

**Faculty of Concordia Seminary. *Faithful
To Our Calling, Faithful To Our Lord.*
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FAITHFUL TO OUR CALLING

FAITHFUL TO OUR LORD

AN AFFIRMATION IN TWO PARTS

BY

THE FACULTY OF CONCORDIA SEMINARY

PART II

I BELIEVE

Personal Confessions of Faith and Discussion of Issues

I BELIEVE

INTRODUCTION

St. Peter has told us, "Be ready at all times to answer anyone who asks you to explain the hope you have in you" (1 Peter 3:15). The Faculty of Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, is grateful for this opportunity to explain its hope and to confess its faith. By means of this publication, entitled "I Believe," it shares with the church at large the witness it makes daily through teaching and preaching on the seminary campus.

Many have requested that the Faculty of our school state its faith and present its position on controverted issues. After the "Report of the Synodical President" was issued in September 1972, the Faculty announced that it would "present to the Synod in the months ahead detailed evidence of our own solid Lutheran convictions." Out of that decision issued a joint statement by the faculty entitled, "A Witness To Our Faith," which is Part I of this two-part publication and a companion piece to this booklet.

In the meantime the Council of Presidents met on our campus and suggested a course of action to our faculty: "we encourage each of the professors of Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, to assure the church of his Biblical and confessional stance by setting forth (in writing), for use in discussion forums, what is believed, taught and confessed, giving special attention to the theological issues in controversy among us today such as Law and Gospel; Holy Scripture, its purpose, authority, infallibility, unity, and its interpretation; the relationship of the Gospel and Holy Scripture; the canonical text; Old Testament prophecy; and original sin, that we encourage these professors and the church to regard this exercise as an opportunity to edify the church."

The Faculty accepted the suggestion of the Council of Presidents. When each member of the Faculty had completed his confession, the Faculty informed the Council of Presidents that its

individual statements were now ready for use in discussion forums. The Council of Presidents then asked the faculty to supply each member of the Council with a set of the individual confessions of faculty members. Therefore the faculty resolved to send them to the Council of Presidents and to make them available to the church at large.

It is important to keep a number of things in mind in reading the individual confessions which follow.

1) The individual confessions were written to fulfill a request by the Council of Presidents that each professor "assure the church of his Biblical and confessional stance" in two ways, a) by stating what he believes, teaches, and confesses, and b) by giving special attention to theological issues in controversy among us today. The request explains the form of the individual confessions. In most cases faculty members deal with controverted issues as they make specific affirmations of their faith. Because of their specific teaching responsibilities, not all faculty members are as conversant with all the controverted issues to the same degree.

2) Faculty members followed no predetermined format in writing their confessions. Therefore the individual confessions are as varied in form as the personalities of the individual authors.

3) The individual confessions were written "for use in discussion forums," as proposed by the Council of Presidents. They are intended to be platforms for discussion, not exhaustive or comprehensive treatments of articles of faith or theological issues. They are statements to begin discussion, discourse, and dialog.

4) The individual confessions should be seen as companion statements to the Faculty's common statement, "A Witness to Our Faith." Both statements, individual and corporate, are intended to complement one another.

In resolving to publish their individual confessions along with their joint affirmation, the Faculty stated: "We implore God the Holy Spirit to bless this decision and to use these statements to edify the church in serving as a basis for discussion forums, to reassure those who have questions about us, and to advance the process of fraternal conversation by which the unity of the church is realized among us."

In the confessions that follow, I joyfully begin with my own. After my confession and those of two other administrators the confessions of the faculty follow in alphabetical order. May these words of witness by those called by the Church to teach, encourage your own faith. "And now I commend you to God and to the word of his grace, which is able to build you up and to give you the inheritance among all those who are sanctified." (Acts 20:32)

**John H. Tietjen,
President**

John H. Tietjen
President

I believe in one God, the Almighty Father, Who sent His Son, Christ Jesus, into His created world to free all mankind from slavery to evil for life as His children and Who sent the Spirit of His Son into the hearts of men to enable us to call Him Father, to live together in love as brothers, and to receive the inheritance of eternal life which God gives His children.

God is at work in the world and present in my life to rescue and to save. The mighty acts of redemption which God did in the history of His servant people Israel and which He did in an ultimate and unique way through His servant Son Jesus God continued to do in our world for us. Nothing is more important than to proclaim the good news which is God's power to save all who believe. Nothing is more crucial for the church in our time than to recover a commitment to its mission of proclaiming God's good news to the world. Through the Gospel words we speak and the sacramental actions we perform we are instruments by which God does for others the mighty acts which He has done for us and for all who believe in Christ.

God is mightily at work to save because He is our Father, the very Source of our lives. He is Creator of the universe, Who has made me and all creatures. The world and human life are not the result of accident or chance but the product of God's purpose and plan. God made us to live with Him and for Him.

From our very beginning we human beings have rebelled against our Creator. From our first parents to the present generation we have chosen to live without God, we have rebelled against His will, we have failed to fulfill His purpose for our lives. We are in fact born dead in trespasses and sins.

In His grace God did not give us up to the judgment we deserved, nor did He abandon us to our bondage to evil and death. Out of His infinite love God had mercy on a fallen and lost mankind. Out of all the nations of the world He chose Abraham and his descendants to be His servant-people through whom He would bring blessing to the world. Among the people of Israel God sent His Son into the world, born by the power of the Holy Spirit of a virgin mother, to reveal His grace and truth to all mankind.

Through Jesus Christ God reconciled the world to Himself. By His life, death, and resurrection Jesus Christ atoned for our sins and redeemed us from our bondage to evil and death. By gaining the forgiveness of sins for us Christ has made it possible for us to be in fellowship with God and to live under Him in His kingdom. As a result of Christ's redeeming work God has poured out His Spirit on all who believe in Christ and are baptized in His name. Those upon whom God's Spirit comes are born anew with God's own life and become living members of the Body of Christ, the Church. God is mightily at work in their lives, enabling them to do His will, empowering them to love, uniting them in the bond of peace, and equipping them to be instruments of His grace and mercy. God continues to do His saving work in their lives, forgiving sins, healing diseases, transforming evil into good. God will keep on doing His saving work for them until Jesus Christ comes to earth again to bring history to an end, to judge the living and the dead, and to enable those who are His own to enjoy the resurrection of the dead and the life of the world to come.

The faith I am here affirming I have confessed in other words and in different forms, sometimes more briefly, sometimes more completely, for example in the ecumenical creeds and in the specifically Lutheran confessions of the Book of Concord. I consider my present affirmation to be in harmony with those creeds and confessions, which I have affirmed and continue to affirm as a correct exposition of the doctrine of the Gospel which is the content of the Sacred Scriptures. Whether it be confessed briefly or at length, the doctrine of the Gospel is all important. In other matters, such as how to interpret specific Biblical texts, questions about authorship of Biblical books or the form of particular writings, hypotheses about sources or dating of Biblical materials, there can be legitimate differences of opinion, so long as the position does not contradict the doctrine of the Gospel.

I rejoice to affirm that in His grace and mercy God has called me by the Gospel to faith in Jesus as Lord and to life together with Him in His Church. In my baptism as an infant God claimed me as His own. Down through the years of my life God has spoken His Word of Law and Promise to me in a variety of ways and has shared His Life with me through the gift of Christ's body and blood in the bread and wine of the Lord's Supper. My Lord Jesus Christ has summoned me to follow in His steps as His disciple and to serve as His undershepherd in the Holy Ministry of the Church.

By faith I affirm that the Sacred Scriptures are the same Word of Life which God has spoken to me through the Word proclaimed and the Sacraments administered. The Bible is the written Word of God as distinct from the proclaimed Word or the Word in visible form or the incarnate Word, our Lord Jesus Christ. Like proclamation and sacrament the Bible is the Word of God because, as Luther said, it is the cradle of Christ. Since the Scriptures were written by men in particular historical situations, the Scriptures can be studied and researched like other human writings. Though the ordinary Christian hears God speak through a simple reading of the Bible, those who are called to teach the Bible may use whatever tools of research are available to help ascertain the message of the Scriptures. Historical and critical research can be helpful to the Bible interpreter. But the Scriptures are more than the writings of mortal men in every word and in all their parts they are the Word of God. They were written by inspiration of the Holy Spirit, and only those led by the Spirit can know their truth. As God's Word they are the only rule and norm of faith and practice. Their authority as God's Word must not be separated from their essential content, which is Jesus Christ, the key which unlocks the meaning of the Scriptures as a whole and of all their parts. Gospel and Scripture belong together and must not be separated. Scripture is rule and norm for our proclamation of the Gospel, and Scripture is rule and norm because its content is the Gospel. Every use of the Scriptures must serve the purpose for which God gave them to us which is to give us the wisdom that leads to salvation through faith in Christ Jesus.

John S. Damm
Academic Dean
Associate Professor of Practical Theology
(Christian Education and Worship)

I consider it a privilege to be able to put into writing a simple and succinct statement of my confession of faith. I do so realizing that any attempt to put into a few words something so deep and so profound as the Christian faith I confess is liable to misunderstanding. Some may feel I have not said enough. Others will question why some things were stated and others omitted.

When I awake in the morning I try to make my first conscious act a renewal of my baptism signaling that the Old Adam in me should, by daily contrition and repentance, be drowned and die with all my sins, and a new man daily come forth and arise, who shall live before God in righteousness, and walk in newness of life.

Each day in my work as a teacher of the church I try, with God's grace, to be faithful to my ordination vow. I believe both the Old and New Testaments to be the inspired word of God and the only infallible rule of faith and practice. I accept the three Ecumenical Creeds as faithful testimonies to the truth of Holy Scriptures and I reject all the errors which they condemn. I believe the Symbolical Books of The Evangelical Lutheran Church, as these are contained in the *Book of Concord*, to be a true and correct exhibition of the Scriptural faith. I attempt to perform the duties of my office in accordance with these Symbols. Insofar as I am able to do this I acknowledge that it is the Lord's doing through the powers and grace of his Holy Spirit.

In the following paragraphs I address myself to several topics which are presently the focus of attention in our synod.

LAW/GOSPEL

As a Lutheran I think it is necessary to distinguish clearly between Law and Gospel. The law commands and requires of us what we should and should not do. It is concerned with our actions. It consists of demands. The Gospel, on the other hand, does not command us to do something, or demand what we should leave undone, nor does it require anything of us. The Gospel does the exact opposite.

It calls us to receive what God in His graciousness has done for us in the incarnation, life, death, and resurrection of His Son.

The Gospel is the power of God that gives us "new life." It is the Gospel that makes us what we are, children of God. But this does not mean that the Law is set aside. In reality the Law is indispensable. This is due not only to the fact that the "justified" man is never only a "new" man, but during his earthly life is also the "old" man and that as "old" man he lives under the Law and is subject to its accusations and judgment. It is due also to the fact that man's earthly tasks and his calling have been given to him by God and are the bearers of the Law. The Law has a universal significance.

I consider the ability to distinguish the Law from the Gospel as the mark of genuine Lutheran theology, the work of an evangelical Christian as distinguished from all others.

(This matter will be treated again in the section that follows.)

THE RELATIONSHIP OF THE GOSPEL TO THE HOLY SCRIPTURES

In attempting to show the relationship between the Gospel and Holy Scriptures I acknowledge that I, a poor, miserable sinner, have been justified before God by grace through faith. The gracious promise of the forgiveness of sins for Christ's sake - this, and nothing but this, is the Gospel. And the Holy Scriptures cannot be properly understood except in the light of that Gospel. Consequently, the doctrine of justification is the key which "alone opens the door to the whole Bible." This is a matter of relationship. The relationship between the understanding of the Scriptures and the doctrine of justification is clear: Christ is the essential content of the Scriptures. For this reason Luther emphasized how necessary it is to distinguish clearly between Law and Gospel. Of course, the Law belongs to the Scriptures, and we cannot talk of the Scriptures without the Law. But the Scriptures can only "instruct us to salvation" because it contains the Gospel, the message of the forgiveness of sin for Christ's sake. Without this Gospel, the Scriptures would be either an unintelligible history of religions, or a revelation of the incomprehensible wrath of God. Only the witness to Christ makes a Bible of the Bible. It is for this reason that the doctrine of the sinner's justification for Christ's sake is truly the key to the whole Scriptures. Only the person who has grasped

this doctrine, and through it has come to an understanding of the Gospel, can comprehend the Scriptures, because he knows who it is who speaks in it: this is no other God than the One who became man; the God who is revealed in Christ, and only in Christ; the God who, if one seeks Him outside of Christ or without Christ, is the *Deus absconditus*, the "hidden God" who drives men to despair.

It is in this sense that I understand "the Lutheran isolation of the Gospel," that is the distinction between Law and Gospel and the placing of the Gospel as that part of the divine revelation in which God opens His whole heart, above the Law.

I recognize this as the correct understanding of the relationship of the Gospel to the Holy Scriptures. I subscribe to our Symbolical explication of this dogma. I attempt to apply it to every area of my classroom and parish responsibility.

HOLY SCRIPTURES

I believe, teach, and confess that Holy Scriptures is God's Word, written under the Holy Spirit. When I want to know what inspiration as the work of the Holy Spirit is, I must ask myself what Jesus Christ Himself taught about the Holy Spirit and his work concerning the preservation of divine revelation. The passages of chapters 14 - 16 of the Gospel of St. John on the Holy Spirit, the Paraclete are especially helpful. There the Biblical doctrine of inspiration is discussed. There it becomes clear what the foremost task of the Holy Spirit is bring to witness to Christ. He will be in the apostles (14:17), their remembrance the Words of Jesus (14:26), bear witness to Christ (15:26), guide them into all the truths (16:13), and in all His Words He will glorify Christ (16:14). And this is the same Spirit "who spoke by the prophets" when they all - and this includes, according to the usage of the Bible, all the holy writers of the Old Testament - did, as St. Peter puts it (Acts 10:43), "bear witness that everyone who believes in Him receives forgiveness of sins through His name."

This witness confirms the Lutheran conviction that Christ is the real content of the entire Scriptures. The Bible is the book in which, from the first to the last page, God the Father, speaking to all mankind, witnesses to Christ through the Holy Spirit: "This is My beloved Son. Hear ye Him."

But the Bible itself does not inform us about the process of inspiration, about the way or the various ways in which God gave His Word to the Holy writers. This in no way casts doubt on the reliability of the Biblical message or the writers. It is God Himself who speaks to us through them.

I believe that the great purpose of Holy Scriptures is to make us wise unto salvation. The authority of Holy Scriptures rests precisely on the carrying out of that purpose as the Word judges, promises, and pardons. I acknowledge Holy Scripture's authority when I permit myself to be judged, when I hear the promise and am pardoned by that Word. Faith has no other sure foundation than the Saviour Himself, Who gives and guarantees the promise and the pardon through His salvific activity. I believe this foundation is secure enough to provide a basis for my faith in the promise, and therefore in the authority of the Word of God.

THE LUTHERAN CHURCH AND OTHER CHURCHES

When I cheerfully place myself under the Symbolical Books of the Lutheran Church I do so with the consciousness that they do not treat lightly the differences between other Christians and the Lutheran church. Obedience to the Word of God makes that clear.

But this does not force me to embrace a narrow separatism that ignores genuine contacts with other churches. Narrow separatism is not an essential characteristic of Lutheranism. I know of no church in Christendom that can afford to be as open to other churches as the Lutheran church.

