:

- During the last eleven months, we have received monthly reports from Pastor Schurganoff. These reports have included the dates for divine Worship Services, which were held every Sunday except for December 7, May 17, and May 24, all three because of sickness, the last two times he was in the hospital. The monthly reports also gave information on the Scripture Lessons for each Worship Service, the Sunday and Wednesday Bible Classes, what was being studied in the Bible Classes, the amount of the offerings by the members, the pastor’s visits with shut-in members, and his classes, teaching, and visiting in the local library, sometimes in a prison, and sometimes in a neighboring town (Nizhny Tagil). For the information of our people, the April and May Monthly Reports will be attached to this report, with the e-mail communication between our treasurer, Mr. Robert Bloedel, and Pastor Schurganoff, pertinent to these two reports.

In the future, we are going to suggest that, in these monthly reports, Pastor Schurganoff also include his sermon text, with the theme and parts, the attendance for each Sunday at the weekly Worship Service, the attendance at his congregational Bible Classes, what he teaches at his outside-of-the-congregation classes in the library, prison, and neighboring town, and his progress in learning to read, speak, write, and understand English through the Rosetta Stone English Course (all three levels), a highly-recommended course (used by the U.S. State Department and Fortune 500 companies). The materials for this course were supplied and sent to Brother Schurganoff by an anonymous donor, and though it was temporarily “stuck” in customs (in Russia), it is now in Pastor Schurganoff’s hands. This course uses Dynamic Immersion in matching real-life pictures (a book) with the word for that picture. Furthermore, this course engages the student through Speech Recognition Technology, which evaluates your speech and coaches you on more accurate pronunciation. The course does not allow the

students to go on until they have mastered each word, after words, phrases, and then ultimately sentences. We will suggest to him and encourage him to set aside at least one hour a day for this English work and study.

- Concerning his sermons, we are urging Pastor Schurganoff to carefully write them out for his own benefit, for the benefit of his own people, and for the benefit of those outside of his own congregation (to distribute written copies). Since Pastor Schurganoff did not have any formal seminary training, we are making efforts to help him in properly preparing his sermons and then putting them in print. To that end, Pastor Mensing (as editor of the *CL*, wanting some periodic sermons from Pastor Schurganoff for inclusion in our periodical) wrote him a very excellent, detailed letter in February concerning homiletics (sermon preparation, sermon writing, and sermon delivery). This letter is attached.
- Because of the present language barrier (we cannot speak, write, or understand Russian, and Pastor Schurganoff and his people cannot - very well - speak, write, or understand English), we are recommending to this convention that we find, as soon as possible, a competent translator to translate from English into Russian, the tract, *"The Scriptural Principles of Christian Giving,"* and the 2008 Pastoral Conference paper by Pastor Bloedel: *"The Full Support of the Pastoral Office."* with the expenses for this translation work to be underwritten by our Conference, as well as the expenses of reproducing them in sufficient number for our brethren in Russia.

Therefore, we are recommending to this convention

1. That the cost for this translation work of the tract and the paper, as well as the cost of reproducing these two items in sufficient number for our brethren in Russia, be paid for by our Conference; and
2. That the monthly subsidy for our Russian brethren for 2009-2010 remain the same as last year: \$800.00 toward the pastor's salary, and \$200.00 toward the rental of their location of public worship.

Secondly, we will focus on the eight congregations of the Fellowship of Lutheran Congregations - Nigeria (F. L. C. N.).

- As we look back one year, we are most grateful to our gracious God for allowing Pastor Fyeface to be with us (representing his own congregation and his sister congregations in Nigeria) at our Seattle convention. One of the truly huge benefits resulting from the communications equipment we sent back with him is the internet/e-mail connection which we now have with Pastor Fyeface. The various expenses for his trip, including the communications equipment, were covered mainly by our Conference, as well as by extra contributions from our people.
- Concerning non-trip related gifts given for our Nigerian brethren during the past year, we especially want to thankfully take note of the \$2,500.00 contribution from St. John's last fall (divided evenly among the eight congregations), the recent \$548.00 contribution from Peace, and the various individual gifts (some anonymous) sent to help our dear brethren in Nigeria during a very difficult year.
- It was a difficult year mainly because of the civil violence between gangsters (militants) fighting against the local police and, in some cases, against the Nigerian army. Pastor Fyeface just reported: "The presence of the Joint Military Task Force is bringing about peace in our area. Some of the militants are now surrendering themselves for rehabilitation" (June 17th e-mail). Some of the other congregations (besides St. Paul's, Abonnema) have also been affected, especially St. Clement's at Elem Sangama. (This violence caused many disruptions for our Nigerian brethren in that area, especially in getting to their jobs.) The town of Elem Sangama was literally cut off from traveling, getting supplies (especially

food), etc., due to the militants hiding in the swamps, ready to attack, rob, and rape passengers in their boats (the only mode of transportation in that area) as they traveled the short, normal route to and from the town. However, there was an alternate, very-expensive-to-travel, and much longer route to Elem Sangama. This was the route taken by members of St. Paul's, Abonnema, to assist their brethren at Elem Sangama as much as they could, especially with basic human needs. When we found out about this crisis, our Board of Directors sent, via Western Union, \$2,500.00 to provide daily bread for the members of St. Clement's. This was done and Pastor Fyneface reported that the brethren at Elem Sangama "were so grateful" and wanted him "to extend their appreciation" to us. This was included in a report sent on May 27 by Pastor Fyneface to Mr. Robert Bloedel, our very competent and faithful treasurer. We are immensely grateful to our Conference, through its elected Board of Directors, for showing such compassion and empathy toward the great need of our dear Nigerian brethren.

- Rev. Robinson Dodo, the pastor of Holy Trinity, Idama, died on January 13 at the age of 72, and is now "with Christ" (Philippians 1:23) in "paradise" (Luke 23:43), where there "is fullness of joy [and] ...pleasures forevermore" (Psalm 16:11). Since another trained man is not currently eligible for a call, the congregation is being temporarily assisted by the catechist and also a seminary student, Mr. February, with the two pastors from St. Paul's, Abonnema (about 40 minutes away by speed boat), helping out as they are able to do so.
- At the present time, Pastor Fyneface has the sole responsibility of teaching eight seminary students: Mr. L. Wariboko and Mr. B. Aaron from St. Clement's, Elem Sangama; Mr. B. Bestman and Mr. B. Thompson from Salem, Abalama; Mr. T. February, Mr. I. Wokoma, and Mr. I. Karibo from Holy Trinity, Idama; and Mr. A. Ibama from St. Paul's, Abonnema. However, Pastor Fyneface reported that Mr. Ibama "has been sick and taken away to Port Harcourt for treatment for almost nine months" (June 17th e-mail). Our Board of Directors approved purchasing and sending six sets of Pieper's *Christian Dogmatics* to Nigeria for the training of these students. (Each set is 4 volumes: I, II, III, and an index, IV.)
- When Pastor Fyneface returned to Nigeria after his 2008 trip to our country, he brought with him the tract, "The Scriptural Principles of Christian Giving," and the 2008 Pastoral Conference paper by Pastor Bloedel: "The Full Support of the Pastoral Office." Brother Fyneface has gone over both of these documents with his fellow pastors and has also run off multiple copies sufficient for each pastor to use in instructing the members of his individual flock. May "the love of Christ" motivate and constrain these Nigerian brethren to not "live unto themselves, but unto Him which died for them and rose again" (II Corinthians 5:14-15) as they willingly and cheerfully put into practice more and more the full support of their pastors, ever remembering the instruction of I Corinthians 9, "Even so hath the Lord ordained [commanded], that they which preach the Gospel should live of the Gospel" (v. 14).
- Since our Interim Report of the Committee on Missions in the January-February CL (pp. 23ff.), Pastor Fyneface's goiter has been acting up, affecting his voice, and causing him considerable, on-going pain. Since the doctor/surgeon whom he trusted recently retired, he knew of no other competent doctor(s) except from a clinic in Lagos. He asked Pastor Ekele to check out the clinic (since he and his congregation) are in Lagos, but he was told that the patient must personally come to the clinic. So, on the 11th of this month, Brother Fyneface and his wife traveled all the way to Lagos. The next day they saw a consultant at the clinic. Pastor Fyneface gave this report in a June 17th e-mail: "From the information I got it is not advisable to go there. Ridiculously expensive. I will try some other places that are less expensive."
- While Pastor and Mrs. Fyneface were in Lagos, they worshipped, on the 14th, with their sister congregation, St. Paul's, and their young pastor, Rev. Ekele. Initially, this congregation had been worshipping in the pastor's apartment, but the landlord, a Muslim, objected to the noise of their singing in the worship service. Currently, for their worship

services, “they are going from house-to-house of the members, with spacious rooms for worshipping” (Report of Pastor Fyneface in his June 17 e-mail.)

- We had previously asked Pastor Fyneface for more detail on the earlier death of the firstborn child of Pastor and Mrs. Ekele, and the near death of Mrs. Ekele. In his recent e-mail, Pastor Fyneface gave these details: “The doctor of the first hospital did not help matters. She [Mrs. Ekele] was due for delivery, but he sent her home because they didn’t have the amount to be deposited immediately. Before they went to the second hospital, the baby had died in her womb and [Mrs. Ekele] became too weak to deliver, so the doctor (a nice man) induced her for the dead baby to come out. All the bills were paid by able members of the church and St. Paul’s, Abonnema. ...Brother Ekele and his dear wife, Deborah, are [now] doing fine. They have put the sad experience behind them. The Lord has blessed them again because she is pregnant.”

Concerning our Nigerian brethren, we are recommending to this convention the following:

1. Keep in touch with Pastor Fyneface concerning his goiter as far as treatment and possible surgery. He has no insurance to help him with the cost of such.
2. Check into purchasing laptop computers for each of the remaining six Nigerian pastors to use in their work, and for e-mail communication between each of them, as well as with us here in the U.S., providing such equipment, if possible, for maybe one or two pastors a year, so that, over a period of a few years, all of them would be supplied with these helpful tools for their pastoral work. Mr. Steve Richter, who has a long history with the Nigerian brethren from F.L.C. days and is very knowledgeable concerning computers, has agreed to do the “legwork” for this project. This will involve checking out the availability of electricity at each congregation’s location, the cost of such computers in Nigeria (with the largest possible batteries), possible internet connection for e-mail, etc., etc. After this “legwork,” we are requesting that Mr. Richter give his recommendations to the Committee on Missions for its consideration.
3. Presently, it costs Pastor Fyneface \$86.00 per month to reactivate his laptop computer so that he can remain connected to the internet. He explains it this way: “It works like recharging your mobile phone when there’s no credit or airtime, and it’s plugged to the laptop in order to get connected to [the] internet” (June 17th e-mail). Mr. Richter has also agreed to communicate with Pastor Fyneface concerning this monthly cost, and determine whether that cost can be lowered without affecting the connection to the internet. After getting necessary information, Mr. Richter will report to the Committee on Missions, making his recommendations.

“As we therefore have opportunity, let us do good unto all men, especially unto them who are of the household of faith” (Galatians 6:10), motivated by the goodness of our God and His everlasting mercy toward us in Christ Jesus. “Thanks be to God which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ. Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye steadfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labor is not in vain in the Lord” (I Corinthians 15:57-58).

Respectfully submitted,

Rev. Robert J. Lietz, Chairman
 Rev. David G. Redlin
 Mr. Stephen Richter
 Mr. Erik Roe
 Mr. Mike Malley

FIRST ADDENDUM TO THE REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE ON MISSIONS



“The Scripture cannot be broken.” John 10:35

February 7, 2009

Dear Brother Schurganoff—

Early in April, 2008, I requested from you occasional translations of your Sunday sermons. I wrote the following:

“**One more request:** We pastors try to **share our sermons** with one another in print or by e-mail --at least occasionally-- so that we can encourage one another with constructive criticism and also rejoice together in our unity of faithful testimony. Occasionally we even use such sermons as the basis for articles in the *Concordia Lutheran*. However, we do not have **any** recent sermons on file FROM **YOU**. It would be very helpful to have a sermon from you *once a month*. Could you **begin** by sending me (via e-mail) your **Easter sermon** for the Feast of the Resurrection of Our Lord? (The computer would probably do a decent job of translating it, wouldn't it?) That would be a good place to start.”

You answered me on April 30 (when you sent your article for the May-June issue) that you were preparing a translation of your **Easter sermon** to send to me, but that even only one translation every month would be very difficult for you. Instead, you said: “But I can prepare for translation of the sermon each three months and send you.”

Sadly, dear brother, I never received that **Easter sermon**, neither have I received **any other** sermons from you in translation.

I understand, of course, that you do not normally prepare your sermons in English — that would indeed be very difficult for you with your limited knowledge of the language. HOWEVER, the *computer* does a fairly reliable translation of *other* things you send us, including your e-mail messages; and I would be happy to make adjustments to the wording on this end to make sentences grammatically and idiomatically correct. As I said to you, we pastors try to share our sermons with one another, at least occasionally, so that we can encourage one another with constructive criticism and also rejoice together about our unity in faithful testimony — “*that [we] all speak the same thing*” (I Corinthians 1:10). Some of the brethren send their sermons *every week*; and this is a wonderful thing! Can the computer not translate your sermons? If it is a special *theological term* that the computer does not know, we can fix that on this end fairly easily, because we will understand what you mean from the context.

You said in your e-mail of April 30: “Usually I prepare only for the **basic theses** for the sermon in church.” I understand that to mean that you do not write out your sermons completely but preach only from an outline. Is that right? If so, I have a very important

suggestion for you which will help you in your work and also make you more confident in your preaching:

ALL of us pastors were taught, when we studied in the seminary, that a pastor should prepare his sermons in this manner: **1)** Study carefully **the text** from God's Word — if possible from the original language — to be confident of what it says and *teaches*. **2)** Determine the *main thought* of the text and make that thought **the theme** of your sermon. **3)** *Divide* the theme into two or three logical **parts** that the hearers can easily follow and understand as they listen. **4)** Write out a **detailed outline** of the *doctrinal points* that you want to point out from the text under each of the parts and their *application* to the lives of the hearers. Then, **5)** **write out** the sermon **in full**, so that you know *exactly* what you plan to say from the pulpit. That written-out sermon is your "manuscript" — which you can look at if you lose your train of thought, which you can print out to give to visitors, prisoners, homebound sick members, etc., which you can use in the preparation of articles for the *Concordia Lutheran*, which you can share with your brethren, and so on.

Having a written-out manuscript is **very important**, Brother Roman, because it helps you to *organize* your message, to *focus* your message (so that you do not aimlessly wander from thought to thought), to *measure* the *time* of your sermon (so that it is neither too long nor too short), but, above all, to be able to *review* your sermon for possible mistakes, to *polish it* for the best possible words, and to *keep it on file* for future use (if you are sick and cannot prepare a new sermon, or to use it in other ways for mission work, for publication, etc.). **All of us**, Roman, even those with years of experience in preaching, write out our sermons **every time**; and we would encourage **you** to do the same.

Preaching is a pastor's most important and most time-consuming work, Roman. The preparation of a sermon, if done *properly*, often takes many hours over several days. After twenty-five years in the ministry, I still follow the **five steps** above for every sermon I preach; and *each step* may take several hours, depending on the text. After all the textual study and outlining, the writing of the **manuscript itself** may take four or five hours! Because of our responsibility for precious souls, we cannot be too careful about what we preach and teach, about *every word* we say! "*It is required in stewards that a man be found faithful*," St. Paul writes in I Corinthians 4:2. That is why the pastoral office is no easy part-time work; and time for solid preparation is **most important** so that we can "*give account*" of our stewardship as the shepherds of our people.

In our Seminary, we teach our students the course called *Homiletics*, the preparation and delivery of sermons. *Homiletics* is a three-year course, during which a student studies, outlines, writes and preaches between 25 and 30 sermons as part of his training. All those sermons are carefully reviewed and evaluated by the professors before they are preached, and the delivery in the pulpit is video-taped. This is because preaching is so very important. Since you were self-trained, Roman, and did not have the advantage of that seminary work, you must do the best you can in proclaiming the Word of God in its purity to your people. However, you will find it helpful to follow sound advice and time-tested suggestions for good preaching; and this is what we want to share with you. Please understand our brotherly and kindly motives in doing this.

I will still look forward to a translation of your **Easter sermon** (if you can provide it) OR a translation of a more recent one. A computer-translation, while not ideal, will be quite satisfactory. And, as you begin on a regular basis to write out your sermons, you will be able to send us more of them. We look forward to reading them and rejoicing in our unity together, as "*we all speak the same thing*" (I Corinthians 1:10).

I am sending you this letter in the body of the e-mail, but also as a *pdf*, which you should be able to open and print out. If you have any problem with it, please let me know.

With loving greetings to all your dear people, and very specially to your wife, Elena, and little Nikolai. We look forward to your annual update to the Committee on Missions.

Your brother in Christ,

Pastor David T. Mensing

SECOND ADDENDUM TO THE REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE ON MISSIONS

(Reports from Pastor Schurganoff for April and May, 2009)

Report for April, 2009 —

1. Divine services took place on April 5, 12, 19, 26.
2. Readings: April 5 – Heb. 9:11-15, John 8:46-59
April 12 – Phil. 2:5-11, Matt. 21:1-9
April 19 – 1 Cor. 5:6-8, Mark 16:1-8
April 26 – 1 John 5:4-12, John 20:19-31
3. Bible classes for adults took place on April 12, 26 and also on Wednesdays (April 8, 22, in my flat.
4. In April on Bible classes we continued studying Commentary on Galatians by Martin Luther (Chapter 6).
5. According to the report of the treasurer for April, 2009 donations for church have been collected at a rate of 2050 roubles (\$68).
I spent conversations about Lutheranism with 4 people in different days in my flat, and also I have visited 2 person in their houses. Two times I spent lectures about Lutheranism in one of local libraries. On April 25, I and active church member had trip to regional city named Nizhny Tagil, where I spent brief divine service and Bible classes for small group in 6 person which have desire to create a Lutheran community [*sic*] in this city. [Pastor Schurganoff no doubt means *congregation*.]

Report for May, 2009 —

1. Divine services took place on May 3, 10, 31. Unfortunately, I had no opportunity to lead divine services for May 17, 24, as I had treatment in hospital during 2 weeks.
2. Readings: May 3 – 1 Pet. 2:21-25, John 10:11-16
May 10 – 1 Pet. 2:11-20, John 16:16-23
May 31 – 1 Pet. 4:7-11, John 15:26-16:4
3. Bible classes for adults took place on May 10, 31, and also on Wednesdays (May 6, 27) in my flat.
4. In May on Bible classes we continued studying Commentary on Galatians by Martin Luther (Chapter 6).
5. According to the report of the treasurer for May, 2009 donations for church have been collected at a rate of 1900 roubles (\$ 63).
6. I visited 2 times two person (members of our church) which are sick. I spent conversations about Lutheranism with 2 people in different days in my flat, and also I have visited 2 persons in their flats. One time I spent lecture about Lutheranism in one of local libraries.

REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE ON THEOLOGICAL EDUCATION

Dear Brethren:

As you will hear and see graphically illustrated in the second half of this report, the C.T.E. reminds all of us that “the pastors serving the congregations in our Conference are getting older year by year and that there are absolutely NO REPLACEMENTS in view who could...be called by any of our congregations in the event that their pastor would be disabled or summoned out of this world by death.” This quote is from our dearly departed brother, Pastor Paul R. Bloedel, from an undated prayer for our seminary and future ministry, a prayer that is, at the very least, more than a decade old. The situation remains the same today. Therefore, we beseech every one of you, men, women, and children, to pray to our Heavenly Father to move the hearts of eligible men in our fellowship to desire the good work of the pastoral office, the only divinely-ordained office of the church extant today, and the most blessed and beneficial occupation a sinful man could aspire to, and to that end matriculate into our excellent seminary program, with the whole-hearted support of their pastor, family and congregation, to be trained as a C. R. M. and thus be eligible for a divine call as a faithful steward of God’s Word, rightly dividing the same, to the eternal salvation of souls, by the grace and power of God alone, who alone makes a man an able minister of the New Testament. St. Paul writes: “*And such trust have we through Christ to God-ward, not that we are sufficient of ourselves to think any thing as of ourselves; but our sufficiency is of God, who also hath made us able ministers of the new testament*” (II Corinthians 3:4-6a) (cf. I Corinthians 4:1-4; II Timothy 2:14-16; 4:1-5). At present, Jason Mabe has completed his first year of theological training. If he continues as he has in the past, as a part-time student, he would not be finished before 2017, or 8 years from now. Jason has successfully completed his latest interim colloquy conducted by the C.T.E. Chairman during our most recent Pastoral Conference, and remains an exemplary student in all respects, due to the empowering grace of our God and in answer to everyone’s fervent prayers. May God continue to provide him with the requisite grace for his studies and as a husband and father, for the Savior’s sake and to His glory alone.