I am confident that the Lutheran Church understands that its office of teaching the Gospel and administering the Sacraments is an office instituted by Jesus Christ; and that it is effectual by reason of the institution and commandment of Christ, even if it is exercised by weak and sinful men; that Christ the Lord, is really and personally present in the Word and Sacraments of our Church, and that the communion of saints, the fellowship of justified sinners, is built up in our midst by this Word and Sacraments. And yet I realize that the church of God is not limited to our confessional church, but rather embraces "men scattered throughout the whole world, from the rising to the setting of the sun, who agree concerning the Gospel, and have the same Christ, the same Holy Ghost, the same Sacraments, no

matter whether they have human traditions that are the same or dissimilar." (Apology VII & VIII, 10)

Thus the Lutheran Church has perhaps outstripped all other churches in acknowledging that the true church of Christ is present in other denominations too.

With this confessional stance, The Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod in its *Mission Affirmations* and at its Milwaukee Convention has already expressed its conviction that the local congregation of believers, as well as groupings of believers in denominations, must be in mission to all parts of the body of Christ, actively seeking to discover and recognize the unity they have with other local communities and groupings and must themselves be willing to be the object of mission from other parts of the body in readiness to follow the Holy Spirit's guidance.

The doctrine of baptism and the doctrine of justification by grace through faith must have the necessary result that we recognize as fellow Christians, and as fellow members of the body of Christ, all those in whom the Holy Spirit has created life and faith even as He has in us.

As Lutheran Christians we must then be ready to listen to and speak with those who differ from us, and we must be ready to establish suitable experiences which will make this possible, so that all who have been called by God through faith in Christ will help each other to grow in Christ.

I believe that it is important to recognize the relationship which Christians have with each other and to realize that it is based on the act of God by which He has created saving faith in Christ through the work of the Holy Spirit. When Lutherans attempt to understand the ways through which the Holy Spirit has created faith, and when they are encouraged to articulate those truths which they know, to which they have given assent and through which they rest their confidence on Christ, then they will have the opportunity to exercise the obligation placed on them to witness and to listen to other Christians so that all may grow in faith.

Kenneth H. Breimeier
Dean of Students
Professor of Practical Theology (Counseling)

I believe in God the Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

God the Father is creator of all things that exist wherever they may be. He made me and all men. The account of creation in Scripture is inspired, accurate, true, and reliable. The account was not written to provide us with answers to scientific questions. Because of the reliability of the Scriptures, it is tempting to try to wring out of the creation description data which will answer questions which we raise for other (good) purposes. It is important to remember that the Scriptures were written for our learning about God and His relation to us.

Man is the creature of God. Man is to glorify His Maker.

The Creator richly provides for the needs of His people, both those who know Him and those who do not.

Man's relation to God was meant to be one of trust. Man was to do God's will and in doing that will, receive all the good gifts which God has to offer. Adam and Eve, however, elected to break the relation God had established. In rebelling against God and His will, they brought down God's judgment on them. In terms of God's wrath at their disobedience, they destroyed the beneficent Creator-creature relationship. The Scriptures teach that through the rebellion of Adam and Eve, every man is guilty of the same mistrust of God. Guilt is passed on from generation to generation. We all share in the same desire to fight God and go our own way. We proclaim our doubt either about His very existence, or at the very least His good will toward us. God could, we say, wipe out all sickness and heartache if He's there and if He cares. That very assertion betrays our childish anger toward our God.

There is little debate among Christians about the tenacity with which we hang on to our nasty defiance of God. We seem determined to be sinners. The depth of our determination suggests the depravity born in us. All of us fight God; sin and its effects are observed in all ages, in all people. Children are not innocent. This is a theological assertion. It is evident that rebellion against God is transmitted from generation

to generation. The Scriptures, however, cannot be called on to answer the improper and impossible scientific question of how that transmission occurs.

The relation that man destroyed through his rebellion God re-established through His Son Jesus Christ, who was born into this world of the Virgin Mary, lived among us, and died, and rose on the third day. Through His death and resurrection man is reconciled to God. Faith in Him counts for righteousness. I believe that as He passed through death and into life again, I, too, go from death to life in Him.

It is only through the Holy Spirit that faith can be worked in my heart. The Holy Spirit comes to me through Word and Sacraments. The Holy Scriptures are God's Word to me and all people. They were written over the course of many years by men moved by the Holy Spirit. The Scriptures are inspired by the Holy Spirit. They are true, reliable, and dependable. All of Scripture is inspired, not just part of it. All of the words of Scripture are inspired.

The term inerrancy has been introduced into our thinking about the Scriptures. Valid Lutheran theology always insists on the Scriptures being the norm for doctrine. Since the Scriptures themselves do not use the term inerrant, or claim for themselves that they are "inerrant," it would be well not to use that term, but rather use those terms which the Scriptures use of themselves, e. g., "inspired," written by men "moved by the Holy Spirit," "cannot be broken," true, "bear witness to the light that enlightens every man," "the gospel of God which He promised beforehand through His prophets in the Holy Scriptures."

The Scriptures tell us what God wants us to know for our spiritual well-being. The Scriptures are the source of our teaching. There is no other source. The Scriptures are the norm. All teaching is to be judged by the Scriptures. Lutherans affirm that the confessional statements as named in Article II of the Constitution of The Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod are a correct interpretation of the Scriptures. Therefore I have pledged in my ordination vow to be faithful to the Scriptures and to the Confessions of the Lutheran Church, a pledge which I still uphold.

Since Holy Scripture is inspired by the Holy Spirit, it is vital that interpreters take the words seriously. It will not do to make the

Word say what we want it to say. It is easy to come at the Word with biases and preconceptions, including the idea of a "correct" interpretation which we have somehow come to accept as correct although just how is veiled in the past. The Holy Spirit works through the Word. As He has guided the church in the past, He still guides those who search the Scripture for its meaning, lay people and professional exegetes alike.

I and other members of the Lutheran church look at the Scriptures in terms of Law and Gospel. Our guide is the conviction that Scripture speaks to us in terms of God's will for us and His love for us in Jesus Christ.

Different methods can be used to study the Scriptures, including methods that originated with men who do not come to the Scriptures with the guides and presuppositions, and the faith, which Lutheran exegetes bring to a study of the Scriptures.

In the creeds we confess our faith in the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit. Our faith in God comes from the testimony of the Scripture and from the efficacy of the Sacraments, the Holy Spirit working through the Word to create and strengthen our faith in God. It would not only be wrong, especially from the Lutheran point of view, but also dangerous to contend that faith first of all begins with faith in the Bible. Faith begins with faith in God and His grace for us. We do have faith in the Bible, of course. But we do not worship it. That would be idolatry. We have faith in God, we worship God, and we rejoice in the Word He has given us so that we may know Him as fully as He has revealed Himself to us.

By the Scriptures we mean those writings which the church has gathered together into the canon, the books of the Old Testament and the books of the New Testament.

In writing the books the authors made use of materials from other authors and from oral transmissions. The writers left their own stamp on their work; the individuality of the author is apparent. The assertion that a writing may have existed in different form before the final manuscript does not preclude the inspiration of the book by the Holy Spirit.

In this statement I have tried to cover as many of the points in con-

trovery within our church body as possible. I have, however, not covered them all, and space and time has not permitted detailed discussion of those I did touch on. My impression of the state of the controversy is that we need to reaffirm the unity of the Body and our trust and mutual dependence on all members of the Body. The Body cannot function well when one part of it doubts the faithfulness and commitment of another part and will not listen - really listen when the part of the Body in question affirms again and again, and demonstrates again and again, its fidelity. One wonders what it takes to change hearts. But I do not wonder too long. God is alive and working minute after minute, day after day, year after year. His presence is very real, His power is undiminished, and His grace still is offered us. God is faithful. He will keep His people in the future as He has in the past. Though we wound Him deeply, He still forgives us, for the sake of His Son Jesus Christ.

Robert Bergt
Associate Professor of Practical Theology
(Worship and Choral Music)

Once again I take this opportunity with willingness and gladness to reaffirm what I have said in my ordination vows:

"I believe the canonical books of the Old and the New Testament to be the inspired Word of God and the only infallible rule of faith and practice."

"I accept the three Ecumenical Creeds - the Apostles'; the Nicene, and the Athanasian - as faithful testimonies to the truth of the Holy Scriptures, and I reject all the errors which they condemn."

"I believe that the Unaltered *Augsburg Confession* is a true exposition of the Word of God and a correct exhibition of the doctrine of the Evangelical Lutheran Church, and that the *Apology of the Augsburg Confession*, the two *Catechisms* of *Martin Luther*, the *Smalcald Articles*, and the *Formula of Concord* - as contained in the *Book of Concord* - are also in agreement with this one Scriptural faith."

"I promise that I will perform the duties of my office in accordance with these Confessions and that all my teaching and my administration of the Sacraments will be in conformity with the Holy Scriptures and with the afore-mentioned Confessions."

"I promise to adorn the doctrine of our Savior with a holy life and conversation." (*The Lutheran Agenda*, pp. 106-107)

Another way to make this confession and affirmation is to say that I uphold Christian doctrine in the way the liturgy of the Church proclaims it. This is the chief content of my teaching besides the music which I teach and through which text and music I witness. I affirm what the liturgy does:

In the liturgy the Word of God is upheld and revered and held in highest esteem. The doctrine of Christ is at the center of worship; the Sacred Scriptures are read and their Law and Gospel proclaimed. The liturgy puts God's Word to work in other ways. There we baptize and distribute the Lord's precious body and Blood. There we absolve and bless men, women, and children in the name of God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

When I fail to honor Christ by word or deed, by witness or teaching, the church's worship offers me opportunity for confession and absolution. As I confess my sinfulness and human frailty to God and firmly trust in God's covenant of forgiveness, I am forgiven, healed, made strong and inspired to go on living, confessing, witnessing, and teaching according to the will of God.

Through the church's liturgy I am able to affirm that God is the creator and sustainer of all things. I am able to give Him

worship and adoration for His great miracles, attested to in the Scriptures. I am able to join with the angels in declaring God's glory and to proclaim God's majesty with all saints, living and triumphant.

The church's worship is Christocentric. Whether it be through *Gloria in Excelsis*, *Benedictus*, or *Magnificat*, I affirm the incarnation of our Lord Jesus Christ and the redemption which God accomplished through Him.

Through the liturgy not only do I affirm the Holy Spirit to be God but the Holy Spirit is present to achieve God's purposes in me. He uses the means God has provided to share His grace. As God Himself is the author of the Scriptures through men, so the Spirit speaks through the Scriptures and through Scriptural hymns and prayers to lead us into all truth.

Especially through the injunctions of the Scriptures the liturgy places proper emphasis on godly living and on the church's mission. Its proclamation of the Gospel empowers us to do God's will.

As the liturgy grows, adapts, and changes with the times, so the church must determine how to understand and apply the mysteries of our faith to the changing world in which we live.

To put it as briefly as possible, I have learned from teaching and praying the church's liturgy that. doxology and Gospel proclamation are the purpose of my life.

Robert W. Bertram
Chairman of the Department of Systematic Theology,
Professor of Historical and Systematic Theology

What could possibly be so important about my faith that I should now be asked to publish it like this "for use in discussion forums?" What is there about my faith that is all that interesting? Certainly not the fact that this faith is mine. That is hardly what makes it important. Then what does? Is it the fact that, being a pastor and teacher, I am in a position to impose my faith on others? True, that influence upon others, which is why I need to be controlled by the church's ordination, does render what I believe a matter of public concern. Still, all this only pushes the question back farther yet. If what is important about my faith is that it might influence the faith of others, then why is the faith of these others so important in the first place? Why is the faith of any Christian important?

If Jesus our Lord could say to His converts, "Great is your faith," what was it about their faith that was great? How could He say about their faith that that was the thing which "made you well" or "saved you"? Why do we say of our own faith that it is that and that alone, quite independently of the good things our faith does, which endears us to God?

What is so great about faith? Is it the fact that our faith is not our own doing but God's, by grace alone? But that is not unique with faith; that much is true also of our loving, our forgiving and all the other gifts of the Spirit we receive. If that has been our big reason for extolling faith, namely that it is the work of God, then no wonder we sometimes sound so Reformed, emphasizing *sola gratia* in a way which deemphasizes *sola fide*. Unless the *Augsburg Confession* is mistaken, the only way truly to say *sola gratia* is to say *sola fide*.

Why is faith special? Is it because faith believes what God says and that way is sure of being right? Of course, that is what faith believes, God's Word, and His Word is always right. But merely agreeing with Him does not make us right. For one of the things God says is that we are all wrong. "None is righteous, no, not one; no one understands." "All men are liars." It is tempting to want to disprove that judgment upon us - of all things, by agreeing with it. For then wouldn't we at least be right about **that**: about how wrong we are? But God does not fail for tricks like that. Nor is He impressed with how right we are

about Bible history. So what if I do believe (as I do) that the Israelites crossed the Red Sea dry-shod or that Jesus was born of a virgin or that He rose from the dead? That much, says God with a shrug, the devils also believe. So then that could hardly be what distinguishes faith as great, namely, how right it makes us to believe what God says.

But there is one thing which God says, one Word of His, which is different: not His word as law but His Word as promise. That promissory Word does change us from wrong to right if and as we believe it. That, finally, is what is great about faith: in our faith God's-promise comes true. He promises to forgive us, but only in trusting that promise do we get forgiven. If His promise goes unbelieved, it goes unfulfilled. A man can promise with all his heart that he loves his wife, but if she disbelieves him, she is not getting loved; his promise is thwarted. With God's other Word, His judging Word, faith makes no such difference. His judgment that we are sinners applies whether we believe it or not. But not so with His promise. That depends on being believed. Not that faith creates the promise. The promise is not something subjective, man-made. The promise is as real as God and it simply stands independently, the way a man's Baptism does or the Body and Blood in Christ's Supper, whether it is accepted or denied. But if it is denied, it stands as judgment and no longer as promise. Still, its original purpose is promise, and the promise is meant to be enjoyed. That is what faith is, enjoying the promise.

The one trouble with faith is not that it isn't great but that it is so scarce even in the staunchest believers. But isn't that a criticism of us? It is. Then does judgment have the last word after all? Not really. The dear God, bless Him, takes our scarce faith and "reckons it to [us] for righteousness." Not that our **faith** isn't already righteous or that God first has to pretend that it is righteous. Our faith, what there is of it, is indeed righteous. The trouble is, our tiny faith is more than outweighed by its opposite, our unfaith -- for example, our worry, which Jesus equates with faithlessness and, in turn, with hatred of God. Yet God "reckons" that tiny faith to me, to all of me, including the unbelieving me, as wall-to-wall righteousness. Which is enough righteousness for a man to tive off of for the rest of his life. That is, forever. God treats believing sinners as whole righteous persons, but *propter fidem*. Because of our faith, timid and paltry though it is, God is delighted with us whole and entire. But why? Ah, there at last is the question by which all theology

and all theologians are to be tested for their biblicalness. Why does God count us meagre believers as altogether right when in fact we are still desperately wrong? What is it about our faith, even our faltering faith, which prompts Him to pay us such sweeping compliments?

The reason, quite simply, is the one whom our faith is faith in, Jesus the Christ. Either He is the Christ, and in that case our faith in Him is vindicated. Or He is not the Christ, and then are we of all men the most miserable. If it should turn out at the end of history, in *The Last Analysis*, that Jesus is not Lord after all, then our faith in Him, no matter how sincere, will be exposed as the very opposite of "great."