The C.T.E. is also very thankful to our gracious and merciful Savior for moving two other men to apply to the seminary, David J. Mensing and Daniel P. Mensing. Both have submitted all required documents and, on that basis, have been accepted into seminary, beginning formally in the fall semester. We praise and thank our Lord for moving these men to desire the good work of pastoral service in the Holy Ministry and beseech God’s gracious help for them to will and to do of God’s good pleasure (Philippians 2:13), as diligent students of God’s own Holy Word (II Timothy 2:15; 3:15-17).

The recommended curricular revisions (as of June 2009) are appended to this report, with an explanatory note.

The structure of the 2009-2010 academic year, with Professor Robert J. Lietz teaching 2nd year courses to Student Mabe, and Professor David T. Mensing teaching full-time 1st year courses to Student David Mensing and Student Daniel Mensing, are also laid out in an appended document attached to this report (which see).

The C.T.E. will also display a *PowerPoint* presentation entitled “URGENT!” which includes a proposal to return to our former Conference policy of subsistence support for seminarians to enable them to study full-time as soon as possible. A script of that presentation is also appended to this report (which see).

Respectfully submitted,
The Committee on Theological Education
Rev. Edward Worley, Chairman
Rev. M. L. Natterer
Mr. Erik Roe
Mr. Phil Martin

ADDENDUM to the C. T. E. REPORT: RECOMMENDED REVISED CURRICULUM

FIRST YEAR —

1. **New Testament Greek** (3 credit hours per semester)
2. **Introduction to the Holy Scriptures** — History, Text & Canon (2 credit hours per semester)
3. **Hermeneutics** (2 credit hours, 1st Semester) and **Exegesis** in Luke and I Peter (2 credit hours, 2nd semester)
4. **New Testament Isagogics** (2 credit hours per semester)
5. **Dogmatics I** — Prolegomena through Pneumatology (3 credit hours per semester)
6. **Practicum** in the Local Congregation (2 credit hours per semester)
7. **Basic German** — Grammar and Reading (2 credit hours per semester)

TOTAL: 16 credit hours per semester

SECOND YEAR —

1. **New Testament Greek** (3 credit hours, 1st Semester) and **Exegesis** in Romans (2 credit hours, 2nd Semester)
2. **Dogmatics II** — Anthropology through Christology (3 credit hours per semester)
3. **Church History I** — Early Church through 1500 A.D. (3 credit hours per semester)
4. **Principles of Teaching** — including Catechetics (2 credit hours per semester)
5. **Old Testament Isagogics** (2 credit hours per semester)
6. **Practicum** in the Local Congregation (2 credit hours per semester)
7. **Introduction to Latin** — Grammar and Reading (2 credit hours per semester)

TOTAL: 17/16 credit hours per semester

THIRD YEAR —

1. **Dogmatics III** — Soteriology through Preservation (3 credit hours per semester)
2. **Symbolics I** — The Ecumenical Creeds through the Smalcald Articles (3 hours per semester)
3. **Church History II** — The Reformation Era (3 credit hours per semester)
4. **Homiletics I** — Principles of textual study, sermon construction, outlining, and the writing of sermons (3 credit hours per semester)
5. **Practicum** in the local congregation (2 credit hours per semester)
6. **Basic Hebrew** — Grammar and Reading (at a local college or university) — (3 credit hours per semester?)

TOTAL: 17 credit hours per semester

FOURTH YEAR —

1. **Dogmatics IV** — Means of Grace through the Lord's Supper (3 credit hours per semester)
2. **Symbolics II** — Formula of Concord (3 credit hours per semester)
3. **Church History III** — Enlightenment and Pietism, the 17th through the 19th Century (3 credit hours per semester)
4. **Homiletics II** — Review of Principles of Homiletics, plus the writing and delivery of sermons (3 credit hours per semester)

5. **Liturgics and Hymnology** (2 credit hours per semester)
6. **Practicum** in the local congregation (2 credit hours per semester)

TOTAL: 16 credit hours per semester

FIFTH YEAR —

1. **Dogmatics V** — Church, Ministry, Election and Eschatology (3 credit hours per semester)
2. **Pastoral Theology** (3 credit hours per semester)
3. **Church History IV** — 20th Century to the Present (3 credit hours per semester)
4. **Comparative Symbolics** (3 credit hours per semester)
5. **Homiletics III** — Writing and Delivering Sermons (3 credit hours per semester)
6. **Practicum** in the local congregation (2 credit hours per semester)
7. *Elective: Keyboard Instruction and Music Theory* (Private Lessons may be provided)

—
(2 credit hours per semester)

TOTAL: 19 credit hours per semester

NOTE: This recommended rearrangement of the curriculum eliminates the need for a three-semester first “year” and the complications it presents, depending upon when the student begins his instruction. If he begins in the fall term (as is most common), his yearly colloquies would come due in late January each year instead of in June at the Summer Pastoral Conference; and he would graduate “mid-year,” having to wait perhaps for certification as a *c.r.m.* until the following June. The above revision does not compromise course content and coverage of material. In fact, it *adds* one **Exegesis** course (Romans) to the second year curriculum, thus insuring that the student is actively involved with Greek for four consecutive semesters before beginning Homiletics. **Liturgics and Hymnology** has been moved to the Fourth Year to help balance the credit load between the 4th and 5th years; and this makes perfectly good sense since the student has already, in his *practicum*, been participating in the liturgy of the service and, in Homiletics, has been selecting hymns to accompany his sermons.

It is further recommended that the *languages* that are actively used in exegesis or are of demonstrable advantage to a pastor in his work no longer be regarded as “electives”.

Respectfully submitted jointly by

Professors Robert J. Lietz and David T. Mensing

November 10, 2008

ADDENDUM to the C. T. E. REPORT: TEACHING ASSIGNMENTS FOR 2009-2010

(Semester Hours in parentheses generally represent number of **class hours** per week.)

Professor Mensing — Primarily First Year courses (to David and Daniel Mensing, and to an auditor, James Bielefeldt): New Testament Greek (3); Dogmatics I (3); Introduction to the Holy Scriptures – History, Text and Canon (2); Hermeneutics – 1st Semester (2); Exegesis in Luke and I Peter – 2nd Semester (2); New Testament Isagogics (2); Practicum (2); Ecclesiastical Latin [a second year course] (2).

Professor Lietz — Second Year courses (to Jason Mabe): Dogmatics II (3); Old Testament Isagogics (2)

ADDENDUM to the C. T. E. REPORT: PowerPoint — URGENT! “Redeeming the time...”
with respect to the training of future pastors in our Conference

(Presented to the Conference in convention assembled as part of its 2009 Report)

- I. Every one of our current pastors confidently confesses with the Psalmist concerning his longevity here in this present world: “*My times are in Thy hand*” (Psalm 31:15). Neither they nor their respective congregations have advance information as to the “*times or the seasons which the Father hath put in His own power*” (Acts 1:7). Moreover, the topic of our present discussion is not the result of worldly or fleshly anxiety regarding “*the morrow*” which, our Savior says, “*shall take thought for the things of itself*” (Matthew 6:34) and will be bad enough when it gets here.
- II. Our pastors are fully aware that their incumbency in the Pastoral Office ceases when the Lord mercifully and graciously calls them from this vale of tears to Himself in heaven; and their respective congregations are aware that any vacancy in that office among them will need to be filled as soon as possible so as to avoid the lack (Titus 1:5) of what the Lord Himself ordained for the nourishment and oversight of His sheep and lambs, namely, the Office of the Public Ministry in their midst.
- III. We also believe, teach and confess that it is the Holy Spirit of God, who *mediately*, through the call of the local congregation, fills the Pastoral Office with the incumbent that He desires and makes that man the bishop or overseer of that flock with his primary responsibility of feeding it and nurturing it with the Word of God, as he that must give account (Acts 20:28; I Peter 5:2; Hebrews 13:17; etc.).
- IV. But just as it is “*the Lord of the harvest*” who **sends** laborers into His harvest (Matthew 9:38), so it is the duty and privilege of the Christians themselves to **train** such laborers for the work of harvesting, committing unto the new recruits what was once committed to their predecessors (II Timothy 2:2), so that they are well-equipped workmen, able rightly to divide the Word of Truth (II Timothy 2:15) and to make full proof of their service in the Lord’s vineyard (II Timothy 4:5).
- V. It is the work of **training** diligent laborers, unashamed workmen, faithful stewards, watchful bishops, able pastors and teachers, bold preachers of the Word, that requires “*time*” on our part to complete in workmanlike fashion, “*time*” that **we** must set aside, arrange, schedule, and use to full advantage while it is still ours. THAT time is in *OUR hands* to employ wisely while we have it and to “*redeem*” zealously lest we lose it — and with it the opportunity to prepare capable, fit and well-prepared Candidates of the Holy Ministry for our churches! May the Lord of the Church graciously enable us to do so willingly, cheerfully, unstintingly and diligently to His glory and to the benefit of His Kingdom, that no flock of the Savior in our precious fellowship may ever suffer a famine of the hearing of God’s Word (Amos 8:11) or lack a faithful shepherd’s leading (Matthew 9:36)!
- VI. As we consider the solemn responsibility set before us and the time-frames that suggest a sense of **real urgency** in seeing to our task promptly, efficiently and resolutely, let us “*perform the doing of it*” (II Corinthians 8:11), confident that “*God is able to make all grace abound toward [us], that [we], always having all sufficiency in all things, may abound to every good work*” (II Corinthians 9:8) to the praise of His grace in Christ Jesus, the Savior and Head of His Church!

What makes the matter of “*redeeming the time*” with respect to the training of future pastors in our Conference so

URGENT?

It is **NOT** the mortality of our present pastors,
but the ***time*** needed to train their **REPLACEMENTS**.

Consider the following **facts**:

- The average age of our present pastors is almost 64 years.
(This average includes the ages of our two youngest pastors at 54 and 33 years respectively.)
- The average age of our four oldest pastors is almost 74 years.
- Our eldest pastor is almost 83 years of age.
- We have at present *NO* candidates of the ministry available to fill a vacancy in *even one* of our congregations.
- We have a five-year* theological training program — **assuming full-time study**.
(*5½ years at present without considering the proposed revision to our curriculum which would reduce it to five)
- Our current student has completed his **first** year of theological training, studying on a part-time basis.
- If *full-time study* were possible after the completion of his first year, his graduation as a *c.r.m.* would not be envisioned before *June, 2013*.
- If only *part-time study* is possible, no graduation is foreseeable *before 2017*.
- The availability of only *one* candidate by June of 2013 will not supply our need for future pastors.