It will be an everlasting reproach to us. All the more so with public teachers and pastors like me, who have in addition led others into this same faith, including our own families. Yet trust Him we do, as the Christ of God and our very Lord, and stake our lives on Him. Because it is in Him that we believe, and not for any other reason, we dare therefore to hope that God finds our poor faith, finds us ourselves, a joy to behold.

This Jesus, whom we believe to be the only-begotten Son of God, is the only man among us who has been truly right. But He has been right for us, in our stead and on our behalf, even to the point of being made wrong for us - He who knew no wrong. Because He is for us, we believe that the One whom He called God is the only God there is and, being the Father of Jesus, is therefore a Father to us as well. Though we do not deny that there are other spirits, even spirits who may heal and who impel men to superhuman activity, we do believe that that Spirit by whom the risen Christ and His Father have spirited the Christian community is the only Spirit deserving of the title "Holy."

Because Christ Jesus is "for us men and for our salvation," we do by believing in Him so identify with Him that we take His death to be our death and His resurrection our resurrection. And we believe that God concurs in that identification and will see it through. Believing this, we are liberated as never before to take also the criticism of God's law, killing though that is, and actually have found such dying profitable for living. We call that the "joy of repentance" or "the dear holy cross."

In fact, since Jesus Christ is *pro nobis*, for us, we who believe in Him (though we are originally from many different races and traditions) now take on the very history out of which He came, the history of an obscure and oppressed people, and take the Scriptures which explain that history. That is, we now take that history, though it does not appear to be ours, as having happened for us, and the Word of God which is there recorded as having been recorded for us. All this, again, for one reason only: the great promise which that biblical history shows is finally kept, for us and for all nations, by Jesus Christ. Accordingly, all biblical history, even the history of God's law, is subordinated to and real in the light of God's promise-kept, Jesus our Lord. Our one rule for doing that is the writings of Jesus' own apostles who, like the prophets before them, were inspired by the Spirit of God but who, unlike the prophets, now recorded the history of a new covenant, rendering the prior covenant "old."

It is into that New Covenant and its ongoing history that we believe ourselves authorized to invite all the peoples of the world, who, since Christ was Brother to them, are our brothers as well. Because of our faith, seeing that it is faith in Him, we are confident that none of all those who believe in Him will be put to shame when He comes back.

Herbert J. A. Bouman
Professor of Systematic Theology

As one who is unreservedly committed to the Sacred Scriptures as the inspired, "pure, infallible, and unalterable Word of God" (*Book of Concord*, Tappert Edition, p. 8) and "the only rule and norm according to which all doctrines and teachers alike must be judged"

(*Epitome*, Rule and Norm, 1) and the Lutheran Symbols as a true and correct exposition of the Sacred Scriptures:

I believe in the Triune God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, as He is confessed in the ancient Creeds of the church, as re-affirmed in the Lutheran Symbols (*Augsburg Confession* I, *Smalcald Articles* I, *Small and Large Catechisms*, *Formula of Concord*, *Epitome*, Rule and Norm, 3).

I believe that in common with all people born according to the course of nature, I was conceived and born in sin, without the fear of God and without trust in God, subject to God's wrath and condemnation (*Augsburg Confession* II).

I believe that Jesus Christ, true God and true man, took my place and died and rose again to redeem me from all sins, from death and the power of the devil, and that all who believe in him have eternal life.

I believe that through my Baptism in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit I received the forgiveness of all sins and the gift of the Holy Spirit who has brought me to faith and given me the new life in God.

I believe that the love and mercy of God extends to all His creatures, that God desires the salvation of all people, and that in Christ God has reconciled the world to Himself.

I believe that the purpose of God's revelation through Jesus Christ, as witnessed in the Scriptures, is to have the word of reconciliation, the promise and gift of eternal life, brought to all mankind.

I believe that God manifested His love and faithfulness throughout human history, beginning with His promise of help and deliverance to our first parents, continuing His promises and His help in His dealings with the Old Testament patriarchs and the people of Israel, and bringing His promises to their fulfillment in the incarnation and redeeming career of His only Son, our Lord Jesus Christ.

I believe that since the Fall God has confronted and continues to confront human beings with His holy Law to convict them of their sin and place them under His judgment in order that He might have

mercy on them and lead them to trust in His Gospel promises (cf. *Formula of Concord, Solid Declaration*, V, 23; *Apology XII*, 53).

I believe that Sacred Scripture, the inspired Word of God, is God's completely adequate and reliable instrument for achieving the purpose for which He has revealed Himself to mankind.

I believe that all questions and problems concerning the Bible, such as its authority, its infallibility, its unity, and its interpretation, must be dealt with in connection with God's purpose and from the perspective of His gracious promise in Jesus Christ.

I believe what the Lutheran Symbols believe, teach, and confess about the Law and the Gospel:

that "all Scripture should be divided into these two chief doctrines (locos), the law and the promises" (*Apology IV*, 5.6; 186-188);

that the Law and the Gospel must be carefully distinguished as to their content and function (*Solid Declaration V*, 1ff); *Small Catechism*, Pref. 18);

that a proper distinction of Law and Gospel must lead to the affirmation of the primacy of the Gospel (*Apology XII*, 49-53);

that the Law (as defined in *Solid Declaration V*, 17.18) dare never be used as an end in itself (*Smalcald Articles*, Part III, Art. III, 1-8) and that the Gospel (as defined in *Solid Declaration V*, 20-21; *Solid Declaration II*, 50 and many other places) is God's definitive Word to man;

that the only proper use of Scripture, "all" of which is either Law or Promise, is to let it function according to its purpose, to convict of sin and to bring sinners to faith in Christ (*Solid Declaration II*, 48-52);

that, while Scripture of course has more than the Gospel alone, it is the Gospel which determines the unique character of Scripture, because it is the Gospel which deals with what God is really up to (*Apology XII*, 51f; God's "proper work");

that, since it is the Gospel by which "the Holy Ghost has called me, enlightened me with His gifts, and sanctified and kept me in the true faith" (*Small Catechism*, 3rd Article), that is, has led me to acknowledge and confess Jesus as Lord; therefore it is through the Gospel that I recognize Jesus as Lord of the Scriptures, and the Scriptures as authoritative;

that the above considerations provide the guide to the correct interpretation of Scripture, (*Solid Declaration* V, 1; *Solid Declaration* XI, 12.91 and especially 92; cf. *Apology* IV, 2, German paraphrase);

I believe that the Lutheran designation of the Scriptures as "the prophetic and apostolic writings of the Old and New Testaments" is all that needs to be said about the "canonical text."

I believe that God through His prophets promised mercy and deliverance and forgiveness of sins to Old Testament believers and that these promises reached their climactic fulfillment in the promised Messiah, the incarnate Son of God (John 5; Luke 24; Heb. 1; Acts 10, etc.).

I believe it is improper to deal with any aspect of Scripture or theology in isolation from the Word made flesh.

I believe it is improper to make any view about Scripture, or any method of interpretation, that does not vitiate the intended purpose and function of Scripture a doctrinal matter

I believe with Luther (*Smalcald Articles*, Part II, I, 5) that the article concerning Christ and faith is the ultimate touchstone of orthodoxy or heresy.

Richard R. Caemmerer, Sr.
Faculty Secretary
Graduate Professor of Practical Theology (Homiletics)

1. Several times a week in the Lutheran congregation of which I am a communicant member, and in the community of Concordia Seminary, I confess my faith by joining in the Nicene Creed. Its words and concepts say what I believe and what I want my fellow Christians to share with me. The Creed also gives me the opportunity to speak the Gospel of Jesus Christ, which is the power of God to salvation (Rom. 1:16).
2. As a teacher of preaching I want students and pastors to help their hearers acknowledge God not only as their Maker, but as their Father. They help people to have God as the supreme and loving Father in their lives as they preach Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord, whom the Father sent "for us and for our salvation." The Creed puts that Word of the Gospel together: Jesus was incarnate through the Holy Spirit; He lived, suffered, died, and was buried for us; He rose from the dead and ascended to heaven to rule with the Father over all things. The Scriptures, and the Lutheran Confessions, call that total obedience of Jesus Christ to the Father's plan, the atonement (2 Cor. 5:18-21; *Formula of Concord, Solid Declaration*, III, pp. 540-541, Tappert edition).
3. I believe and teach that in order to preach this Gospel the preacher has to help people confront God's will and plan for them, and God's judgment upon their failure to meet His will and plan. For the Gospel should sound to them not merely as a record from the past, but as God acting through the Spirit at this moment to bring "salvation," to strengthen their faith in Him for the forgiveness of their sin, and to enable them to live their lives according to the will and plan of God.
4. I believe that as man is born into the world he is only flesh and without the ability to change (John 3:5,6). I believe that also regenerate man has remnants of the flesh which compete with the new life in him, because of which he needs the constant supply of Law and Gospel to maintain the work of the Holy Spirit in him (Gal. 5:16-26).
5. I confess the Creed in the setting of a service which includes lessons from the Scriptures and elements of worship which repeat

and apply extracts from Scripture. I teach preaching which is based on the Scriptures. I believe and teach that in the plan of God and through the Spirit the Scriptures already in the Old Testament bring us God's plan for the life and purpose of His people, and in the New Testament they focus on the Good News that God has completed His plan in Jesus Christ.

6. I believe and teach that the preacher should employ the richest resources at his command for understanding the meaning of the Biblical materials which he uses in his work. Thus they are able to make men wise to salvation by faith which is in Christ Jesus and to achieve the purposes for which God has given them (2 Tim. 3: 14-17).
7. With *Christian Dogmatics* of Francis Pieper (1, 307), I believe and teach that the Scriptures have the authority to demand the faith and obedience that is due God, and their inspiration contributes to it. But I also believe that the power of the Scriptures for moving men to that faith and obedience is in Law and Gospel (315-317). Therefore I regret that the term "authority" is used interchangeably with "power;" or that other factors of Scripture, such as its inerrancy, are set out to be a power for faith and life rather than the Word of God in His Son and His atonement. The inspiration of Scripture sums up the complete program of the Holy Spirit for our life and salvation; the faith to accept and use it is the work of the Gospel of Jesus Christ.
8. I have not found theories concerning multiple sources of Biblical books to hamper their trustworthiness. The composite documents as we have them in some Biblical books convey the plan of God to the church and are the work of the Holy Spirit. Biblical books whose authors cannot be identified are not for that reason less helpful or inspired.
9. When St. Paul described the inspiration of the Bible in the one passage that uses that term (2 Tim. 3:14-17), he was writing about the Scriptures of the Old Testament. He affirmed that also his own preaching of the Gospel was in words which the Holy Spirit gave (1 Cor. 2:13) and which had the power of the Word of God (1 Thess. 2:13). I teach future preachers of the Gospel to keep this action of the Holy Spirit at work also in their preaching, as they become the agents through whom the Holy Spirit speaks in people what Jesus said and did (John 14:25).

11. I have not been deeply concerned over what books are canonical. The church has never attempted to give an exclusive list and has often derived much profit from disputed ones. I have found the Epistle of James more effective as a vehicle of Law and Gospel than did Martin Luther. I would be distressed if I could not refer to the Epistle to the Hebrews for its magnificent word about Christ and about preaching. I have very little experience with the Old Testament apocrypha, despite Luther's recommendation.
- 12 I believe and teach that the Gospel of Jesus Christ is primary for the faith of the Christian. By that I do not mean that it is merely the chief doctrine, or that the rest of the Bible is dispensable. But I mean that through the Word of Jesus Christ God has repaired the breach between Himself and mankind, has made all of the Bible intelligible and useful to faith, and has given me the calling to bring life with God and the power of the Spirit to men.

Robert L. Conrad
Associate Professor of Practical Theology (Christian Education)

I believe, teach and confess that:

Jesus Christ is Savior and Lord.

God works faith in Jesus as Savior and Lord through His Word of Law and Gospel. This two-fold action of God is important for confessional Lutherans to acknowledge.

The distinction between Law and Gospel is an especially brilliant light which serves the purpose that the Word of God

may be rightly divided and the writings of the holy prophets and apostles may be explained and understood correctly. We must therefore observe this distinction with particular diligence lest we confuse the two doctrines and change the Gospel into Law. This would darken the merit of Christ and rob disturbed consciences of the comfort which they would otherwise have in the holy Gospel when it is preached purely and without admixture, for by it Christians can support themselves in their greatest temptations against the terrors of the law. (Theodore G. Tappert, trans., ed., *The Book of Concord, Solid Declaration V*, 1.)

God must prepare a man for the Gospel through means of the law because "all men are full of evil lust and inclinations from their mothers' wombs and are unable by nature to have true fear of God and true faith in God" (*Augsburg Confession* II, 1). The Law always judges and never caves. Its function is to prepare men for the Gospel.

The chief function or power of the law is to make original sin manifest and show man to what utter depths his nature has fallen and how corrupt it has become. So the law must tell him that he neither has nor cares for God or that he worships strange gods—something that he would not have believed before without a knowledge of the law. Thus he is terror stricken and humbled, becomes despondent and despairing, anxiously desires help but does not know where to find it, and begins to be alienated from God, to murmur, etc. (*Smalcald Articles* III, II, 4)

Just as the law never caves but always judges, so the Gospel, in its strict sense, never judges but always caves.

...the Gospel is not a proclamation of contrition and reproof but is, strictly speaking, precisely a comforting and joyful message which does not reprove or terrify but comforts consciences that are frightened by the law, directs them solely to the merit of Christ, and raises them up again by the delightful proclamation of God's grace and favor through the merits of Christ. (*Epitome* V, 7)

The Christian who has been brought to faith in Jesus Christ through the Gospel is one who confesses Christ as Savior and Lord.

I believe that Jesus Christ, true God, begotten of the Father from eternity, and also true man, born of the Virgin Mary, is my Lord, who has redeemed me a lost and condemned creature, delivered me and freed me from all sins, from death, and from the power of the devil, not with silver and gold but with his holy precious blood and with his innocent sufferings and death, in order that I may be his, live under him in his kingdom, and serve him in everlasting righteousness, innocence, and blessedness, even as he is risen from the dead, and lives and reigns to all eternity. (*Small Catechism* II, 4)

But the Christian who confesses Christ as Savior and Lord still wrestles with sin in his life. He is both saint and sinner. He lives in a cycle of judgment and grace. The law still plays a part in his life as does the Gospel. "As often, therefore, as Christians trip, they are rebuked through the Spirit of God out of the law. But the same Spirit raises them up again and comforts them with the preaching of the Gospel." (*Solid Declaration* VI, 14)

God is Father and Creator.

God can be known as Father only by those who believe Jesus Christ is Savior and Lord. The Son has made them members of the family, sons and daughters who know the paternal love of God and can express the relationship in the words of the "Our Father." "Here God would encourage us to believe that He is truly our Father and we are truly His children in order that we may approach Him boldly and confidently in prayer, even as beloved children approach their dear father" (*Small Catechism* III, 2). To know God as Father is also to acknowledge with joy that He is Creator of all.