The fact that this situation is **URGENT** is critical to understand. Consider the following **eventualities**, even if we had ***full-time*** students:

- If the Lord took even ONE of our pastors home to heaven *before 2014*, **no one** would be prepared to replace him.
- If the Lord permitted even ONE of our pastors to become disabled *before 2014*, **no one** would be prepared to replace him.
- Without ***additional*** students — studying on a ***full-time*** basis — the above eventualities would be gravely compounded by the death or disability of **more than one** pastor *before 2014*.
- Without the **promise** of God in His Word that **none** of our pastors will either die or become disabled *before 2014*, we dare not simply ***assume*** their perpetual and uninterrupted service.
- If we as a Conference of congregations ***ignore*** the seriousness of these eventualities, we will be derelict in our mutual responsibilities.

- If we as a Conference of congregations do not do all in our power to *avert* these eventualities, we will have to answer for our inaction.
- If we as a Conference of congregations do not set as our *priority* the recruitment, training and support of theological students and do everything we can to enable their *full-time study*, the results may be catastrophic for our churches and for our people.
- If we as a Conference of congregations do not *determine*, under God and with His blessing, to sacrifice what is necessary to bring this about, our reluctance to “*redeem the time*” may have untimely consequences.
- If we fail to act NOW, are we prepared to face the resulting *realities* which should not be difficult to envision?

The foreseeable realities make it **URGENT** that we do not delay. Consider the following **realities**:

Without a **pastor** in one or more of our congregations, particularly for a protracted period of time...for *five* or even *ten* years,

- There will be a *lack* of the office that the Lord Himself instituted for the spiritual care and oversight of those local flocks (Titus 1:5; Acts 20:28; I Peter 5:2ff.; I Thessalonians 5:12-13; Hebrews 13:17; etc.).
- There will be a famine of “*hearing the words of the Lord*” (Amos 8:11); for “*how shall they hear without a preacher?*” (Romans 10:14c; cf. II Timothy 4:2a).
- The regularity and consistency of Christian education is likely to suffer without a well-qualified pastor apt “*to teach others*” (II Timothy 2:2), “*to exhort and to convince gainsayers*” (Titus 1:9), “*rightly dividing the Word of Truth*” (II Timothy 2:15) “*with all longsuffering and doctrine*” (II Timothy 4:2c). What about Confirmation instruction for our children and adult classes for prospective members??
- Unless the practice of *lay communion* is established, the **Lord’s Supper** will not be celebrated with due frequency; and pastoral oversight and accountability in the use of the Sacrament will be completely absent (I Corinthians 4:1; Hebrews 13:17; etc.).
- There will be no pastoral comfort and guidance, no pastoral visits in cases of emergency, no pastoral assistance in times of trial and adversity, and no pastoral instruction and counsel in matters of Christian admonition and church discipline. There will be no Pastoral *Office*.
- Marriages will be solemnized only by *civil* authorities. There will be no church weddings as is customary in Christian congregations.
- Baptism may be administered by *lay members*, as in cases of urgency; but burials, too, will have to be conducted by authorized laymen.
- This situation will continue for *several years* until a candidate is available.

Our most optimistic target date makes it **URGENT** that we act *quickly* to “*redeem the time*” that we have. The calendar will not stand still.

Consider what our situation will be, even *without* the death or disability of one or more of our present pastors, ...

...in **2014** (the *earliest date* at which we can envision a graduation) —

- The average age of our present pastors will be almost **69 years**.

(This average includes the ages of our two youngest pastors who will then be 59 and 38 years old respectively.)

- The average age of our four oldest pastors will be almost **79 years**.

- Our eldest pastor will be almost **88 years** of age.

and

- We will have graduated **ONE** candidate — assuming his *full-time* study.

...in **2019** —

- The average age of our present pastors will be almost **74 years**.

(This average includes the ages of our two youngest pastors who will then be 64 and 43 years old respectively.)

- The average age of our four oldest pastors will be almost **84 years**.

- Our eldest pastor will be almost **93 years** of age.

and

- We will have graduated **ONE** candidate — assuming only *part-time* study.

By the grace of God, who has *poured us out a blessing* (Malachi 3:10) to **help us** “*redeem the time*” in preparing faithful pastors for the future, your Committee on Theological Education has some **GOOD NEWS** to share with the Conference...

GOOD NEWS that makes it **MORE URGENT** that we act **NOW**.

- As of this spring, we have **two new applications** for matriculation into our seminary program.
- BOTH** prospective students have committed themselves to studying **full-time** beginning in September 2009.
- Their full-time study, however, will depend upon the **Conference’s commitment** to grant them a subsistence level of support (as we did to our student from 1998-2003).
- Our current student, who is at present studying only *part-time* while supporting his family, has also committed himself to studying **full-time** beginning in September 2011.
- At that time, the **THREE** students —having converged at the same point in the curriculum— will complete their last three years together and graduate, God-willing, in June 2014.
- Thus, the *mutual commitment* of the students and the Conference, under the gracious blessing of the Lord of the Church, will result, God-willing, in **THREE available candidates** for the ministry by June 2014.
- It is hoped that, as “success breeds success” under the mighty hand of God, **even more** men will commit themselves to study for the Holy Ministry, so that, by His grace, none of our precious flocks will ever lack a faithful shepherd’s leading.

☐ This *mutual commitment* on the part of BOTH the students AND all the congregations of the Conference will require *great sacrifice* “over the long haul;” but the **alternative**, as outlined above, is truly *unthinkable!*

What will be the **COST** of this undertaking to our congregations?

◆ When the Conference fully supported a seminarian **in the past** — both when he was single and when he was newly married — the cost varied somewhat, depending on whether the Conference also had to pay the cost of his *housing*. The costs to the Student Aid Fund were as follows:

- First Year** (January 1998 thru June 1999 – 3 semesters)
housing provided *gratis* by Peace, Oak Forest \$ 300.00/mo.
- Second Year** (1999 – 2000) including housing rented \$ 300.00/mo.
- Third Year** (2000 – 2001) including housing rented \$ 600.00/mo.
- Fourth Year** (2001 – 2002) housing provided *gratis* by St. John’s, Lebanon \$ 300.00/mo.
- Fifth Year** (2002 – 2003) [Student newly married; no children]
housing provided *gratis* by St. Mark’s, Sauk Village . . . \$ 1000.00/mo.

In addition, the student’s moving costs from location to location were assumed by the Conference, and some medical costs were defrayed.

This was for **ONE full-time** student — who is now a pastor among us — a cost well worth the price!

◆ Proposed support for the *coming year*, 2009 – 2010, involves **TWO** full-time students. [No support is requested for our part-time student.]

- First Year** (2009 – 2010):
- Single student, housing provided *gratis* by Peace \$ 300.00/mo.*
- Married student with three children, housing provided *gratis*
by Pastor & Mrs. Mensing \$ 1600.00/mo.**
- TOTAL:** \$ 1900.00/mo.

This is for **TWO full-time** students.

*No adjustment for cost-of-living since 1998

No adjustment for cost-of-living since 2002, but +3 children. This is \$ 6,590.00/yr. *below* the federal “poverty**” level for bare subsistence.

This level of support is sustainable by the Student Aid Fund for **over two years** *without additional contributions*:

2009 – 2010	\$ 22,800.00
2010 – 2011	<u>22,800.00</u>
TOTAL:	\$ 45,600.00

Thereafter, the **THIRD full-time student** (our current *part-time* student) would be added to the equation.

By that time he will have completed his second year on a part-time basis and will be able to join the other two at the same point in the curriculum, thus saving instructional costs (8 credit hours @ \$ 75. = \$ 600.00/mo.) necessary to continue him on a *part-time* basis while the others proceed on a *full-time* basis.

His needs, however, will be somewhat different from the other married student since *he will have to provide his own housing*.

Married student with two children (at present), housing at his own cost
 \$ 2300.00/mo.

(The money saved by incorporating him into the program on a *full-time* basis will, by the time of his graduation, more than offset the cost differential between him and the other married student by eliminating three extra years of part-time instruction.)

NOTE that the sacrifice undertaken under this plan **by our students** is **CONSIDERABLE!** Imagine supporting a family of four or five — including providing one’s own housing — on \$ 27,600.00 per year! This is what the U. S. Department of Health and Human Services considers to be living on the “**poverty**” level, less than half of the local median household income.

These men are not “going to school” in order to launch a lucrative career for themselves. On the contrary, they are *giving up* the chance for a lucrative career, to live in **poverty** for the Lord’s sake and for OURS!

For **all of us TOGETHER** to assume a *proportional share* of their support is a **SMALL** sacrifice for **US** in comparison to theirs. The **principle of Scripture** is that some should not be eased and others burdened, but that there should be “*an equality*” in the bearing of the load (II Corinthians 8:13-14). This is to be also **OUR** burden, not just the burden of our theological students.

What might that burden be for the next **five years** — *statistically* speaking?

Consider the following figures as **estimates** (on the basis of our statistics):

- ✓ Per *communicant* member per **month**: \$ 16.00 ...per **week**: \$ 3.56
- ✓ Per *voting* member per **month**: \$ 47.73 ...per **week**: \$ 10.61

While not every communicant member is a wage earner... while not every voter *may* be a wage earner... but while there *may be more* than one wage earner in a household, and even teenage members may have a little job or even an allowance...

...the “average” amount needed (*statistically* on the basis of the total communicant membership of the Conference) is not a huge figure, not a “budget-breaker,” not much of a “sacrifice” even for a teen, considering the fact that **\$ 3.56** represents expenditures that are made *out-of-pocket* routinely and even impulsively with little or no regard to their “economic impact.” \$ 3.56 is what is commonly spent for:

- a burger and fries ● a milkshake ● a 6" *Subway* sandwich
- a latte grande ● a large slice of pizza ● a movie rental ● a *Big Mac*
- two AA batteries ● one 13w CFL bulb ● an 11 oz. bag of chips
- a bagel or muffin and a medium coffee ● a small drink at the movies
- a *Happy Meal* ● a weekly magazine (*People, Time, Newsweek*) etc.

If **ALL** of our people participate and share the burden, **one** such “sacrifice” per week per communicant member will finance the effort. Considering the **ALTERNATIVE** to sacrificing **NOW** in order to provide candidates of the ministry for our **FUTURE**, the cost to our people is small indeed.

We need to “*redeem the time*” **NOW**. This is truly an **URGENT** matter.

Your **Committee on Theological Education** therefore proposes that:

- Beginning with this present fiscal year, the Conference return to its former practice of supporting *full-time* theological students in its seminary program at a subsistence level to be reviewed annually in convention assembled as to its adequacy.