I believe that God has created me and all that exists; that he has given me and still sustains my body and soul, all my limbs and senses, my reason and all the faculties of my mind, together with food and clothing, house and Name, family and property; that he provides me daily and abundantly with all the necessities of life, protects me from all danger, and preserves me from all evil. All this he does out of his pure, fatherly, and divine goodness and mercy, without any merit or worthiness on my part. For all of this I am bound to thank, praise, serve, and obey him. This is most certainly true. (*Small Catechism* II, 2)

But to know God only as Creator is to know Him, at best, as judge who holds man responsible in and for creation. God is active through His law to uphold His creation and "to maintain external discipline and decency against dissolute and disobedient people" (Solid *Declaration* VI, 1). This action of God is not seen by the unbelieving person for whom God remains "anonymous" as the author and source of constraints and demands in life. But the Spirit of God can remove the "anonymity" of God so that men may know themselves judged by God and thus be opened to the promise of the Gospel.

The Holy Spirit is Sanctifier and Preserver.

It is the Spirit of God who works faith in men through the Gospel and preserves them in faith.

I believe that by my own reason or strength I cannot believe in Jesus Christ, my Lord, or come to him. But the Holy Spirit has called me through the Gospel, enlightened me with his gifts, and sanctified and preserved me in true faith. (*Small Catechism* II, 6)

The Holy Spirit "calls" through the written (Scriptures), spoken (preached), and enacted (Sacraments) Word of God. The **written** Word of God, Scriptures, is a Word of both law and Gospel which the Spirit uses to bring men to faith. As the *Apology* states, "All Scripture should be divided into these two chief doctrines, the law and the promises. In some places it presents the law. In others it presents the promise of Christ" (*Apology* IV, 5). The Scriptures are a fully adequate means to perform their God-intended function.

The Scriptures express what God wants them to say and accomplish what God wants them to do. In this sense and in the fulfillment of this function they are inerrant, infallible, and wholly reliable. Their truthfulness, their infallibility as the only rule of faith and practice, and their reliability are incontrovertible. There is no human or secular criterion by which their truthfulness, their infallibility as the only rule of faith and practice, and their reliability can be measured and made evident. This truthfulness, this infallibility as the only rule of faith and practice, and this reliability is known and asserted only in faith; those who believe the Scripture, trust them, and rely on them are not put to shame, for the Scrip-

tures neither go astray nor lead astray. ("A Statement on the Form and Function of the Holy Scriptures," Faculty, Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, 1960)

In order that the church might use the Scriptures for their God-intended purposes in teaching and preaching, the best available exegetical and practical tools need to be used. For the Gospel is to be spoken in the church, not just read. The *Augsburg Confession* speaks of the church as "the assembly of all believers among whom the Gospel is preached in its purity and the holy sacraments are administered according to the Gospel" (*Augsburg Confession* VII, 1). It is also obvious from the preceding that the church must practice a full use of the sacraments. They are the enacted Word of God. They give what the Gospel gives. Baptism "effects forgiveness of sins, delivers from death and the devil, and grants eternal salvation to all who believe, as the Word and promise of God declare" (*Small Catechism* IV, 6). Confession and Absolution continue what was begun in Baptism. "Repentance, therefore, is nothing else than a return and approach to Baptism, to resume and practice what had earlier been begun but abandoned" (*Large Catechism* IV, 79). The Lord's Supper also gives what the Gospel gives. This "we are told in the words 'for you' and 'for the forgiveness of sins.' By these words the forgiveness of sins, life and salvation are given to us in the sacrament, for where there is forgiveness of sins, there are also life and salvation" (*Small Catechism* VI, 6). As the church uses the written, spoken and enacted Word of God the Spirit is active.

In this Christian church he daily and abundantly forgives all my sins, and the sins of all believers, and on the last day he will raise me and all the dead and will grant eternal life to me and all who believe in Christ. This is most certainly true. (*Small Catechism* II, 6)

John W. Constable
Associate Professor of Historical Theology
Chairman of the Department of Historical Theology

I believe that "the Gospel is the power of God unto salvation to everyone that believeth" (Romans 1:16). As a Christian and a member of The Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod, I believe and accept this Gospel revealed by God in Christ even before the church had written Gospels and a good century before an established canon. I stand in the company of St. Paul.

In July 1949 I voluntarily pledged myself as a Lutheran pastor to the Scriptures and the Lutheran Confessions. My life has been used in a study of both. I have served the church for nearly a quarter of a century. In my ministry I have labored in three districts of our church. I have personally ministered to hundreds of students at two major state universities and have taught several hundred more in classes at the Seminary for over eight years.

I stand pledged to the Scriptures as the divinely inspired Word of God. They are to "make us wise unto salvation" (II Tim. 3:15) and to "train us in holy living." They are not given to us to answer every problem of man's existence or to solve every historical or scientific question.

When our Lord said, "Search the Scriptures;" (John 5:39) I believe that I have been given His counsel to use every tool of historical and scientific research in that task. When a Lutheran Christian, committed as he is to respect the Scriptures, uses an historical critical method, I do not believe that he destroys or negates the Word but finds richer meaning and deeper comfort in that Word for himself and in his preaching to those to whom he has been called to serve.

I believe that the Bible is both a human and a divine Word. "Holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Spirit" (II Peter 1:31). God did not dictate His Word, but used the talents, abilities and even the shortcomings of fallible men to produce His divine Word of grace. "All Scripture is given by inspiration of God and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness" (II Tim. 3: 16).

I believe that too much attention has been given in the Lutheran Church to agreement *in abstracto* with propositions about the Gospel separated from the Gospel itself. A minimal amount of attention has been given to the other great solas of the Reformation -- sola fide and sola gratia. There is a pronounced tendency within our church to demand agreement with certain theological positions that are the product of rationalism.

For me, as for Luther, the two great doctrines of the Bible are Law and Gospel. The passages that are Law direct my attention to my sin, the sins of others and this world's sin. The Gospel passages lead me directly to my Savior who by grace has saved a sinner such as myself. I find it futile and valueless to argue in such a way as to make Gospel passages into another Law, a practice which leads the agent to legalism and negates the redemptive work of Jesus Christ.

I believe that differences of opinion over the mode of creation, the length of the creation days, whether Moses wrote the Pentateuch or not, whether there is more than one Isaiah, whether Jonah is a real history or a parable are useless logomachies in a world where men are crying out for a word of comfort that the Gospel offers to confused and alienated sinners.

I believe and accept the doctrine of original sin. I do not believe that the question of the literal or figurative role of Adam is crucial to the doctrine. I have adequate witness to this doctrine from many other parts of the Scriptures, from the world about me and from my own personal life.

With all deference to the Synod, I believe that synodical conventions are not the place to deal with complicated theological questions as has been done in recent years. Conventions of the synod should be used for edification and reporting on the work that we have been able to do by the grace of God. Theology should be based on the Gospel of Christ and not on synodical resolutions. It should be prayed over, labored over by the best minds available, studied diligently in small groups, allowed to mature by time and then presented to the church by the best lay and clerical talent in the church.

I personally believe in Biblical miracles culminating in the miracle of the resurrection. I do not, however, believe that a person can be saved by faith in miracles alone. Salvation is by faith in the life, death and resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ.

I believe and accept the Lutheran Confessions because they are a proper interpretation of the Word of God. I accept the doctrinal content of them but do not consider myself to be bound to their historical judgments or scientific world view (cf. Traducianism, Ptolemaic world view).

I believe that The Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod, founded by men of very diverse backgrounds and interests, can and does contain within its scope a variety of emphases and positions that can be reconciled with the doctrine of the Gospel. Our Synod was built out of diversity -- that of Saxons, Pomeranians, Franconians, etc. Their historical backgrounds were in Germany where variety was the rule and not the exception. This can be illustrated from the various hymnals, orders of service, standards of church and ministry, etc., that our church early showed. The result of this diversity and variety is that they sought for the highest degree of consensus that was possible among them under the Gospel. Our founding fathers attempted the agreement in faith and practice, but did not insist upon absolute uniformity in every area of church life.

The history of The Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod has shown that it can and did support the right of many to hold diverse and somewhat different views -- and they were in the tradition of Martin Luther himself. His views on the Scripture and its authority plus his views on the sacraments are prime examples of reformation variety.

I believe that The Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod has and can live under diversity where the Gospel has not demanded uniformity.

Frederick W. Danker
Professor of Exegetical Theology (New Testament)

I believe that the doctrine of original sin needs to be reemphasized in our time. With Adam and Eve each one is linked in a massive rebellious plot against the Creator. Original sin displayed itself in the murder of Abel by his brother Cain. Original sin is constantly operative among us as counter-rebellion against God's grace that comes to us through the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ. Original sin displays itself, to use St. Paul's language of Galatians 5:19-20 and Romans 1:30, in the polarization, political jockeying, party strife, name-calling, prejudicial labeling and suspicion even of brethren, that can take place also in The Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod. Original sin asserts itself in my life as a theologian when I enjoy the digging more than the receipt of God's treasure, or when through arid intellectualism I obscure simplicity of the Scriptures. No one, whether administrator, pastor or professional scholar is immune, and we must be on constant guard lest Satan use misdirected theological and scholarly zeal (see Romans 10:2) to raise mountains of offence within the church so that the unconverted find further excuse not to accept the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ. I believe that we must all pray together for the Holy Spirit to drive out our old Adam and give us increasing measure of new Adam -- Jesus Christ our Lord.

I believe that through the Scriptures God investigates us and puts under judgment all pretensions and motives and deeds that would challenge the authority vested in Jesus Christ. Through the Gospel, described in the Scriptures, God offers to the repentant sinner forgiveness, the joy of His Holy Spirit and life that is everlasting. The Scriptures are infallible. They challenge all other claims of infallibility and constitute the canonical text. Canonical means for me that the Bible is the ultimate written source and judge of what is taught and practiced in the church. Thus the Lutheran Symbols emphasize that they contain only such doctrine as is founded on God's word.

I believe that prophecy permeates the Bible. Prophecy may disturb or comfort God's people. When God's people fail to carry out His instructions for them, the prophet usually pleads with them to repent lest disaster befall them. A large part of prophetic

message deals with hope of deliverance in the future. The New Testament declares that Jesus Christ is the fullness of what was hoped for in the Old Testament. Also the New Testament contains prophecy. Some of this prophecy warns the church against renewed rebellion. Some consoles the church in her tribulations with assurance of the Lord's deliverance.

From the preceding it is apparent that I believe the Scriptures to be constantly concerned with the relation between Law and Gospel. The Apostle Paul sums the matter: "Where sin abounded grace did much more abound" (Romans 5:20). Law has to do primarily with the abounding of sin; Gospel with the abounding of God's power to cancel out my sin and restore me to a new relationship with Himself through Jesus Christ my Lord, so that I might henceforth be under the guidance of the Holy Spirit. Since Sacred Scripture constantly displays God's concern to rescue rebellious mankind, it is the task of an edifying interpreter to show the relationship between the Gospel and the many situations or contexts in which it finds expression in the Scriptures.

In view of the awesome esteem in which the Scriptures are to be held, it is all the more incumbent on the scholar to tell the truth and not permit the text of Scripture to be bent in the direction of any private or collective interest. The exegete must be a watchdog for the church and protect it against distortion of the meaning of Sacred Scripture. His task is to help improve preaching. I use historical method so that especially the interpretation of the Old Testament by the New Testament might be appreciated. I also use such method so that the historical values of the Scripture might not be sacrificed to philosophical and ecclesiastical interests that do injustice to the data of the Scriptures. I use critical method in order to understand the Scriptures on their terms rather than on my terms or those inherited without question from other interpreters. Thus critical method aims to preserve the text against false interpretations. It is evident, therefore, that to be critical does not mean to be negative, but to be open to whatever God has communicated in His Word. I engage in grammatical criticism in order to hear out the text in an the clarity with which it first found utterance. I am convinced that much of the problem in the church is due to the fact that the responsibilities of exegete (that is, as professional biblical interpreter at

a seminary) and pastor (of a congregation) are frequently confused. The task of the exegete is to tell the truth about the text and its content so that the sermon derived from comparable study is truly Scriptural. The task of the preacher is to proclaim to his contemporary generation the truth expressed in the text. Thus the exegete is pastoral and the pastor is exegetical, but the exegete does not deliver a sermon in the classroom and the pastor does not deliver an exegetical lecture from the pulpit. In this manner Lutheran interest in scholarly inquiry and also recognition of the needs of the average hearer may be preserved and encouraged among us. Such a pastoral approach is in the spirit of Ephesians 4 and will promote unity instead of polarity in our midst. For this preserve us Heavenly Father!

William J. Danker
Director of Missionary Training
Professor of Missions

I Believe In God Who Does Wonders

I believe that God who created the galaxies of the macrocosm and the intricate wonders of the microcosm, has made me and all creatures.

No man is able to tame and prison the creative power of God in any cage barred with ideology or man-shaped dogma. Whenever finite man thinks he has God boxed in, His irrepressible, life-giving Spirit breaks forth anew. God's Word is a declaration of independence from man's control.

Because I kneel in dumb-struck awe before the Resurrection of our Savior from the dead, I boggle not at other wonders. I take a dozen, a thousand, a hundred million others in my stride.

Precisely therefore, I stand fast in my freedom under the Gospel to seek after the Spirit's intent and that of the inspired writers of Holy Scripture. I feel no need to play down the supernatural where I find it, nor to dress up the natural where I encounter that.

Man was the balance wheel that was supposed to keep all the lesser wheels of God's Creation turning in perfect theocentric harmony. But man abandoned God as his center. He became ex-centric by becoming self-centered and thus profoundly disturbed the smooth machinery of Creation.

Now the world will not work properly because man no longer works for God but for himself. Man's self-interest is both cause and result of the Fall. There is nothing in man to remedy the fatal sickness of his alienation from God.

I Believe in Jesus Christ, My Promised Lord

I believe that God the Son is our Promised Lord. God's promise becomes flesh in Him. While the promise is means of grace, He is grace itself. The highest revelation of Islam is a Book, the Quran. The highest revelation of Christianity is a Person, Jesus the Christ, Whom we learn to know through the inspired Scriptures.

I believe that the Promised One has entered into history to liberate me, a lost and condemned creature, from the power of sin, death and the devil. For me He was born of the Virgin Mary under Caesar Augustus. For me He suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, dead and buried. For me He rose from the dead on the third day that He might give me Life that never ends.

I believe that my Promised Lord reconciles me and all He has made to God by the blood of His Cross. In Christ I become a new creation. I find fulfillment as His redeemed creature by witnessing in words and actions that He is my Risen Lord as well as my reconciling Savior. His love seeks to overcome my self-centeredness and move me to serve Him in people who need my help, especially the least of His brothers and sisters, the hungry, the naked and the oppressed.

Though His lordship is perfect, my present discipleship is very far from it. But by grace He has promised me that beyond this time I will share in the perfection of His risen glory.

I Believe in the Holy Spirit the Lord of God's Mission

I believe in the Holy Spirit who revealed Himself supremely when He conceived in Mary's virgin body the Word made flesh. To witness this Word to all ages the Spirit guided the persons He chose to utter and record God's revelation so that we in these latter days might come to faith in Him and carry out His mission in the world.

This is not a static but a dynamic Word. Through the Gospel and the sacraments the Spirit moves His Church everywhere to carry out her basic New Testament functions, such as service, witness, fellowship, worship and nurture.

Within the generous limits of Scripture and the Lutheran Confessions the Spirit sets us free, allowing form to follow function in His great mission. The New Testament is the story of the Spirit's liberation of the Church for His mission. He strikes off the shackles of Old Testament law and the hobbles of scribal tradition. He lifts the handicapping weights that biblicistic, legalistic Judaizing Christians had loaded on the mission outreach.