- Funding for this support will come from the *Student Aid Fund* of the Conference; and ongoing, regular contributions to defray this joint effort will be solicited from the congregations of the Conference to share according to the principle of Scripture (II Corinthians 8:13-14).
- The *initial* level of support for the 2009-2010 fiscal year will be: a) \$ 300.00 per month for an unmarried student (assuming housing is provided *gratis* by the host congregation); b) \$ 1600.00 per month for a married student with children (assuming housing is provided *gratis* by others as a brotherly sacrifice for the Lord's work).
- This support will be paid on a twelve-month basis, since the students will have sacrificed, for the Lord's sake and for ours, any other means of financial support for the next five years.
- The congregations will be encouraged to build up the *Student Aid Fund* from its current level in anticipation of supporting a third student beginning in September, 2011.

“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.... Now therefore perform the doing of it; that, as there was a readiness to will, so there may be a performance also out of that which ye have.” — II Corinthians 8:9, 11

Respectfully submitted,

The Committee on Theological Education

Rev. Edward Worley, Chairman

Rev. M. L. Natterer

Mr. Erik Roe

Mr. Phil Martin



INTEREST REPORT OF THE SEMINARY INSTRUCTOR

Dear Brethren:

“*What shall [we] render unto the Lord for all His benefits toward [us]?*” (Psalm 116:12). We thus add our humble thanks to those of the Psalmist in declaring our gratitude to the God of all grace for His abiding blessings to us personally and to our work in the theological training program of our beloved Conference! Just a few weeks ago we completed the third year of operation under our new, restructured and revitalized seminary program. In this brief report we shall endeavor to summarize the progress made by our student, Brother Jason A. Mabe, in successfully finishing up the course work required by the first-year curriculum; and we also want to share with you a brief glimpse into what lies ahead in the coming academic year. With respect to his coursework this past year, Jason has by this time already been colloquized by the pastors; and hopefully some of you were personally present at the Pastoral Conference on Tuesday to witness his understanding and answers.

Shortly after last year’s convention, we again convened a *summer session* during which we continued the course on **Basic German** with the second semester’s work on an accelerated basis. For this two credit-hour course, which is normally conducted in two classes per week over the course of sixteen weeks, we met for four class-hours per week (two two-hour sessions from 7:00 to 9:00 p.m.) for eight weeks. As usual, Jason did excellent work and earned two additional credits. Again, “auditors” were invited to sit in and to participate for their own interest’s sake; but they were not required to take the final exam since they were not studying for credit.

In September Jason continued with the **Introduction to the Holy Scriptures** course (covering the text and canon of the Old Testament), the second semester of **New Testament Isagogics** (including the authorship, background, time and place of writing, general outline, and content of the Pauline epistles), and his first course in **Greek Exegesis** (reading in and interpreting according to the original Greek portions of Luke’s Gospel). In lieu of the *practicum for credit* (since only three semesters of two hours each are required), Jason took on assigned practical work in the local congregation for no credit and will continue to do so until his second year *practicum* officially begins. The semester did not end officially until the first week of February, during which Jason wrote three excellent final examinations and earned six additional credits.

During the spring term, Jason got back to his German, completing advanced grammar topics and doing some reading and study in Luther’s Small Catechism. He was joined by Dave Mensing, who had by that time decided to apply for admission to the seminary and wanted to polish up the German he had studied in high school. The two of them did outstanding work and, by the end of May wrote excellent examinations. Since Dave had been out of German for about ten years, the test served as a screening tool for the granting of proficiency credit upon matriculation. In addition to the German, Jason also took the third and final semester of **New Testament Isagogics**, surveying the Epistle to the Hebrews, the catholic (or *general*) epistles of James, Peter, John and Jude, and the Revelation of Jesus Christ to His servant John. Jason also completed his second semester of **Greek Exegesis**, focusing upon some additional readings from Luke’s Gospel and from the 1st and 2nd General Epistles of Peter. By the second week of June, Jason had successfully completed all of his first year course work. Again, in lieu of the *practicum for credit* (since only three semesters of two hours each are required), Jason took on assigned practical work in the local congregation for no credit. Jason has now completed **46 credit hours** with an **overall grade-point average of 4.0**, and he continues by the grace and with the help of God to demonstrate diligence, faithfulness, scholarship, and true humility before God and His Word as “*a workman that needeth not to be ashamed*” (II Timothy 2:15).

Because of their necessary secular work, both Jason and Phil Martin (who has audited most of the classes except for the language-based courses) chose two years ago already to meet two evenings per week. With the 3-credit-hour courses completed, the schedule called for three one-hour sessions two days per week. Therefore, during the **Fall Semester** this past year, we again met every Sunday and every Thursday from 7:00 p.m. until 10:00 p.m. with only a few minutes between classes. The *practicum* was unscheduled time, and your professor again elected not to be compensated for that course. In addition to Jason and Phil, **Pastor Lietz** of Oak Park also audited the courses (except for German) and contributed additional depth to the discussions. Needless to say, the presence and participation of the two “auditors” greatly enhanced the dynamics of classroom discussions and contributed in no small measure to their enjoyment.

Jason continues to support his family, employed full-time as a mechanical engineer in a Chicago company that designs and manufactures specialized parts for engines and other machinery. This is very demanding work, particularly the quality control aspect of the manufacturing process; and, because of internal “company issues” that have increased pressure on the job and brought even some “ethical” stress to the fore, the secular work is often a factor that might adversely affect his studies, were it not for the manifold grace of God that is sufficient for Jason and has given him the strength to bear those adversities (II Corinthians 12:9). Nevertheless, and with the knowledge and consent of the chairman of the C. T. E., it was necessary now and again to adjust our class schedule out of Christian charity to our brother to give him some “breathing room.” The same was true for our final exam schedules — which never seem to come at the right time.

Particularly when dealing with a married student, it is worthy to note that an understanding, dedicated, and committed Christian wife is truly essential to his success. Again, with all praise to God for His grace, we recognize **Gina Mabe** as an helpmeet who cheerfully holds up her husband’s hands, who is “there” for him “24/7,” as we commonly say today, who lends a sympathetic ear to his frustrations, insulates him from as many distractions as possible, and supports him in his desire to prepare for the most blessed work on earth and the most satisfying under heaven — the work of the Pastoral Office. We share with Jason his gratitude for Gina as an exemplary Christian spouse — faithful, patient, loving and steadfast — to the glory of God; for she too serves the Lord Christ (Colossians 3:24). Late last summer, Jason and Gina, together with “Big Brother Aaron,” then two years old, joyfully received God’s gift of an addition to their family, little **Selah Janelle**, who was born on August 19th. We continue to remember this precious family in our prayers to the Throne of Grace!

This coming summer we will not be offering classes but will be spending that “leisure” time in fine-tuning and, where necessary, adjusting the curriculum, class syllabi, and other teaching materials in preparation for the Fall Term. As Pastor Worley has already informed you in his C. T. E. report, we have, in addition to Seminarian Mabe, two applicants for matriculation into our theological training program, who intend, God-willing, to pursue their studies full-time. I am personally grateful to the Lord of the Church for having moved these young men — both of them my own sons — to “*desire the office of a bishop*” (I Timothy 3:1) and to “*study [even now] to show [themselves] approved unto God*” (II Timothy 2:15) for this important work. Their full-time study will necessitate me to develop a carefully-crafted weekly schedule to accommodate all of the first-year courses, in addition to my pastoral work, and for Pastor Lietz to incorporate into his busy schedule the second- year offerings which Seminarian Mabe will pursue, still on a part-time basis.

While it would be *ideal* for **all** theological students to be able to study *full-time*, that is, to take a course-load of sixteen hours per semester and to finish in five years, necessary secular employment to support one’s family concurrent with pursuing one’s studies has been heretofore a typical scenario for many students — even for me “back-in-the-day.” This, of course, slows the whole process down considerably; and, as Pastor Worley and the C. T. E. pointed out so urgently, we presently do not have the “luxury” of waiting for eleven years to

produce a well-equipped candidate for the ministry. Nevertheless we are grateful to the Lord for blessing us with such men as Jason Mabe, who, with their wives and children, are willing to make real sacrifices of time and togetherness for the sake of the Savior's kingdom, for your sake and mine, and ultimately for the welfare of many souls. We are, of course, very hopeful that the Conference, with its active and generous financial support of our students, will enable ALL of them to study **full-time** and thus relieve them of the inordinate stress of having, in effect, TWO full-time jobs — for OUR benefit. We are, by the grace of God, fully able to “*perform the doing of it*” (II Corinthians 8:11), and He is fully able, as our omnipotent Lord, “*to make all grace abound toward [us], that [we] always, having all sufficiency in all things, may abound to every good work*” (II Corinthians 9:8) —including this very important goal. We await the Lord's good pleasure to bring this sought-after blessing to pass to the glory of His grace!

Brethren, please remember your Seminary in your daily prayers, that the Lord bless abundantly all the faithful labors of both professors and students, endue them with energy and zeal, with diligence and patience, with tenacity and endurance, that, at the conclusion of their training, our students will be properly equipped and “*able to teach others also*” (II Timothy 2:2) and, at the call of the Holy Spirit, ready 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). Thus will be averted, by the grace of God, the “*famine*” spoken of the Lord through the Prophet Amos (8:11-12), the famine of which we have been amply warned well in advance, that we, our children, and theirs may never lack a faithful shepherd's leading!

Respectfully submitted,

Professor David T. Mensing

INTEREST REPORT OF THE SEMINARY STUDENT

Dear Brethren:

Following my second colloquy last June in the Pastoral Conference at St. Luke's, Seattle and after a recess from my classes, I returned to **Basic German** for a second “accelerated” semester in the summer. Professor “Herr” Mensing continued his instruction on principal parts, sentence tenses, imperative forms, more principal parts, relative clauses, adjectives and adverbs, and, again, principal parts. Highlights included learning the Apostolic Benediction in German and having our brother and now fellow seminarian, Daniel P. Mensing, occasionally but quite capably participate in the language exercises with me. By summer's end there was left only one more semester of German, tentatively scheduled for Spring of 2009.

Not too long after this class, my dear wife and I were graciously blessed by the Lord on August 19th, 2008 with a healthy baby girl, Selah Janelle. Even more wonderful, little Selah was later received into the kingdom of God's grace by means of her Holy Baptism on August 24th. With our son, Aaron, then just over two years old, and our new infant daughter, my wife and I, imploring the Lord's unfailing strength, prepared for the next semester of my seminary training.

In the Fall of 2008 I continued with the course on **Introduction to the Holy Scriptures – Text and Canon**. The focus this time was the divinely authoritative collection of the 39 Old

Testament books which the Holy Ghost also inspired for our learning (II Timothy 3:16a; Romans 15:4) and on which our Savior Jesus Christ Himself stamps His divine approval (Luke 24:27, 44; John 5:39, 46). Here especially it was taught that man's fallible, scientific and so-called "scholarly" investigation is not what determines whether or not we have today the true Word of God. Rather the Lord's infallible, divinely inspired words promise us that His Word in its full truth and purity has been, is and ever will be providentially preserved for us even in copies and in translation (Matthew 5:18 and 24:35; Isaiah 40:8; Matthew 28:19, 20; Mark 16:15; Acts 1:8). Thanks be to our faithful God that we have today most assuredly His precious Word for our salvation and for our knowledge of His truth (I Timothy 2:4; John 8:31, 32)!