With our entire Synod, I affirm as a Lutheran Christian that "the Evangelical Lutheran Church is chiefly a confessional movement within the total body of Christ rather than a denomination emphasizing institutional barriers of separation." (*Mission Affirmations*)

David E. Deppe
Director of Instructional Media Center
Assistant Professor of Practical Theology (Speech)

- I. I BELIEVE IN GOD THE FATHER ALMIGHTY, MAKER OF HEAVEN AND EARTH.
- A. I believe, teach and confess that God is the creator of all things.
1. God is Lord of all heaven and earth. He alone was in the beginning; nothing else; no one else.
 2. Jesus Christ is the image of the invisible God; the firstborn of all creation; in Him, through Him and for Him all things were created. All things were made through Him, and without Him was not anything made that was made.
 3. God created me and all creatures. There is nothing visible or invisible that is not created by Him.
 4. God has given me my body, soul and life; my members great and small; all the faculties of my mind, my reason and understanding. None of us has life, physical or eternal, outside of the creator God.
- B. I believe, teach and confess that God is the preserver of all things.
1. God's creating activity is a present reality as well as a past event.
 2. God daily and abundantly provides me with all the necessities of life
 3. God protects me from all danger and preserves me from all evil. This He does out of His pure, fatherly and divine goodness and mercy without any merit or worthiness on my part.
- C. I believe, teach and confess that all of creation is bound to

give God thanks and praise. The mystery of creation, however, can only be comprehended by faith and only a person of faith can exclaim: "Worthy is our Lord and God to receive glory and honor and power for He created all things and by His will all things exist."

II. I BELIEVE IN JESUS CHRIST, HIS ONLY SON, OUR LORD; WHO WAS CONCEIVED BY THE HOLY GHOST; BORN OF THE VIRGIN MARY; SUFFERED UNDER PONTIUS PILATE; WAS CRUCIFIED, DEAD AND BURIED; HE DESCENDED INTO HELL; THE THIRD DAY HE ROSE AGAIN FROM THE DEAD; HE ASCENDED INTO HEAVEN AND SITTETH ON THE RIGHT HAND OF GOD THE FATHER ALMIGHTY; FROM THENCE HE SHALL COME TO JUDGE THE QUICK AND THE DEAD.

A. I believe, teach and confess Jesus Christ, God incarnate.

1. Jesus Christ is true God from eternity.
2. Jesus Christ, the eternal Son of the Father, was miraculously planted in the womb of the Virgin Mary and became true man, conceived and born without sin that He might become Lord over sin.
3. Jesus Christ, in fulfillment of God's promises, came for us men and for our salvation. In Adam's fall all men are lost and live under the curse of God's wrath and the judgment of death; but Jesus Christ, the Second Adam, has come to bring us back from death to life, from sin to righteousness.

B. I believe, teach and confess Jesus Christ crucified and risen.

1. Jesus Christ suffered, died and was buried that He might make satisfaction for me and pay what I owed, not with silver and gold, but with His own precious blood. I receive forgiveness of sin and become righteous before God by grace, for Christ's sake, through faith, and not by my own merits, works, or satisfactions.
2. Jesus Christ bodily rose from the dead on the third

day in the same body which He assumed from the Virgin Mary and which was nailed upon the cross, but a body which now had different attributes. He swallowed up and devoured death and finally ascended into heaven and assumed dominion at the right hand of the Father.

3. Jesus Christ is the sympathetic high priest, mighty Lord to be sure, but one who was made like His brethren in every respect; who even now lives as our brother and our king to pray for us and to protect His people.

C. I believe, teach and confess that it is the duty of all men to thank and praise, to serve and obey Jesus Christ. The mystery of redemption, however, can only be comprehended by faith and only a person of faith can truly exclaim: "Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honor, and glory and blessing."

III. I BELIEVE IN THE HOLY GHOST; THE HOLY CHRISTIAN CHURCH; THE COMMUNION OF SAINTS; THE FORGIVENESS OF SINS; THE RESURRECTION OF THE BODY; AND THE LIFE EVERLASTING.

A. I believe, teach and confess the Holy Spirit.

1. The Holy Spirit is God, proceeding from the Father and the Son from eternity.
2. The Holy Spirit is the Comforter, that is, the One who strengthens us with the power of Christ. By my own reason or strength I cannot believe in Jesus Christ, my Lord, or come to Him. Only the Holy Spirit calls, gathers, enlightens, sanctifies and keeps the whole Christian Church in the one true faith.
3. The Holy Spirit is the Counselor, the Advocate, who is at work in the Church and through the Church, interceding for the Church with sighs too deep for words. He brings to that Church various gifts that are

even more diverse than God's varied gifts of creation. The Church rejoices in the abundance of gifts and uses those gifts for the upbuilding of the Body of Christ.

4. The Holy Spirit is the Revealer, who breathed God's Word to men. He caused all Holy Scripture to be written, both Old and New Testaments, in all its concrete wording, through many human authors, for the one purpose of making men wise unto salvation. The Scripture is the witness to the Word, Jesus Christ, who is the center and scope of the Scripture. The Holy Scripture possesses divine authority, that is, in all that it says it is entitled to the same faith and obedience that is due God.
5. The Holy Spirit is the Spirit of Truth. His Word is not false; it does not lie. His Word teaches perfectly whatever we need to know for our eternal salvation.
6. The Holy Spirit is the Enlightener, opening the minds of the people of God to understand the Word of God. He alone gives such understanding, equipping His Church with various interpretation and application of that Word.
7. The Holy Spirit is the convincer, convincing the world of sin, righteousness and judgment. He does this through the proclamation of Law and Gospel. The Law teaches what is right and God-pleasing and condemns everything that is sinful and contrary to God's will. The Gospel teaches that Christ has satisfied and paid for all guilt and without man's merit has obtained and won for man the forgiveness of sin, life and salvation. It is essential that this distinction be made between the Law and the Gospel so that the Word of God may be properly applied!
8. The Holy Spirit is the Sanctifier, working in and through the Gospel: Through the spoken Word by which the forgiveness of sin is preached to the whole world, through Holy Baptism, through the Holy

Sacrament of the Altar, through Holy Absolution and through the mutual conversation and consolation of the brother, to make men holy, that is, to set men apart for God's own purpose.

B. I believe, teach and confess that it is the duty of all men to thank and praise God for the Work of the Holy Spirit. The mystery of sanctification, however, can only be comprehended by faith and only a person of faith can exclaim: "Hallelujah! Salvation and glory and power belong to our God. Hallelujah! For the Lord, our God, the Almighty reigns. Let us rejoice and exhalt and give Him the glory; for the marriage of the Lamb has come, and His bride has made herself ready. Praise our God, all you His servants, you who fear Him, small and great! Hallelujah!"

Arlis J. Ehlen
Assistant Professor of Exegetical Theology (Old Testament)

The following is a personal statement drawn up in response to a recommendation made to the faculty by the Council of Presidents. It is not intended to be a complete confession of faith, covering all points of Christian doctrine; rather, it sets forth my convictions on certain matters currently under discussion. Hence the omission of various subjects indicates only that I do not consider them to be among the main points at issue. I am willing to discuss these matters and others further with anyone of good will, in the spirit of the Council of Presidents' resolution.

As a baptized Christian, a confirmed Lutheran, and an ordained servant of the Word wholeheartedly pledged to the Holy Scriptures and the Lutheran Confessions, I desire first to state some fundamental aspects of my faith under two headings, then to show at the hand of two examples how this faith guides me in the interpretation of the Scriptures.

A. FIRST DUALITY: LAW AND GOSPEL

If it were not for God, I believe, neither I myself nor anything in the world about me would prosper or even exist. But I believe that God has made me and all creatures and still preserves us.

These two statements stand in contrast yet also in relationship to each other. They constitute one example of a basic duality that underlies the entire Biblical faith and my own faith. The two elements of that continually recurring duality are the human condition without God and the actions of God to change that condition. Following the Lutheran confessions, I often refer to these two poles of the Biblical message as law and gospel.

Thus I see first what we are as long as we do not have God. I recognize in myself and in the whole history of mankind an innate failure to acknowledge God and to live as he intended in his good creation. This has brought estrangement from God and a great variety of conditions in which humans are miserable and lost without God. It is particularly the Holy Scriptures, in their law aspect; that lead me to understand the full depth of this common human experience and to acknowledge my own fateful share in it.

But I have come to believe, by the Spirit of God working through the gospel, that it is the nature of God to change those miserable human conditions by his gracious action. Along with all others who make up his church, I have experienced this grace in my own life, beginning with his fostering care from the moment of my birth, and especially at my baptism. I believe, however, that God has acted most significantly in a series of specific events in the history of mankind, recorded and interpreted in the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments. Through the recounting of these real historical events and the promises conveyed through them the Holy Spirit has led me to trust that in spite of God's judgment on me he is nevertheless merciful to me through his Son, the Christ.

This is the two-part pattern which I see in history and in my own life: a hopeless human situation reversed by a gracious act of God. This duality provides an essential key to the interpretation of the Scriptures - and to the interpretation of events in contemporary life as well, since I believe that in the midst of today's misery and need God continues to act graciously.

B. SECOND DUALITY: DIVINE AND HUMAN

I believe furthermore that God's gracious response to human need and sin most often takes the form of acting through human means rather than in a dazzling display of his unveiled majesty and power. This further duality-divine, yet human-appears clearly in very many of God's acts as reported in the Scriptures. God worked and spoke both his judgment and his grace through his human servant Moses, through kings and prophets and numerous other persons. Yet it was God's own will that was accomplished through these human means.

Most significant of all, God accomplished the gracious salvation of fallen mankind through his own divine Son, born as a human of the Virgin Mary. In him God shared our human life and then passed through death itself, in order to give us with him a resurrection to eternal life. Christ still lives and reigns as true God, fully able to save us, but also as true man, fully sympathetic to our human experiences and human needs.

Even to this day, I believe, God continues to do his divine work in the world through Christ and through many "little Christs;" real men and women in whom God is graciously active.

Yet another instance of this divine-human duality is God's way of speaking to us. The message of law and gospel, whatever the vehicle, is truly the Word of God. It comes to us in its authoritative form in the Holy Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments, which are in their entirety the Word of God. The message and even the words themselves are God's. They can be fully understood and accepted in faith only through the working of the Holy Spirit.

The words are God's, but we thank him that they are expressed in human language. Otherwise we could not know what God is saying to us. God used men like us to speak and write his words by inspiration. In order to understand these words of God through men we

must use our knowledge of normal human language and literature and history; that is, we must use the same historical, critical methodology that is appropriate for the study of other human writings. And that is simply because God usually chooses to accomplish his divine work through earthly, human means. Yet the faith that results is entirely God's doing.

These two dualities - law and gospel, divine and human - are deeply embedded into the very structure of my faith, which is the faith taught in the Holy Scriptures and correctly expounded in the Lutheran Confessions. As a Lutheran interpreter of the Scriptures, I approach any exegetical-doctrinal matter in full awareness of these two basic dualities. Several examples will show what this entails.

C. FIRST EXAMPLE: ANGELS

In the light of what I have already set forth, I believe that the Biblical statements about angels must be understood against the background of what other humans in ancient times were saying and thinking about supernatural beings. Much attention was devoted to such beings, their names and ranks and personalities were described in detail, and they were often actually worshiped. In contrast, it is noteworthy how very little the Biblical writers say about the kinds of beings the angels are.

In the Scriptures our attention is directed instead to the many different ways in which the angels serve and glorify God. An angel of destruction brought death to the Egyptian oppressors (Exodus 12:23). God's angel stood between the camp of Israel and that of Egypt (Exodus 14:19-20). The angel of the Lord announced the birth of the Savior (Matthew 1:20-24; Luke 2:9-12). Angels were the first to proclaim the resurrection of Christ (Matthew 28:2-7; Luke 24:4-8).

A faithful study of the human-divine Word has showed me that God evidently does not want us to become fascinated by the existence of angels in and of itself. Rather, he wants us to see these creatures too as involved in his all-important dealings with mankind in judgment and in mercy (law and gospel).

D. SECOND EXAMPLE: THE DELIVERANCE AT THE SEA

I affirm the Biblical testimony that God wrought a spectacular act of

judgment against Pharaoh and his army at the Red Sea (law). Thus God completed the gracious redemption of his people Israel from their Egyptian tyranny (gospel).

I have come to see, however, that the event itself was only the beginning, and that its law-gospel character extends much further. This terrifying yet saving act of God was fundamental to the entire relationship between God and his people. On its basis he made a covenant with them and gave them laws (Exodus 19:3-8), then led them into the promised land (Joshua 24:6-8). His loving miracle for them at the Red Sea made their rebelliousness and sin all the more detestable (Psalm 106:6-15). But in the end he graciously promised further deliverance after the pattern of the Red Sea event (Isaiah 11:15-16; 43: 14-21).

All this is still significant for my faith as a New Testament Christian. It foreshadows our own redemption from the tyranny of sin. We pass through the waters of baptism, sharing in Christ's death in order to become his living people. (Cf. 1 Corinthians 10:1-6; Colossians 1:13-14; Revelation 15:2-4.) God is still speaking both law and gospel to us today through these ancient events and words.

I think we must recognize that these words also clearly involve a human aspect. God used a number of different human spokesmen to testify to these events and their meaning. Each of the many Biblical references to the subject has its own special viewpoint and its own particular application to faith or life. Some inspired authors emphasize this aspect, others that. Some elaborate here, others expand there on the basis of various other experiences of God's might and mercy. Some details are surely meant as literal fact -- the death of the pursuing Egyptians by drowning, for instance. Others are just as surely to be taken figuratively, in the light of all we know about literary conventions - the neighboring mountains skipping like lambs (Psalm 114:4,6). Still others are uncertain, and may be variously explained without questioning the interpreter's orthodoxy -- the Egyptians sinking to the bottom like a stone or a piece of lead (Exodus 15:5,10; weren't they already on the dried-up sea bottom before the waters came back?).

Faced with such diversity built into the Scriptures themselves, I am concerned to remain faithful to God's Word. Various details about the miracle remain obscure in spite of our best exegetical efforts. It

would violate the passages themselves, I believe, to make these details into articles on which perfect agreement is required. When we properly recognize the divine-human duality of the Scriptural statements we are helped immensely in hearing the intended message of God's Word, in which the law condemns our sin and the gospel shows us God's love in Christ. I thank God for giving us this message so clearly and unmistakably!

Alfred O. Fuerbringer
Director of Continuing Education

I

When I was ordained to the ministry of the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ on 18 September 1927, I stated publicly that I "believe the canonical books of the Old and the New Testament to be the inspired Word of God and the only infallible rule of faith and practice" (*Liturgy and Agenda, CPH*, St. Louis, 1921, p. 376) and that I "hold and profess the doctrine of the Evangelical Lutheran Church as laid down in the Symbols contained in the *Book of Concord* of 1580, to wit, the three Ecumenical Creeds, the *Augsburg Confession*, the *Apology* of the same, the *Smalcald Articles*, the *Small* and the *Large Catechism*, and the *Formula of Concord*, to be the true doctrine of the Holy Scriptures" (ibid).

At the convention of the Oklahoma District of the Evangelical Lutheran Synod of Missouri, Ohio, and Other States in May 1928 I was received into synodical membership. I signed the constitution and testified to my acceptance of the confessional paragraph which stated then, exactly as it does now,

"The Synod, and every member of the Synod, accepts without reservation

1. The Scriptures of the Old and the New Testament as the written Word of God and the only rule and norm of faith and of practice;
2. All the Symbolical Books of the Evangelical Lutheran Church as a true and unadulterated statement and exposition of the Word of God, to wit: the three Ecumenical Creeds (the Apostles' Creed, the Nicene Creed, the Athanasian Creed), the *Unaltered Augsburg Confession*, the *Apology of the Augsburg Confession*, the *Smalcald Articles*, the *Large Catechism* of Luther, the *Small Catechism* of Luther, and the *Formula of Concord*. " (*Synodical Handbook* 1924, p. 1; *Handbook of rhe LCMS* 1971, p. 15)

For 46 years I have lived with, and kept, these commitments. Not that I lay claim to perfection in studying, understanding, thinking through, and putting into proper words for myself and my hearers and readers what the Sacred Scriptures and the Lutheran Symbols teach. On the contrary, I am conscious of much misunderstanding, faulty formulation and error throughout my career. I agree with and am comforted by the words of C.F.W. Walther, the first president of our synod,

"The situation in the case of error is the same as in that of sin. Just as all Christians because of human frailty have their sins, so all have their errors-and both are forgiven them" (*Lehre und Wehre*, XIV, 1868, p. 236).

I thank God that I can also state with Walther:

"It is [my] continual earnest endeavor to make progress in the apprehension of the truth and with the help of God to cleanse [myself] more and more from all error that adheres to [me]" (*Der Lutheraner*, XIII, 1856, p. 1).

Surely, all those who appreciate Walther as a great gift of God to His church will join him in this confession.

I also thank God that, in spite of strong and sustained efforts on the part of some people to alter the doctrinal requirements for synodical membership, the LCMS has kept them unchanged and has neither subtracted from nor added to them.

The ministry entrusted to me by the Lord of the church has included

14 years as parish pastor and 32 years as school administrator. In response to the request of the LCMS Council of Presidents for a simple and unsophisticated statement of my "Biblical and Confessional stance" I am happy to give the following.

II

When John the Baptist began his ministry of preparing the way for the appearance of Jesus Christ, the Son of God, among His people, the chief accent of John's preaching was, "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand." (Matt. 3:1ff). Our Lord had the same theme, as He began His ministry, "Repent and believe in the Gospel" (Mark 1:15). When Peter preached on the day of Pentecost and the people asked him, "What shall we do?" his response was, "Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins" (Acts 2:38). This note is echoed again and again throughout the New Testament as it had been scores of times in the Old (the history of Israel from Exodus through Chronicles, many Psalms, frequent utterances of the prophets).

Repentance was also a Reformation keynote, sounded in the first of Luther's famous 95 Theses and called in Apology XXIV, 46, "The principal doctrine of the Christian faith" (Tappert, p. 258).

Repentance is the result of the work of the law of God which is "the thunderbolt by means of which God with one blow destroys both open sinners and false saints. He allows no one to justify himself. He drives all together into terror and despair" (*Smalcald Article III*, Art. III, 2; Tappert, p. 304). But "to this office of the law the New Testament immediately adds the consoling promise of grace in the Gospel. This is to be believed, as Christ says in Mark 1:15 "Repent and believe in the Gospel!" (ibid, 4). "Christ Himself says in Luke 24:47, 'Repentance and the forgiveness of sins should be preached in His name to all nations!'" (ibid, 6). Every human being is condemned as a sinner (Rom. 3:9,19f.). To every human being is offered the forgiving grace of God in Christ Jesus (2 Cor. 5:18 - 21). It is this proclamation of judgment and promise, law and Gospel, that is the heart of God's Word to men, the essential content and message of the Sacred Scriptures and, derivatively, of the Lutheran Symbols and therefor of the theology, witness and teaching of every true Lutheran.

Of course, it is the Gospel that is the great, the significant thing in all of this. "It is the saving power of God for everyone who has faith . . . because here is revealed God's way of righting wrong" (Rom. 1:16f). All that God has done, and still does, to reverse the evil man brought upon himself through his disobedience is part of the "Good News," especially the incarnation of the eternal Son of God in the person of Jesus, Son of the Virgin Mary, His earthly ministry and His suffering, death and resurrection - all carried out "for us" (2 Cor. 5:14f).

The Gospel also includes what God has done in His work of creation, making "me and all that exists," and what He continues to do in ordering the universe and in giving us our daily bread, that is, "everything required to satisfy our bodily needs."

The Gospel furthermore includes the work ascribed to the Holy Spirit, namely, calling men to saving faith through the Gospel, preserving them in this faith and uniting them with their fellow-believers in the "one, holy, Christian and Apostolic church." The Holy Spirit, operating in the church through Word and Sacrament, conveys the forgiveness of sins, assures the resurrection of the dead, and grants eternal life to all believers in Christ.

III

Among the marvelous and unique acts of God for His children on earth must be ranked the giving of His written Word, the Sacred Scriptures. While both under the Old Covenant and in the New Testament era the people of God were first gathered and sustained spiritually through the spoken word of the inspired prophets and of Jesus and His apostles, respectively, God soon inspired servants of His also to write His Word and thus gave to His people "the prophetic and apostolic writings of the Old and New Testaments as the pure and clear fountain of Israel [which] is the only true norm according to which all teachers and teachings are to be judged and evaluated" *Formula of Concord, Solid Declaration*; Rule and Norm 3, Tappert p. 503f).

The Scriptures say practically nothing about the manner in which the inspiration took place, or about the way in which the writings were recognized for what they are, were used, circulated, gathered and kept. The latter is as great a miracle of God as the former. In spite of the loss of all original manuscripts, in spite of copyists' errors and

other forms of textual degeneration and emendation, and in spite of frequent mistranslations into other languages, the peoples of today have - as their forbears had before them - in the Bibles or portions thereof they can read or have read to them "the sacred writings which have power to make you wise and lead you to salvation through faith in Christ Jesus" (2 Tim. 3:15).

The authority and the power of the Sacred Scriptures are the authority and power of God Whose word they are. This truth is apprehended by faith. The manner in which the authority and power assert themselves is, again, a mystery which God has not revealed to man. The great diversity within the Scriptures - interesting, enlightening, helpful, necessary - is partly a result of the wide span of subject matter, of time and circumstances, partly due to the human factor, that is, God's use of an array of writers of vastly different backgrounds, abilities, characters and personalities. Yet the Scriptures forma beautiful and unified whole, like a diadem of many precious jewels and metals.

IV

In recent years controversies about the doctrine concerning the Sacred Scriptures have become quite sharp in the church, including the LCMS. While the written Word of God is a great treasure and is worth whatever struggle is necessary to hold on to it, some of the aspects of the discussion about the Bible have harmed rather than helped matters. The important question must always be, "Are the Sacred Scriptures recognized as being the Word of God which He has given to men in the divine-human form in which we have it?" If there is agreement on this and on the corollary that, therefore, whatever the Scriptures are found to say is to be accepted as the subject of faith and the standard for life, whatever problems arise concerning the meaning of the text of the Scriptures should be discussable and should yield to fraternal discussion, especially among people committed to the Lutheran Symbols.

In our circles much is made of the matter of the inerrancy and the facticity of the Sacred Scriptures. The questions arise because of obvious disagreement between what the Bible says in one place from what it says in another, or between what the Bible says and what is discerned from scientific observation or known from geography, geology, history or some other branch of human knowledge. People who become greatly concerned about such matters need to keep several

things in mind. It is quite generally agreed that scribal errors and deliberate textual changes account for disparities in numbers, names and similar data. These do not change the message of the Scriptures and there's not much point in arguing now about an original text we do not have. Furthermore, the style of the Biblical writers is to a very large extent the language of ordinary communication with its generalizations, lack of exactness, phenomenology, etc. A large part of the Old Testament is couched in poetic terms, also in historical and prophetic books. What God says here is just as fully true as the rest of Scripture, but both the every-day language and the poetic style need to be interpreted for what they are. Finally, people need to remember that there is usually more than one true and correct way to describe a given event, thing, or concept. When the Scriptures give more than one account of the creation or of an event in the life of Jesus, one is just as true as the other and each fulfills the purpose God wished to accomplish through the inspired writer. This may also be the case where secular sources differ from Biblical accounts. Each may be a legitimate way of telling the story in keeping with the end in view. What the seminary faculty said in 1960 in "A Statement on the Form and Function of the Holy Scriptures" is still valid,

"The Scriptures express what God wants them to say and accomplish what God wants them to do. In this sense and in the fulfillment of this function they are inerrant, infallible, and wholly reliable. Their truthfulness, their infallibility as the only rule of faith and practice, and their reliability are incontrovertible. There is no human or secular criterion by which their truthfulness, their infallibility as the only rule of faith and practice, and their reliability can be measured and made evident. This truthfulness, this infallibility as the only rule of faith and practice, and this reliability is known and can be asserted only in faith; those who believe the Scriptures, trust them, and rely on them are not put to shame, for the Scriptures neither go astray nor lead astray."

The method to be employed in Biblical interpretation is another controversial issue. How do we find out what the text really says, what its intended meaning is? There is no doubt that here enlightened human judgment and sanctified common sense must be used. If God had seen fit to give us a Bible directly from heaven that had a firm text in every man's language, and notes for the understanding of it, we'd be saved these problems. But given the text we have and our

limited knowledge of its history and original form, we have to operate with the best tools available. As soon as we begin to study the various extant Biblical manuscripts we of necessity start making critical judgments as to the probable original form of the text and the meaning of many of the words it contains, and expressions. As we proceed from this point there is no sharp dividing line to mark off form criticism, redaction criticism and other aspects of historical-critical methodology. All have their proper use to open up the Sacred Scriptures to a better understanding. All also may be and are being improperly used to the detriment of Biblical understanding. The attitude of the interpreter and the presuppositions with which he approaches the text are the determining factors. The history of Biblical interpretation amply demonstrates that there never has been a foolproof method which eliminated all errors. Committed Lutherans need to make sure that they use their tools within the framework of their confessions.

Since the controversy in the church has become very sharp and threatens to cause further division beyond those obtaining at present, it is essential that all who really love the Lord and His church bend their efforts towards the preservation of unity. This must be done through evangelical persuasion. High pressure methods and scare tactics to win converts to either side do great harm. It must be borne in mind that persuasion is by the power of the Holy Spirit who works through the Gospel to produce faith.

What St. Paul says as he inveighs against the judaizers of his day in denouncing their attempts legalistically to impose the unnecessary and harmful burdens of Jewish law and ritual on Christians from Gentile ranks applies today also whenever legalistic methods are being used to attempt to force followers of Christ to accept unnecessary and potentially harmful limitations on methods of arriving at Biblical understanding.

V

Since much attention is being focused on the theology confessed and taught by the members of the faculty of Concordia Seminary and since considerable pains have been taken to discredit much of it, I believe that the following facts ought to be carefully weighed and be reflected in any conclusions that are proposed.

Since my coming to the seminary in 1953, the members of 18 classes have been graduated and recommended for ordination to the ministry in the LCMS. All had completed a year's supervised vicarage before their final year of studies. The 18 classes totaled 2,697 men. Add to that the members of this year's senior class, who also completed vicarage, and the present third-year men who are serving in congregations at present and have had plenty of opportunity to give evidence of their theological stance. They bring the 20-year total to 3,024.

It is very significant that, considering this large number of students engaged in vicarage over such a long span of years, the bad reports or complaints on theological grounds received from congregations, supervising pastors, circuit counselors and district executives have been comparatively very few. If the current theology to which the seminary students were exposed were to any appreciable degree non-Biblical, non-Lutheran, this ought surely to be discernible in more than one percent of the vicars and graduates -- a percentage that is no higher now than it was a generation or two generations ago.

If the opinion is voiced that what is held to be serious theological deterioration at Concordia Seminary is of too recent vintage to have a noticeable effect in the synod, the answer must be given that the faculty has been under heavy fire for a long time, continuously for almost 40 years and heavily as long as 60 years ago. Also, there have been comparatively few recent additions to the faculty. The average tenure of the 46 present faculty members is 14 years.

Each member of the LCMS, and especially everyone in a position of leadership who is really concerned about helping to bring peace to the church, had better make sure that he looks both wider and deeper for the causes of the current unrest than the present theological stance of the St. Louis seminary faculty.

Paul F. Goetting
Assistant Professor of Practical Theology (Church and Society)

The miracle of God's turning me to Himself by the power of His Spirit has awed me throughout my life. In spite of my rebellion, sin and doubt, He has made me His own through His grace and has kept me by the power of His Spirit. The miracle of faith for me as for much of the church was initiated by Holy Baptism when God conveyed to me all the benefits of Christ's suffering and death and united me as a person to Christ and His Holy Christian Church, with all the saints past and the whole ecumenical church present.

My life with Christ's body, the Church, has been immensely strengthened through the means of grace. The Word and the Sacraments have proved to me a wellspring of spiritual blessings. As sin, doubt and weakness bring on despair, God's ministry within His Church has comforted and strengthened me with the declaration of forgiveness and hope in Christ's name.

It is Christ's Word that is attached to baptism, to my baptism; it is Christ's Word that is with the Holy Supper. It is the effective Word of law and gospel, of judgment and grace, which turns us in repentance and holds us in the arms of our Father. Such events, the daily events of my life signal celebration, joy and gladness - Christian worship.

The Word of Baptism, the Word of the Eucharist is the same Word that was witnessed to by the prophets, evangelists and apostles of the Old and New Testaments. It is the same Word to which God's faithful people have borne witness by the Spirit's power in each generation.

It is the Word which I know and believe in the Scriptures. Indeed the Holy Scriptures are the Church's primary witness to the miraculous events of God's self-revelation of Himself. Because they are the very Word of God they are the authority, the norm above all norms to determine both faith and life.

In my studies I have found that the Lutheran Confessions beautifully exhibit the Word which the Scriptures reveal. And I am therefore fully committed and obedient to the Lutheran Symbols, for they do for me what they claim to do, confess freely and clearly our Lord Jesus Christ. They are not merely accepted in so far as they are a true exposition of the Gospel; they are accepted because they do truthfully confess the Gospel and properly instruct against false gospels.

The Scriptures are in all their parts God's Holy Word. They are to be revered, studied and handled as they indeed are, God's unique revelation of Himself to mankind. At the same time, God's revelation must also be recognized as it also truly is, God's revelation of Himself through Moses, Abraham, Mary, Jesus and the apostles. They are thus God's revelation in and through history at particular times and under unique cultural and social conditions. Because the Scriptures are both divine and human, because they have been entrusted by God to His Church to be known and proclaimed, they invite scholarly study, including the best methods of historical research. This is not in any way license for irresponsibility, let alone irreverence. Because the Scriptures are Christ's Holy Book and subject to His Lordship, scholarship in biblical matters as in all other work in the church must be approached with the specific discipline of faith, for by no other means will the Scriptures ever be understood as the truth of God.

In our circles the Lutheran confessional principles give shape to this scholarly biblical enterprise. Faith and the Lutheran Confessions do not stifle or restrict sound biblical scholarship; faith dares to look deeply, seeking for our generation as well as tomorrow's a clearer and more perfect witness to the mercies of God.