In the course on **New Testament Isagogics**, which first began in the Spring semester of 2008 with the Historical Books of the Gospels and the Acts of the Apostles, I continued in the Fall semester of 2008 with the Didactic or "teaching" Books of the Epistles given to and written down by the Apostle Paul by inspiration of God (I Corinthians 2:13; cf. II Thessalonians 2:15). We completed the three-semester course this past Spring with the study of the Epistle to the Hebrews, the General Epistles and the Prophetical Book of the Revelation of Jesus Christ to "*His servant*" John (v. 1). These special Biblical introductions consisted of each book's penman of the Holy Ghost, background, addressees, occasion and purpose, time and place, and general outline of its contents. Here, too, Professor Mensing reiterated throughout the course that all of these book details were "*not by the will of man*" (II Peter 1:21), but the deliberate result of the verbal inspiration by the Holy Ghost.

In one of my new classes, **New Testament Exegesis**, Professor Mensing patiently guided me through two semesters of careful study to "take out of the text" only what the Holy Ghost Himself had originally laid down in the very words of Scripture, and, with the help of God working through His Word, to refrain completely from "putting into the text" any private opinions and subjective interpretations (II Peter 1:20). So with the *Textus Receptus* or *Received Text* of the Greek New Testament in one hand and a lexical aid in the other, my Greek grammar book within easy reach and my instructor just a phone call away, I slowly worked through various selections from Luke, I Peter and II Peter. Most memorable were our class sessions in which we studied *The Temptation of Christ* in Luke 4, *The Stilling of the Tempest* in Luke 8, *Mary and Martha* in Luke 10, *The Hope of the Christians* in I Peter 1 and *The Sure Word of Prophecy* in II Peter 1.

Lastly, this past Spring I completed my third and final semester of **Basic German**. Professor "Herr" Mensing concluded his instruction with advanced sentence structure, the passive voice, the subjunctive mood, conditional sentences and indirect discourse, and, yes indeed, principal parts. This time I had the privilege of a classmate, our brother and now fellow seminarian, David J. Mensing, who labored along with me throughout the semester and through the writing of the final examination. Although more than ten years removed from his original German instruction, Dave's recall particularly of his vocabulary was quite remarkable to witness. I eagerly await more seminary courses with both him and Dan in the coming years, God-willing.

My dear brethren in "*the household of faith*" (Galatians 6:10), my real family in "*the unity of the Spirit*" (Ephesians 4:3), I am humbly grateful to God for all of you who have spent the time keeping my family and me in your prayers to our Heavenly Father, for Jesus' sake. The Lord has richly blessed me with a faithful Christian spouse, Gina, and I thank God for her devoted time of loving service to me and to our growing family, "*as unto Christ*" (Ephesians 6:5). I specially thank the Lord for our dear sisters of the Women's Guild at Trinity, Oak Park, as they continue their gracious underwriting of all my textbooks; for Brother Phil Martin and Pastor Robert Lietz, who both regularly took the time out of their demanding schedules in order to audit the seminary classes; and for our Sunday School teachers of Peace, Oak Forest, Brother Phil Martin, and Sisters Rebekah Mensing and Alison Mensing, whose clear teaching of God's Word to the children I had the opportunity to observe on separate occasions, and from whom I received several helpful suggestions to my teaching of

the children as part of my ongoing **Practicum** in the local congregation. At the close of my first year courses, I also want to offer my sincere appreciation to our God for my seminary instructor, my Pastor, The Reverend David T. Mensing, who by the grace of God consistently spent the time speaking Scripture (I Peter 4:11) — not just what Scripture says but what Scripture teaches — over the past three years of my part-time theological training.

Finally, “unto Him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think” (Ephesians 3:20), may we all take the important time to remember our two newest seminarians, David Mensing and Daniel Mensing. May we joyously receive both of these men as truly answers to our prayers, for “*whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in My Name, He will give it you...Ask, and ye shall receive, that your joy may be full*” (John 16:23, 24b). Let us therefore, motivated by the precious Word of Reconciliation, take the opportunity to show our humble gratitude to our Savior Jesus Christ, “*the Shepherd and Bishop of [our] souls*” (I Peter 2:25), by firmly committing our hearty support both to Dave and his family and to Dan throughout their seminary training for the Pastoral Office so that under God’s blessings the hearing of the words of the Lord be bountiful among us all to the praise of His grace.

Respectfully submitted,

Mr. Jason A. Mabe, Seminarian

REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE ON LUTHERAN UNION

Dear Brethren:

“Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity!” Psalm 133:1. This expression of the Psalmist, praising the blessedness of a fellowship based on the true “*unity of the Spirit*” (Ephesians 4:3), was the watchword of your Committee on Lutheran Union this year as we pursued our task of searching out other Lutherans truly concerned about purity of doctrine and practice and desirous of the *goodness* and *pleasantness* of true Christian unity. In the case of a layman in Texas, Mr. Ross Pounders, who had shown initial interest in our Conference and even contributed generously toward the eventual printing of the trilogy of historical essays documenting the slide into heterodoxy of the Missouri Synod and the formation of our Conference, we conducted subsequent correspondence with him in order to establish whether that interest were in fact genuine and God-pleasing or whether his erstwhile enthusiasm had been purely for the sake of *outward* connection with **an** orthodox group and was actually an exercise in selective fellowship. In another case, we followed up on an overture we made several years ago to a young pastor in Michigan who had left the Lutheran Churches of the Reformation for doctrinal reasons, whom we had endeavored to help, and for whose benefit we had explored every conceivable avenue of appropriate assistance. In another case, we contacted a Missouri Synod pastor to whom we had been directed by a brother in the faith — a pastor who, we were told, was very concerned about the heterodoxy of the LCMS and was looking for an orthodox fellowship in which he could find God-pleasing refuge. We also responded to a general inquiry sent out to several “orthodox Lutheran church bodies” by a congregation in Burleson, Texas, that had early in January “seceded” (their term) from the Missouri Synod and was also looking for a “home.” In all of these contacts, we followed, by God’s grace, the exhortation of St. Paul which tells us that “*speaking the truth in love*” (Ephesians 4:15), that is, testifying forthrightly to the truth of God’s Word in the spirit of meekness and out of loving concern for their souls, is the proper way of finding others of like mind, “*all speak[ing] the same thing...[with] no divisions among [us], ...perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment*” (I Corinthians 1:10). Most of the contacts were carried out by your chairman in written correspondence and on the telephone; but I was happy to have the assistance

also of other brethren on the committee in follow-ups and in coordinate contacts. I shall endeavor in this report to summarize these briefly for your current information.

With regard to the Pounders matter, both Pastor Lietz (through whom Mr. Pounders had made his initial contact) and your chairman exchanged a protracted series of e-mails and also letters with him to determine his true and long-term intentions toward our Conference. Quite a few of these exchanges were occasioned by remarks which Mr. Pounders made concerning his membership in an LCMS congregation (which he eventually terminated) and his general plan thereafter to remain in effect independent and to relocate in his retirement to an isolated rural area of West Texas, where he would have no real connection with a church of the pure Word, except perhaps by way of electronic contact—certainly not with one of *our* congregations—and would retain the right to pick and choose among spiritual relationships with individuals and organizations not in fellowship with one another. We pointed out to him that such a convoluted combination of separatism and selective fellowship is NOT in accord with Holy Scripture and discussed with him at length the passages that he would violate, were he to embark upon this plan of his; and we urged him to relocate to a city or town where we have a congregation, so that he could regularly assemble with *true brethren* for spiritual nourishment and God-pleasing worship under the diligent watchfulness of a faithful pastor and, at the same time, distance himself from heterodox alliances. Although he promised to study and evaluate our pleas on the basis of God's Word and to get back to us with a truly Christian, Scriptural response, he never did. His initial reaction to our admonitions and exhortations was that we were being legalistic in our expectations and unnecessarily demanding in what we suggested to him. The last we were able to learn of his situation was that he had joined a congregation of the *Church of the Lutheran Confession* (even though he had recognized their position on the church and its ministry to be unscriptural), and we heard no more from him. His reaction to our Scriptural exhortation was akin to that of certain disciples of the Lord Jesus in John chapter six: "*This is an hard saying. Who can hear it?*" [And] *from that time many of His disciples went back and walked no more with Him*" (vv. 60 & 66). Sadly, this is often typical of those who are confident in their conservative self-image but refuse to hear, heed and follow clear Scripture.

Early in November last fall, I addressed as Vice President and CLU chairman an urgent letter to the **Rev. Nathan Diers** of Pittsford, Michigan, inquiring about his puzzling and, quite frankly, frustrating silence over against our Conference and those of us who had personally gone to great lengths to be of encouragement and help to him after he and his congregation left the Lutheran Churches of the Reformation. Many of us had been under the impression that, judging from what he had said to us, we were at least friends, and that, barring a sudden change of attitude on his part regarding his agreement with us in doctrine and practice, we were virtually on the verge of a mutual declaration of fellowship. Yet it had been over a year since Pastor Lietz, the chairman in 2007, directed a letter through Pastor Diers to **Emmaus Lutheran Church** of Hudson, Michigan, concerning our offer to send representatives to meet with their voters and to answer any questions they might have regarding our doctrine and practice. That letter of June 25th was finally answered the following September in a brief note from the secretary of the congregation, who stated that, in a special voters' meeting held in August, the congregation had decided to examine and review the documents we had provided *before* considering a meeting with Conference representatives.

Nevertheless, over a year later, and well over sixteen months after our last face-to-face visit with Pastor Diers in Michigan, not one word had been received from them. I asked him to explain why, in this age of nanosecond communication, he had not so much as e-mailed an update on his situation and at least a brief explanation as to why his congregation had not to date carried through on what we assumed to be its good-faith assurance to study our position and to test our pastors. I reiterated our readiness to help him work with his congregation to persuade them to abandon their ambivalence toward us, to convince him of the dangers inherent in spiritual isolationism, and to assist him in teaching his people about the requirement of Scripture that their God-given shepherd be fully supported financially by

those who are being taught by him as their pastor, particularly since his necessary secular work was prohibiting him from making full proof of his ministry (II Timothy 4:5). *Not one word* has been received from him in reply, nor from his congregation in response to our overture.