How insidious are the ways that tradition becomes frozen and so easily obstructs an authentic expression of Christ's Word and the work of Christian mission. Luther, we should recall, knew something about the idolatry of tradition. To be sure, the traditions of the church from one generation to another are important. And biblical scholarship dare not disrupt traditions in the church merely to disturb. But traditions must be disrupted when they confound the teaching and life of the church and obstruct faith and hinder mission. I have found good biblical scholarship disturbing, especially when I discovered how a traditional interpretation of a biblical passage has become "institutionalized" at the expense of a fresh historical interpretation.

Finally I believe and teach that God who has shown Himself uniquely in Christ Jesus continues to call to all men through the sufferings of society, the sick, the imprisoned, the oppressed -- through all manners of injustices. In such contexts Christians must be caught up with God in His mission. Our Lutheran insight to law and gospel **both protects**

us from falsely identifying His Kingdom with any particular human ideology and frees us in faith for prophetic preaching and effective service to all men in their many needs as God gives opportunity.

Carl Graesser
Associate Professor of Exegetical Theology (Old Testament)

My faith, my teaching, my confession grow out of and are based upon the nurture in the faith I received among God's people, the Church. I was baptized by my grandfather, first taught the love of Jesus by my mother, confirmed and ordained by my father. The wellspring of my hope and life is God's promise that He will ever be my gracious God in Jesus Christ. This Gospel of God's forgiveness is the heart and source of my ministry as a servant of Christ and His church.

My specific ministry is that of a teacher of Old Testament to men preparing for ordained ministry in the Lutheran church. I consider this a particularly weighty responsibility, since the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments are the written word of God and the only rule and norm of faith and practice. It is crucial that ministers develop professional ability to interpret these Scriptures, to hear clearly the Word of Law and Gospel which God speaks there, as the Lutheran Confessions have rightly perceived the heart and purpose of the Scriptures. This transforming Word of the Gospel is the basis and power of their ministry and mine.

In interpreting the Scriptures, I take its divine inspiration with all seriousness. God wrote this book through certain men, to bring His message to a specific audience in their specific need. The interpretive methods I use must take into account this God-chosen historical specificity. I must avoid unwittingly reading into this text my

own 20th century concerns and rather attempt to discern the meaning intended in the text. To this end I thankfully use the whole array of tools and knowledge of the biblical world which Christian scholars have acquired under the Spirit's leading. This naturally involves many technical procedures and details, for my students and I are professional exegetes. We owe God and His church the very best efforts of which we are capable. The ultimate purpose of this labor is this: to understand the Scriptures; to hear clearly the message which God spoke and still speaks in them today, His Word of law and Gospel. To aid my students to accomplish that purpose, I owe them the example of the witness of my own faith and that of the Church. This I gladly give, and I cherish that they will join me in that confession.

I believe that God has created me and everything in this universe. He exercises all power over His creation through means we term both "natural" and "miraculous." God has set man at the crown of His creation, in order to care for it. In fact, he places each human being in his own calling and place in the world and society. Therefore, each person finds his identity and meaning in life only as he responsibly fulfills that divinely ordained role. We are to care for this earth and for fellow men in all their needs of body, mind, and spirit, and in every relationship with God and fellowman.

I believe that God has redeemed me and all mankind. This is our ultimate need, for since the fall we are all born sinful, rebellious, without proper fear of God, without ability or desire to please God. Yet God, in His inexplicable mercy, set in motion His redemptive plan. He chose the patriarchs, promising them the blessings of land and descendants, that thereby he might mediate every blessing needed to remedy our fallen state. This promising, saving, forgiving God fulfilled that plan: by the Exodus and the Red Sea rescue, by forming a chosen covenanted people, by the gift of the promised land, by the promise to the Davidic dynasty, by nurturing His people through the prophets who announced judgment and held forth the promise that God would bring in the blessed age of His Kingdom and Messiah. Finally, in Jesus God fulfilled all the promises of His prophets, the hopes of His people, and the needs of all mankind. Setting aside the glory that was His, our Lord Jesus became man, born of the Virgin Mary. He lived for us a life of obedience to God. Through preaching and wondrous deeds He brought in the reign of God, and, praise God!, the beginning of the end of every form of the rule of Sin, Death, Satan, and Law. In His death and bodily resurrection He won

for us a gift too wonderfully full to describe without an endless series of words: victory, forgiveness, life, reconciliation, propitiation, salvation, and on and on. Happily we look forward to resurrected life beyond death, an eternity where we may contemplate this gift fully.

I believe that the Holy Spirit is working powerfully among us to accomplish His saving purposes. He is the One who calls us to faith through the Gospel, preserves us in it, and empowers the Christian Life in us. He sees to it that His people are never without the comforting power of this Good News. He raised up leaders, Moses, Joshua, David, the prophets and apostles, and those sacred authors of the Scriptures. Today He continues to work behind the mask of human history, in ways visible only to faith: in the water of baptism, in the bread and wine of the sacrament, in the words of absolution, in the printed page of Scripture, and in the living voice of the Church, men, women, and children. He works through us as we carry on His Mission within this fallen world to mediate every blessing which Christ has wrought and which God would give to fill the needs of every person.

This is the biblical faith which I confess. This is the faith which the Lutheran Confessions, to which I cheerfully subscribe, proclaim and explain in greater detail. I pray and cherish for my students that they will join me in it that they, with me, will believe it to their salvation, teach it in fulfillment of their calling and ministry, and confess it before the church and the world, to the edification of God's people and the glory of God.

Robert A. Grunow
Director of Seminary Relations
Associate Professor of Practical Theology

With Luther I believe, teach and confess that Jesus Christ, true God, begotten of the Father from eternity, and also true man, born of the Virgin Mary, is my Lord, who has redeemed me, a lost and condemned creature, purchased and won me from all sins, from death, and from the power of the devil; not with gold or silver, but with His holy precious blood, and with His innocent suffering and death; that I may be His own and live under Him in His Kingdom, and serve Him in everlasting righteousness, innocence, and blessedness, even as He is risen from the dead, lives and reigns to all eternity.

I believe, teach and confess the ecumenical Creeds and the Confessions of our church, especially Luther's *Small Catechism*. I was ordained in February, 1949, and took my oath to uphold the Bible and these confessions. I have repeated this oath three times, including my installation as professor at Concordia Seminary nine years ago. I have never knowingly taught ANYTHING against my ordination vows and would not knowingly do so.

Since becoming professor at Concordia Seminary in 1963, I have taken sixteen courses from fourteen of my colleagues, have listened to hundreds of their sermons and meditations, have listened to them informally and formally at meetings, social gatherings and in private discussions and have NEVER heard any false doctrine. There were different doctrinal emphases, differing approaches to questions, variety in pious opinions expressed, but no false doctrine. Never has my Savior been denied, never has salvation by grace alone been attacked, never has the atoning blood of Christ been questioned. In my honest opinion the present situation is simply a continuation of arguments which have gone on for generations.

I believe that the Bible, the 66 books of the New and Old Testaments, are the inspired and infallible Word of God. This can be said only of the original texts which we no longer have. Therefore, we are dependent upon copies, and undoubtedly copies of copies, which were handed down through the years by dedicated, but very human men. However, I believe the Holy Spirit, who originally used ordinary men and their own peculiar language, phrases and idioms to express the very words, thoughts and ideas of God, has basically preserved for

us His truths necessary for our eternal salvation.

In studying the Bible, I believe every scholarly tool is viable, as long as the presupposition is that we are dealing with the verbally inspired Word of God, and respect it as sacred and holy, revealing God's eternal truths. As long as this presupposition is applied conscientiously and seriously, I believe God expects us to use our reason and scholarship to dig into His Word and rediscover in each generation that which He Himself is saying to man. The Bible is not a dead Book, but is relevant, dynamic and living. It is so deep the greatest mind cannot comprehend. It is so simple a child can know his Savior. Each generation will have to search, study and dig into it to find those answers hidden within it for the questions and problems of each age. I fear too often today answers given by devout and dedicated men of years gone by are being applied to questions no longer being asked. Similarly, I believe questions being asked today by the church often are not being answered from the Bible, because those attempting to answer are not digging deeply enough to find God's answers.

I believe the basic Lutheran approach or presuppositions must still be applied: every word is God's word; Scripture interprets Scripture; the text itself decides whether it is to be taken literally or symbolically; Christ is the key which unlocks the real meaning.

Where there is an honest differing opinion on whether a word, number, story, book of the Bible is literal or a hyperbole, parable or other literary form, I am not convinced fellowship with that person is involved UNLESS he denies a clear teaching of Scripture. For example, the story of Jonah. I personally believe there was a historical person swallowed by a great fish. I was brought up to believe that since I was born. But if a fellow Lutheran sincerely believes this Old Testament Book is a parable, given to teach God's people of the Old Testament, I would not deny that individual fellowship, as long as he did not deny me the right to hold a literal interpretation, or deny the possibility that God could have performed all the miracles mentioned in the book.

Paul wrote Timothy: "All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, etc." The Bible teaches us how to be saved eternally. It is not meant to be a book of geography, science, sociology or psychology. This does not say that

the Bible does not teach other truths, but if perchance a statement of historic fact in the Bible could be proven wrong, this would not alarm me or cause me to question its truthfulness in spiritual matters. To insist that the Bible is a book of science, etc., in my opinion is a misuse of Scripture. We must not ascribe more to the Bible than God ascribes to it.

Concerning original sin, I have no doubts in regards to this doctrine. Man by birth and nature is an enemy of God and is blind, dead and actively in opposition to God. The Gospel is the only known divine means of overcoming this situation.

I accept Old Testament prophecy concerning Christ. Whether these prophecies were understood by the prophets or the people of their time in exactly the same way we know them after fulfillment I am unable to say. I don't believe we are given enough evidence. The Holy Spirit alone leads people to the truth, then and now. How clear an understanding He provided individuals thousands of years ago have no way of knowing.

My faith may be summarized in one of Franz Pieper's favorite Scripture passages: "By grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is a gift of God: not of works, lest any man should boast." Ephesians 2: 8,9. (Quoted on plaque at entrance to Pieper Hall at Concordia Seminary, St. Louis.)

Norman C. Habel
Associate Professor of Exegetical Theology

I am free. I was born free in my baptism. Through baptism I died with Christ. But the waters of baptism were also the waters of

life for me and I was born free. I did not free myself. My Father created the new me. I rose with Jesus Christ, rose a new man. Christ's resurrection meant victory over all ugly forces lurking in the shadows of my life. Sin, death and the law can no longer dominate me or my brothers and sisters in Christ. I have died many times since my baptism. I have lost many of the security blankets that people in my family, my church and my society said were necessary for faith or success. I just like other men, I am frightened by my finitude and I am intimidated by the demonic. But I am free from their final threats. In Christ I know who I am! By his liberating power I rise to affirm my identity. I also affirm the words of faith spoken softly on my behalf at my baptism. The Apostles' Creed they confessed is true.

I am free today because I trust God and His Promise. He, by grace, without the demands of presumptuous men or the threats of militant powers freely chose to love me! I find His love disclosed in the Gospel of Jesus Christ, His Son. The death and resurrection of Jesus Christ are like no other event. That event is the hinge of history and the turning point in my life. Through Jesus Christ I hear the Promise of God loud and clear: "My son, you were lost but I have found you." "Sinner, your sins are forgiven." "Slave, I have delivered you from the prisons of death." "Laugh, for I have overcome the world." "Arise, take up your broken life and live."

Despite these liberating promises, I fall. I fall into pits of my own making. But the Spirit of God leads me back. I return to find my Lord in the Eucharist. There I hear God's word of healing. There I sense the mystery of my oneness with Christ who frees me to live and celebrate. There I receive more than bread and wine. I share the body of Christ in some mysterious way as I remember his death. I share the blood of Christ as I relive his resurrection and my liberation. At His table my Lord affirms me and I am assured again of who I am. There I experience communion with all who are free in Christ. There I unite with all the church and all the cosmos in giving glory to Christ our Lord. "We are one in the Spirit, we are one in the Lord."

So the I becomes we, doesn't it? We are free to see and wonder at the glory of the Creator in the softest petal or the boldest glacier. We stand in awe at the goodness and beauty of all that God is creating in us and for us: new colors, new songs, new selves, new tomorrows. We hail the Word made flesh as the Word at work liberating this groaning creation and forming a new creation. It's happening

now. And we are part of it.

I, like the first human being, am Adam in this present creation. As Adam, I am one with each man and each woman throughout the world. God has created each man and each woman as a distinct human being with unique characteristics. The worth, dignity and identity of every man and every woman is as important as my own. Wherever human beings are forced to be something less than human or less than free, I am called to their side. For the risen Lord is there. Yahweh espoused the cause of the Israelite slaves in Egypt. Our Lord loved the outcasts of his society and gave them new identities. Today He walks among the blacks and the beaten, the Indians and the oppressed, calling us to hear and speak His message of freedom. Through them He confronts us anew with the scandal of the cross. In America, especially at this time in human history, Christ is black, and He calls us to be His disciples. That word is crucial for God's mission among us.

We are also free to hear God speaking to us through His Scriptures. For in the Gospel word of the Scriptures we encounter Christ. God drives through the human language of those pages into the very depths of our being. His Spirit impelled His messengers to announce His Word long ago. A similar urge of the Spirit led His people to record and preserve His messages. But the Spirit of God is free. It blows where it wills. We cannot dictate to the Spirit what kind of language or literature is appropriate for conveying God's will. As professional students of His Scriptures we are called to discover how He speaks. The better we understand the medium, the better we understand the message. We are free to search diligently into every word, for we trust our Father who speaks through these words. Historical criticism is a valuable tool for this kind of search. If, however, historical criticism becomes an end in itself it is damnable. As a professional exegete I must be as current as the scientist in my technical skills and as sensitive as the artist to the needs of my students. Thus I am free to be a responsible expert in my field for I teach in the community of critics who are free in Christ.

As part of that community I am free to endorse the **Affirmations** of faith and the **Discussions** of the issues approved by the Faculty of Concordia Seminary on November 21, 1972. Because I have been freed by the power of the Gospel I relate all theological issues to that Gospel as the governing center of the Scriptures and my

faith. Any teaching which does not promote the truth and sufficiency of the Gospel dare not be made a test of orthodoxy. Hence, questions of the six day creation, the historicity of the account of Adam and Eve, the facticity of all geographical or historical data and similar questions are of secondary importance. They may be subjects of theological debate but they must not be made the touchstones of biblical truth.

Far more important than these issues is the meaning of the Gospel for our world. How do we speak the Gospel to our contemporaries? To the scientist? To the poet? To the starving? Sectarianism and deceit have obscured the liberating power of the Gospel among us. Meanwhile we have paid little attention to the challenges of medical research, world religions, political ideologies, racism, world hunger, oppression and similar forces. We have become slaves in a denominational squabble. No one hears the message of freedom, the Promise of liberation, from us. It is time for the Truth. It is time for the Gospel. Amid this bondage I reaffirm my freedom, my identity, my faith! Come Lord Jesus and free us.

H. Lucille Hager
Archivist
Director of the Library

My confessional statement of faith is based on what I have been taught from Luther's *Small Catechism* and more specifically from the Apostles' Creed; for in the three articles of the Creed, I confess my belief in the three persons of the Holy Trinity and the part each of them plays in my life.