We acknowledge that Pastor Diers is practically *consumed* with work — in his efforts to carry out his pastoral responsibilities, in his secular work trying to stay afloat financially, and in his on-going “hands-on” project of trying to renovate and remodel singlehandedly a run-down farm house he had purchased when his congregation did not provide him with a place to live. Nevertheless, we fully (and reasonably) expect him to acknowledge our correspondence, to touch base with us at least occasionally, and, as instructed by Solomon, to recognize “*in deed and in truth*” (I John 3:18) that “*a man that hath friends must show himself friendly*” (Proverbs 18:24). Otherwise there is practically nothing we can do for him personally, despite our earnest desire to be of assistance; neither can we make any headway with his congregation (which no doubt regards us with a certain amount of suspicion, judging from the slander that the L. C. R. spreads about us), when it either ignores us OR deliberately stands aside from us. We intend to make one last effort to reestablish contact with Pastor Diers, after which we can only commit his situation to the Lord of the Church, praying that He might yet open the young man’s eyes to the truth of His Word and convince him to stop “*limping on both sides*” (I Kings 18:21) regarding issues about which the Scriptures clearly speak with instruction to which he should take humble and immediate heed.

On January 26th, President Worley copied me via e-mail on a letter of inquiry received from **Charity Lutheran Church**, Burleson, Texas, the **Rev. Kent A. Heimbigner**, Ph.D., Pastor. I want to quote part of the letter itself, since, upon first reading, its expressed interest seemed to be genuine and its prospects promising. We did notice, however, that it had been sent to “several such [orthodox] church bodies” as a kind of form-letter, and not to us in particular. Pastor Heimbigner wrote:

On 11 January of this year, recognizing the heterodoxy into which the Lutheran Church–Missouri Synod (LCMS) has fallen, Charity Lutheran Church of Burleson, Texas, voted to secede from the LCMS.

Our congregation’s constitution indicates that we will seek to be part of an orthodox Lutheran church body, and to remain a part of that church body as long as that church body remains orthodox. Having left the LCMS on account of her heterodoxy, we now find ourselves seeking an orthodox Lutheran Church body to which we may attach ourselves. This letter is being sent to *several* such church bodies.

...If you believe our congregation might find a home in your church body, we request that you would send us information on your church body, including the steps we would need to take in order to join. Thank you for your attention to this matter. Please remember us in your prayers.

The congregation had been led to take its action because of “several specific concerns,” which it enumerated as follows:

- We are concerned to maintain closed communion.
- We are concerned to retain Lutheran (and not revivalistic) services.
- We renounce unionism and syncretism.
- We reject lay consecrations of the Lord’s Supper (AC XIV).
- We uphold the “order of creation” (I Timothy 2:12) against those who would confer inappropriate, unbiblical authority on women.
- We believe the Word of God, and not human councils, should decide all matters of doctrinal controversy in the church.

Since it would take several days to write up a thorough answer to address all their questions, I immediately sent a one-page reply on January 26th to introduce myself and to acknowledge

their inquiry through President Worley. I also sent several issues of the *Concordia Lutheran*, the “Sketch” of our doctrinal position, our Conference *Constitution*, and some other documents of interest. I also included the following brief description of our Conference and its stance for them to examine pending their receipt of my more detailed reply:

If you’re looking for a consistent, truly Lutheran and genuinely orthodox church body, then I’m sure that you will be interested in learning more about *us*. We are “old Missouri” in more than name only and have been in existence since **1951**. By God’s grace, we all “*speak the same thing*”; we have “*no divisions among [us]*” but are “*perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment*” (I Corinthians 1:10). We also can say without equivocation “Amen” to the six “trial balloons” that you set forth in your letter as “specific concerns.” By the grace of God, and anchored solely upon His inerrant, verbally-inspired Word, our position in both doctrine and practice is solid. We have no “pet agendas” or “hot-button issues” that get addressed today and are time-worn by tomorrow. We instruct our kids prior to Confirmation in the “old” standby 1943 *Synodical Catechism*, use the “old” standby *Lutheran Hymnal* in our services, print our own Sunday School materials, hold to the *Brief Statement* and, of course, to the Lutheran Confessions of the *Book of Concord* with a *quia* subscription, and dearly love and use consistently the reliable King James Version of the Scriptures.

A four page letter followed on January 29th by “blitz-mail” — a .pdf on Conference letterhead attached to an e-mail — so that they would receive it without undue delay. The letter set forth the Confessional Standard of our church body, gave a brief history of the Conference, stated the fact that it is not a “church” but merely a service body of likeminded congregations (I Corinthians 1:10), delineated the chief differences between us and other “Lutheran” groups, and described our polity, our programs, and our projects. I included also a Seminary Catalog and a brief description of the work of *Scriptural Publications*. The letter also set forth from our *Constitution* the requirements for membership and reference to the 58th Annual Convention, dates, time and location, and an invitation to come and at least to observe our proceedings and to hear our essays and sermons.

The very next day, I received this short reply by e-mail:

Dear Pastor Mensing:

You have most certainly been diligent “above and beyond” in responding to our humble letter. Allow me to assure you that you are of course correct in your assumption that we desire to find a fellowship of congregations with whom we have genuine *concordia*, i.e., “one-heartedness” in the whole of the doctrine (“all things whatsoever I have commanded you”) entrusted to us by our Lord, and not merely agreement on six issues. The six issues we identified were, rather, the six points with which the LCMS had been confronted at her recent convention, and which she chose to ignore rather than deal with. While we did not undertake to document every blemish that the LCMS has, we are certainly aware that there are more issues than simply the six we listed.

And then came this little portend of a possible stumblingblock:

As an aside, somewhere in the back of my mind, I think I recall hearing that the Concordia Lutheran Conference had issued a statement concerning modern dance. Was that statement perchance included in the packet that you indicated you would be sending? Thank you again, not only for your desire to be faithful to our Lord, but also for your zeal in attending to us.

I answered the very same day, and he thanked me for my “no nonsense” straightforward answer to his question, adding: “I look forward to reading those materials. But I certainly find the “no beating around the bush” directness of your responses to be particularly refreshing.” I found this to be a rather *positive reaction*, compared to what I had expected. I had written:

Thanks for your particular inquiry. We do not, of course, condemn ALL dancing (as some might erroneously characterize our stand), and I shall be most happy to include several documents concerning our Scriptural practice of Sixth Commandment principles. As you

study through them, you will find that our stand and practice is certainly nothing new, but is the orthodox practice of the Missouri Synod (back in the day) on the basis of clear Scripture, has always been the consistent practice of our Conference by God's grace, and is fully understood and practiced by our people in whom the Lord has worked "*both to will and to do of His good pleasure*" motivated by the Gospel, not by the Law (Philippians 2:13).

As with a lot of issues in these latter days of sore distress, this one is often hard for people to grasp who have never been taught to embrace solid, orthodox *practice* of Scriptural principles. But so are issues like true chastity and abstinence for the unmarried (instead of just "safe sex"), engagement being tantamount to Holy Marriage; also objections to Lodgery and Scouting, merchandising for the support of Christ's kingdom, gambling (especially in its "finer" forms like the lottery), the indiscriminate practice of fellowship (particularly prayer fellowship) between individual professing Christians not of the same faith, and woman suffrage in the church and women's incumbency in offices of authority over the men (including the Pastoral Office). MOST of these go back to the 40's and 50's in the LCMS (as to controversy over them). Before those years, the Synod's practice was clear as crystal and usually consistent, as the record shows. It is, of course, the Gospel that alone should motivate believers to want to follow God's Word and to do so cheerfully for Jesus' sake (Ps. 119:97ff.; 127-128; Luke 6:46; John 14:15, 23; I John 5:2-4; etc.). "Do I HAVE to??" is the flesh talking!

I'm always happy to discuss any of this with you on the basis of God's Word, but please read thru the material I am sending you first. It's the "old stuff" — "*the old paths where is the good way*" wherein we should walk (Jeremiah 6:16), "*the paths of righteousness for His Name's sake*" (Psalm 23). Cf. Galatians 5:16.

That was January 30th. We waited for a reply, but heard nothing...not even a further acknowledgment of the receipt of materials, nor any reaction to them. The latest news was gleaned by Jason Mabe, the lay member of our committee, in his search of the Web: Charity has apparently joined **E.L.D.O.N.A.** — the *Evangelical Lutheran Diocese of North America*, which is a neo-episcopal spin-off of the movement which seeks to imitate Luther and the Reformation fathers in the *early years* of the Lutheran Church, during which many hold-overs from the Papacy were still practiced — including the "supervision" of parish pastors by "bishops" appointed over them. The head of this non-Lutheran outfit is Pastor James Heiser in Malone, Texas, who runs *Repristination Press* and used to subscribe to our Sunday School materials. He is now the **Rt. Rev.** James Heiser, the self-styled presiding "Bishop" OVER his brother pastors. Now Pastor Heimbigner, for all his protestations of orthodoxy, willingly dances to the tune of his "bishop" and ignores the Savior's warning in Matthew 23:8-12 against the establishment of hierarchies in the church. And he *could have* joined OUR Conference and been subject to Christ and His Word!

Finally, we contacted a Missouri Synod pastor to whom we had been directed by a brother in the faith — a pastor who, we were told, was very concerned about the heterodoxy of the LCMS and was looking for an orthodox fellowship in which he could find God-pleasing refuge. The man was a long-time personal friend of our brother in Seattle, Warren Malach; and, although this pastor recognized the endemic heterodoxy of the Missouri Synod and spoke forthrightly about it, he had taken no steps to leave the Synod. In fact, as we eventually learned, he was a "circuit counselor" in Synod's establishment and thus, in a real sense, a cog in its political machinery. Nevertheless, Brother Malach thought that perhaps all he needed was some Scriptural prodding in the right direction and the knowledge that there is a "place to go" (namely, our Conference) to find a truly God-pleasing fellowship of the truth.

Both Pastor Lietz and I, at Brother Malach's urging, engaged **Pastor David R. Boisclair** of the St. Louis area, in cordial dialog via e-mail, letters, and telephone conversations to determine, **first of all**, his evaluation of the Missouri Synod's position in doctrine and practice in general and specifically on a variety of specific issues; **secondly**, his theological ability to judge righteously, on the basis of Scripture alone, how *dangerous* his continued membership in the Synod was — both for himself and for his two congregations; and, **thirdly**,

what his intentions were over against the Synod in obedience to God's Word, motivated by the Savior's Gospel, and out of concern for his soul and the souls of his people. We found, in Pastor Boisclair's case, that he is, like so many who were trained in the post-1950 Missouri Synod, a "workman" operating with half a toolbox, unable to give a clear-cut answer (I Corinthians 14:8; I Peter 3:15) in a singularly *theological* manner — that is, on the basis of **God's Word alone**, *sola Scriptura* (I Peter 4:11; etc.) — without clouding the issue and its discussion with rationalistic "if's" and "but's" and "don't you think's," and without making the test-stone of their theological judgment the record of church history, the opinions of the fathers, the views of Luther, Chemnitz and Walther, and, in the last analysis, what "works" among fellow theologians. Such pastors are not used to quoting the clear words of **Scripture** to establish, defend and support Christian doctrine; and many of them simply *cannot* quote them. They do not know the *sedes doctrinae* underlying what they believe and teach (or should believe and teach). Thus they are easily "*tossed to and fro and carried about with every wind of doctrine by the sleight of men and cunning craftiness whereby they lie in wait to deceive*" (Ephesians 4:14). When we were on the telephone with Pastor Boisclair and refused to allow anything but a "theological answer," he was able rightly to discern; but after the conversation was ended and he had time to reconsider and reevaluate on the basis of other standards what he had acknowledged on the basis of Scripture, he lost his focus, permitted himself to be guided by reason and distracted by temporal considerations, and reversed himself. Finally, in the last analysis, Pastor Boisclair declined even our invitation to attend our convention as an observer, to allow us to visit with him personally to discuss the matters of concern, and to consider *any* action whereby his association with the Missouri Synod might be affected. It was back to "stay in and fight" rather than "*come out from among them and be ye separate*" (II Corinthians 6:17). He holds that studying "modern theologians" and their "logic and thinking" is beneficial, that the antiquated language of the King James Version "hinders the proclamation of the Gospel," that our use of Romans 16:17 is an "overemphasis" and not an "evangelical policy," that our position on the Real Presence that the sacramental union obtains in the "entire action" or "use" of the Lord's Supper (*Thorough Declaration of the **Formula of Concord**, Triglot, p.1001*) is a doctrinal difference between us, that the "Johannine Comma" (I John 5:7) is not part of the Scripture, that contemporary music and worship are essential to their practice, and that he and his people cannot conform to the 1943 Catechism and the Lutheran Hymnal. Well..., sadly, that is where Pastor Boisclair "dug himself in" at the very last; and our contact with him ceased. Our brother, Warren Malach, was kept up to date on all of this and is convinced that his former friend has made himself partaker of Missouri's sins and is himself a heterodox teacher, one to be avoided, rejected, and separated from.

This has been a busy year for your Vice President and for the Committee on Lutheran Union. I am grateful for the help of the brethren on the Committee and regard the work which we do in contacting and engaging those who show a genuine interest in our Conference and its Scriptural position very important work indeed —and, for the Lord's sake and our own, very enjoyable and rewarding work, even though fruit is not immediately evident. May the Lord of the Church continue to establish and prosper the work of our hands upon us to His glory (Psalm 90:17!

Respectfully submitted,

Rev. David T. Mensing, Chairman

Rev. Paul E. Bloedel

Rev. Robert J. Lietz

Mr. Jason A. Mabe

RESOLUTIONS ADOPTED BY THE FIFTY-EIGHTH ANNUAL CONVENTION**Resolution #1 —**

WHEREAS Pastor Worley, in his Friday sermon entitled “A People Ripe for God’s Terrible Judgment: A Famine of God’s Word,” tying into the theme of our Convention, “*Redeeming the Time*,” expressed the need for us to consider our current situation regarding the scarcity of pastors and pastoral candidates in our midst, showed us the consequences of not heeding the warnings found in God’s Word concerning foolish inaction, and in his convention essay also set forth the Scriptural application of Ephesians 5:16 to the training of future pastors and for the provision of their needs; and

WHEREAS we have often heedlessly placed ourselves in jeopardy of a famine of hearing the Word of God by our lack of interest and zeal for a future ministry in our midst and by the fact that so few of our own young men have aspired to the Pastoral Office over the past fifty seven years in our Conference; and

WHEREAS motivated by the Word of Reconciliation, the precious news that God for Christ’s sake has forgotten all our sins, having blotted out our unrighteousness in the redeeming blood of His beloved Son, our Savior, we confide in His gracious forgiveness and seek His help in amending our lives;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that we bring forth the necessary fruits meet for our repentance by valuing more highly the pastors we have, giving due attention to the training of well-prepared candidates for the future, and exhorting one another even now richly and cheerfully to support our theological training program and to underwrite to the best of our ability the financial support of men who, by God’s grace, desire the office of a bishop and are minded to be trained for that blessed office, that a famine of hearing the Word of God may be averted among us to His glory.

Resolution #2 —

WHEREAS the Report of the Committee on Theological Education, “Urgent: Redeeming the Time!” brought to the attention of the Conference the need of financial assistance and support for our students over the next five years in order to permit them to assume full-time study; and

WHEREAS this mutual commitment on the part of both the students and all the congregations of the Conference will require sacrifices of all of us together over these five years; and

WHEREAS the principle of Scripture is that some should not be eased and others burdened, but that there should be “*equality*” in the bearing of the load (II Corinthians 8:13-14); and

WHEREAS the Conference in Convention assembled, moved by the Gospel to observe the will of our Lord in generously supporting His work, approved the recommendations of the Committee on Theological Education;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that we give all thanks and glory to the Lord of the Church, our precious Redeemer, for having worked in us both to will and to do of His good pleasure (Philippians 2:13) and for creating in us the confidence of His grace to enable us to perform the doing of it out of what we have (II Corinthians 8:11); and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that render 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 faith toward Him and in fervent love toward one another,

and promises by means of His pure Word and Sacrament to keep us His own unto His everlasting Kingdom of Glory, through Jesus Christ, our Lord; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that we continually beseech our Lord that He would fill the hearts of young men in our Conference with the earnest desire to serve Him in the pastoral office and, to that end, to be trained for it in our seminary program, that, upon completion of their studies, they may be fit and prepared at the call of the Holy Ghost to undertake this office for our good and blessing. We also beseech Him to help us as congregations and as individual Christians to be aware of young men who have expressed this God-wrought earnest desire and to encourage them not only with words but also with the assurance of our wholehearted support, that the ministration of His precious Word may continue among us and among our children after us for generations to come.

Resolution #3 —

WHEREAS the officers and standing committees have served our beloved Conference faithfully during the past fiscal year under the Lord's continued blessings,

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that we express our gratitude for all that these brethren have wrought in their dedicated Christian service to our Conference during the past year of grace; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that we call upon the Holy Spirit to endow those brethren who have been newly elected to positions of leadership in our midst for the next fiscal year with a rich measure of His grace, so that all they think, say and do may be in accordance with God's Word, to His glory alone, and for the welfare and continued prosperity of His kingdom among us.

Resolution #4 —

WHEREAS the devotions and divine services conducted during this convention were beautified by special organ and choral music to the praise of our Lord and Savior;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Conference thank Mr. Lloyd E. Martin for serving as organist for this Convention and Pastoral Conference, and all those who under his leadership participated in providing the special choral music in the Sunday Divine Service; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that we beseech God the Holy Ghost to endow us with a greater appreciation of the righteousness of Christ with which we are clothed by faith and ask Him to strengthen us in the year ahead, and to continue to grant the members of our beloved Concordia Lutheran Conference joy in true Christian unity.

Resolution #5 —

WHEREAS each session of our convention was opened with an edifying devotion by Pastors Worley, Bloedel, Redlin, Mensing and Lietz respectively; and

WHEREAS we were particularly edified by the sermons preached by Pastor Worley on Friday morning and by Pastor Redlin on Sunday morning, both of which focused our attention upon the theme of the Convention: "*Redeeming the time*" with respect to the training of future pastors; and

WHEREAS the doctrinal essay presented by Pastor Worley presented not only the doctrinal imperative of Ephesians 5:16 but also its practical application to the theological preparation and financial support of students;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that we thank each of these men for providing us with spiritual food from God's Word for our souls' meditation, nutrition and edification.

Resolution #6 —

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

WHEREAS Trinity Evangelical Lutheran Church of Oak Park, Illinois, showed itself to be a most gracious and hospitable host to this 58th Annual convention of our beloved Conference; and

WHEREAS most generous and sacrificial Christian hospitality was demonstrated by the pastor and members of this congregation, making the stay of the pastors, delegates and visitors a particularly pleasant and enjoyable experience throughout the entire week's activities, and in general, serving their brethren in love with every conceivable comfort and convenience, particularly in light of the high temperatures;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that we express our gratitude to Pastor Robert J. Lietz for his efforts, by the grace of God and to His glory, to make our convention a success, and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Concordia Lutheran Conference express its hearty thanks to the members of Trinity Evangelical Lutheran Church for generously hosting this convention, as well as to members of her sister congregations, Peace and St. Mark's, who lent loving assistance as requested.

Soli Deo gloria!



STATISTICAL REPORT FOR FISCAL YEAR 2008-2009

Membership	Good Shepherd Ev. Lutheran	Peace Ev. Lutheran	St. John's Lutheran	St. Luke's Lutheran	St. Mark's Ev. Lutheran	Trinity Ev. Lutheran	TOTALS
Baptized Members	43	78	77	114	40	38	390
Communicant Members	34	48	65	72	19	29	267
Voting Members	10	20	20	30	4	6	90
Children in Sunday School	8	22	6	29	2	3	70
Adults in Bible Class	15	36	35	60	25	22	193
Received by Transfer	0	0	1	0	0	0	1
Received by Confirmation/Profession	0	4	2	0	2	0	8
Lost by Transfer	0	0	0	1	0	0	1
Lost by Other Circumstance	0	0	1	1	2	1	5

Official Acts

Infant Baptisms	1	5	3	1	1	1	12
Adult Baptisms	0	0	2	0	0	0	2
Confirmations of Children	0	1	0	0	2	0	2
Confirmations of Adults	0	3	0	0	0	0	3
Marriages Solemnized	0	0	0	1	0	0	1
Funerals or Burials	0	0	1	1	0	1	2

Auxiliary Staff

Sunday School Teachers	6	4	2	7	1	3	23
Elected Auxiliary Officers	5	13	9	7	2	2	38
Organists	1	1	1	1	0	0	4
Choir Members	0	16	0	12	0	0	28

Property

Church Facilities Owned	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	6
Church Facilities Rented	No	No	No	Yes ¹	No	No	1
Acreage (with or without bldgs.)	7.5	3.2	.5	1.07	5.0	.75	18.02
Value (in thousands of \$\$)	\$600	\$975	\$200	\$1033	N/A	\$1750	\$4558

¹ Remote chapel facilities in Victoria, BC, Canada

Congregations: 6 Pastors: 6 Congregations/Pastors in Fellowship: 9 Available Candidates: 0

Respectfully submitted,
Raymond S. Kusumi, Statistician