I believe in the Father, who has created me, who defends me against

all danger and guards and protects me from all evil, who does all this for me out of His Fatherly divine goodness and mercy. I do not deserve what He does for me, but out of His Fatherly love He does this for me. I, therefore, daily should thank and praise Him, serve and obey Him. By confessing "I believe," I know and accept as true what the Bible says of Him as Creator and put my trust and confidence in Him.

I confess my faith in the second person of the Trinity, the Son, Jesus Christ. I accept Him as my personal Savior and trust only in Him for the forgiveness of my sin and for eternal life. By His death on the cross, He redeemed me that I might be His own and willingly serve Him by being a true follower of His.

I confess my faith in the third person of the Trinity, the Holy Ghost. The Holy Ghost makes me holy by bringing me to faith in Christ. He calls me by the Gospel, the means by which I hear the good news about the grace of God in Christ Jesus, and works in my heart the faith by which I accept Jesus Christ as my Savior. He helps me to overcome sin and keeps me in the true faith. He daily and richly forgives me all my sins and also the sins of all believers. He does this by grace for Christ's sake, as it is expressed in Romans 3, 28: "Therefore we conclude that a man is justified by faith without the deeds of the Law." I can be sure of this forgiveness of my sins because God's promises are certain. I also firmly believe that He will raise me **froco the** dead on that last day and that I shall Tive with Him in eternal joy and glory. He promises this in John 3, 16: "For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish but have eternal life."

With the continued presence of the Holy Spirit in my life, as I study God's Holy Word, as I listen to His Holy Word, and as I regularly partake of His holy sacrament, I continue to receive forgiveness of my sins and strengthening of my faith.

George W. Hoyer
Dean of the Chapel
Professor of Practical Theology (Homiletics and Worship)

For purposes of discussion and for clarification of my own position I would distinguish between what I believe and what I accept.

This is not a division which allows for a simple listing of items under each category. Many items will overlap. The result is more spectrum than specification. The differentiation aims to call attention to the basic fact that faith is a relationship with God which the Holy Spirit works. Other areas of my Christian conviction develop through sequences of reasoning. Since the logical development is based on the primary fact of faith, the conclusions accepted are more than mental constructs, but they are nevertheless of different dimensions from the basic gift of faith.

Without attempting a complete classification under this division, I make here a statement of what I believe and confess and endeavor to teach, with an eye on the articles of the *Augsburg Confession*.

I have come to a relationship with God, as loved child with dear Father, through the sacrament of Holy Baptism by which I was committed to God and became acceptable to Him. (AC IX). Since I was unable by nature to have true fear of God and true faith in God (AC II), I could not by my own reason or strength believe in or come to Him. I believe that God the Son became man, was born of the Virgin Mary, suffered, was crucified, died, and was buried in order to be a sacrifice not only for original sin but also for all other sins and to propitiate God's wrath (AC III, IV). This same Christ truly rose from the dead, and is exalted by God that He may eternally rule and have dominion over all creatures. What God accomplished for all mankind through Jesus Christ was given to me through Holy Baptism. By that sacrament I was buried with Christ and rose with Him to new life in the family of God, the Church, the assembly of all believers and saints. (AC VII, VIII). The Church shared with me the Gospel and the sacraments through which, as through means, God gave me the Holy Spirit, who works faith. Faith is the confidence that I have a gracious God, not by my own merits but by the merit of Christ (AC V). The Spirit has brought me into a restored relationship with God and enabled me to believe in Him.

The true body and blood of Christ really present in the supper of our Lord under the form of bread and wine which were distributed in the Church and which I have received, have strengthened me in this relationship and confirmed me in my belief (AC X). This indwelling Spirit continues to give me power in the new life to enable me to produce good fruits and good works and to do so for God's sake and not in order to merit favor through them (AC VI).

Though I have sinned after baptism, I have been contrite and confessed my sin. Believing the Gospel and absolution, namely that sin has been forgiven and grace has been obtained through Christ, I have received forgiveness of my sin (AC XI, XII). In the Church I have come to understand and to believe that there is one divine essence which is called and which is truly God, and that there are three persons in this one divine essence, equal in power and alike eternal: God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit (AC I). I have also been taught and believe that the Lord Jesus Christ will return on the last day for judgment and will raise up all the dead, to give eternal life and everlasting joy to believers and the elect but to condemn ungodly men and the devil to hell and eternal punishment (AC XVII).

I accept the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments as inspired by God and profitable for doctrine, for reproof and for correction. These scriptures were written by holy men who were inspired and who yet remained men. We are to search them, study them, carefully and with the critical tools that assist in understanding them, because they testify of Christ. Just as the Gospel of God's action for all mankind in His Son Jesus Christ is the source of faith, so it is the touchstone for understanding all the teachings of the Bible. Our fathers in the faith who established the canon of scriptures have passed them on to us and with them I accept them as reliable for all that God wishes to reveal to us through them. There can be differences in interpretation of scripture, as for instance in the opening chapters of Genesis, even as there are different understandings of the type of literature and the understanding of history found there, but the word to faith is that "almighty God has created and still preserves nature" and that "sin is caused in all wicked men and despisers of God by the perverted will." (AC XIX). The scriptures clearly teach the law of God revealing that all men as sinners are under the judgment of God. They teach that good works should and must be done, but only the Gospel can move men to such fruits of faith. When through faith the Holy Spirit is given, the heart is moved to do good works. (AC XX). When

the Christian man who knows that there is no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus hears the will of God for his sanctification, he hears it as opportunity, as directional signals which can be followed through the power given by the Gospel.

Church usages which contribute to peace and good order in the church and which aid men in appropriating the power of the Gospel and in advancing in holiness of life are included in my acceptance. (AC XV). With the Confessions I teach that nobody should publicly teach or preach or administer the sacramenta in the church without a regular call (AC XIV). but I recognize the procedure of seminary and the council of presidents which allows seminarians to undertake preaching and participation in the conduct of the Church's services as part of their training. The sacraments are not only signs by which people are identified as Christians, but are instituted for the purpose of awakening and strengthening our faith (AC XIII). They require faith and are rightly used when they are received in faith and for the purpose of strengthening faith. While the church strives for confessional unity, pastoral concern must recognize the priorities of the Gospel and of faith in administering the sacrament of the altar.

In keeping with the summons, I have desired to present the above statements as a declaration of my confession and my teaching. If anyone should consider that it is lacking in some respect, I am ready to present further information on the basis of my understanding of the divine Holy Scripture. (AC Conclusionj)

Holland H. Jones
Associate Professor of Exegetical Theology (Old Testament)

I believe and confess that God, the Creator of the sky, earth, sea, and all things in them, is my Father:

Who has given and gives me physical life and what pertains to it, such as body, mind, senses, and health.

Who daily and richly has and does provide me with what I need to sustain this physical body and life.

Who has and does protect me from all that threatens to destroy my life.

Who cares for me as a loving father cares for his beloved son, daily giving me new evidence of His loving care.

I recognize it as my obligation to this wonderful Father:

to worship Him.

Thus giving Him the credit for doing what He has done and does for me, by thanking Him and declaring His praises to others, as my Benefactor.

to obey Him.

By both learning to know His will for me and conforming my life to it, realizing that the best possible life is one that is lived in accord with my Father's desires and wishes.

to serve Him.

Thus dedicating to Him, who gave and gives it, the life He gives, by employing these gifts to perform His wishes and desires.

As I strive to do this, I experience that my physical and mental being rebel against such worship, obedience, and service, and are abetted in this rebellion by a demonic force, which I find to be operative in every other human being with whom I associate and in the events of life on this earth. I recognize and acknowledge such mental and actual rebellion as sin against my Father, by which I constantly forfeit my right to live and deserve to receive the wages of sin, which is death.

I believe that my heavenly Father promised to send and sent His Son, Jesus Christ, to earth as a human being

to make known and exemplify His ways with and will for me and all men.

to solve for me the problem of my sin, by dying to assure me of the love, forgiveness, goodwill, and reconciliation with my Father.

to reveal to me my Father's plan to give me eternal life, by rising from death and ascending to the Father.

I trust this Jesus as my Savior, being convinced that because of His death for me my Father forgives all my sins, as I acknowledge that I am a sinner, confess those sins that I recognize, and ask for His forgiveness. I regard as truth His teachings about my Father's ways, will, and plan for me. I worship Him as my Savior, and recognize it as my duty as His disciple to serve Him as my Lord, by seeking to know, understand, and observe all that He taught and commanded. I look forward to His return, when I know, though I have died, I shall live again and enter His eternal, glorious kingdom.

I believe that the Holy Spirit empowered me, when I could not have done so by my own reason or strength, to know, believe in, and love God my Father and Jesus my Savior: that He daily conveys to me the forgiveness of sins, and keeps me convinced that I am forgiven for Jesus' sake; that He constantly influences me to forsake sin and to dedicate my God-given and God-redeemed life to God; that he will continue to do this divine work in and for me till death; that he will raise me from the dead and give me eternal life.

I am convinced that the Holy Spirit has done and does this, in answer to my prayers and the prayers of others in my behalf, by means of God's witness of His love to me through His people, word, and sacraments.

This is The One in whom I believe. This expresses essentially what I believe about this One. Of course I could expand that:

by describing what I believe He did for me today. This would require 5,000 words,

by describing in so far as I can remember, what he has done for me in the past year. This would require 70,000 words,

by describing, in so far as I can remember, what he has done for

me in my whole life. This would constitute a book.

However, it has been suggested to me that I should relate my confession of faith to my work as a teacher of the Old Testament. So here goes.

When I graduated from Concordia Seminary I was:

biblically illiterate. I didn't know the contents and message of one book of the Bible. My courses had never covered one entire book. They had consisted of some indoctrination based on some part of some books.

opinionated. I was convinced I had the truth the whole truth and nothing but the truth.

dogmatic. I insisted that my truth, biblical or not, was the dogma of the The Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod.

legalistic. I demanded that everyone accept my truth, biblical or not, or get out.

schismatic. I refused to regard anyone as a fellow brother in Christ, if he in any way disagreed with my truth.

I was regarded as such a good example of what a student ought to be that I was contracted to teach other students, i.e., I was offered and accepted a position of instructor at Concordia Seminary. My assignment was to teach the Old Testament Scriptures. I realized and told the Seminary administration that I was not equipped for this task. I didn't even know the contents and message of one book of the Old Testament. But I thought, and still do, that calls, even contracts, are divinely arranged. And I began to teach the contents and message of those books of the Old Testament, which the curriculum of the seminary required. I soon realized that those aspects of my seminary training that left me biblically illiterate and made me opinionated, dogmatic, legalistic, and schismatic weren't very helpful. But I also recognized that there were some significant results of my training at the seminary. My teachers had inculcated:

A reverence for the Bible that motivated me to try to discover what it said and meant.

A conviction that, if I could discover what it meant, I could rely

on that as the truth.

An understanding of the word of God as law and Gospel and the realization that the law-judgment part was God's way to get me to grab hold of the Gospel-grace part.

As I, influenced by these last three insights, attempted to teach the contents and message of a variety of biblical books, God slowly but surely made me biblically literate. In the process he dissipated my opinionated, dogmatic, legalistic, schismatic attitudes toward others. Praise God. I have tried to analyze what it was in my training that produced the opinionated, dogmatic, legalistic, schismatic product I was when I graduated, and I have religiously eliminated those things from my teaching. I have tried to determine what it was in my training that nourished a reverence for and willingness to trust God's word and helped to inculcate the insight that the Gospel was Sovereign over law in the purpose of God and I have emphasized those things in my teaching of the Old Testament. I have never done anything that was not tainted with and corrupted by mistakes and failure, so I'm sure my analyses in this area have been. And I'm sure that my attempts to teach what I found significant in what I learned have been faulty. My study of the Bible - motivated by my desire to teach it properly and influenced by the things that were really significant in what I had learned as a student at Concordia Seminary - has led me to the convictions that:

the essential characteristic of the body of Christ is unity.

this unity is produced by the Holy Spirit who alone produces faith in the favor of God the Father, expressed most clearly in the incarnation, ministry, death, and resurrection of God the Son.

this unity is expressed by recognizing and acknowledging that everyone who experiences and confesses that he lives by the favor of God the Father, especially as this was expressed in the life of Jesus, is my **BROTHER**.

Such a faith in God-Father-Son-and Holy Spirit-as I confessed at the beginning of this document I want to create, nourish, or increase in my students. I try to do this in such a way that my convictions - just stated - are clearly discernible. I am interested that my students share my convictions, but I consider it the matter of greatest im-

portance that they share my faith.

In attempting to help them share my faith and to understand that a personal relationship with the persons-Father, Son, Holy Spirit is the essential of Christian life, in attempting to express my conviction, that everyone believing in Father, Son, and Holy Spirit is my brother, in attempting to fulfil my vocation which is teaching the contents and message of the Old Testament, I employ many tools that are not objects of my faith. My faith is in God, not in the many useful tools and techniques I employ.

I use in translating the only authoritative text of Old Testament in the LCMS - the best tools available - because they're helpful in understanding words and syntax. I have discovered books produced by historical-critical scholars are far superior to those produced by those who reject this method.

I engage in textual criticism - to attempt to discover an intelligible text-witnessed to by variants or versions - because I think an intelligible emended text will be more comprehensible than a printed text, which is in places unintelligible. Books in this area produced by Historical-Critical Scholars are also superior.

I engage in form criticism - to explain and exemplify that materials were originally produced in specific literary types - because this is demanded by the nature of the biblical text, and I'm interested, that if material is ancient, I assert it is. Books in this area have been produced only by Historical-Critical Scholarship.

I engage in tradition criticism - to explain the nature of biblical materials and to describe the transmission history of the ancient materials - because I'm interested in knowing what traditions were developed and what message they conveyed to people to whom they were addressed. Books in this area have been produced only by Historical-Critical Scholars.

I engage in redaction criticism - to explain the nature of the biblical text and to describe the situations that effected revisions of the ancient material - that had been preserved in written documents; and to comprehend the message these revisions conveyed to people to whom they were addressed. Books in this area have been produced only by Historical-Critical scholarship

I try to understand - Biblical re-interpretations of old materials because I want to know what other biblical writers said on the subject - so as I use a pericope in preaching - teaching - counseling etc. - I won't contradict what a biblical writer said about it.

I try to understand the history of the interpretation - of a given pericope, because I'm interested in knowing how previous people of God-understood, interpreted, used - this pericope - because I think this may be helpful in my understanding the pericope and in my application of it.

I use those aspects of historical-critical method that help me to understand the Bible - to expand my knowledge of God and to be able to use it better as a medium for transmitting such a knowledge of God. Since my interest is to discover the biblical witness to the action of God in history, I don't use this method in such a way as to reject or deny God's action in history.

Everett R. Kalin
Associate Profssor of Exegetical Theology (New Testament)

1 Cor. 15:3-5 - I delivered to you AS OF FIRST IMPORTANCE what I also received, that CHRIST DIED FOR OUR SINS IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE SCRIPTURES,

that HE WAS BURIED,

that HE WAS RAISED ON THE THIRD DAY IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE SCRIPTURES

and that HE APPEARED

This early Christian recital of God's action in Jesus Christ, recorded by Paul and declared by him to be of primary importance, is the center of my faith as it was of his.

I believe that the bondage under sin that I share with every member of the human family has been decisively broken by the death of Jesus Christ on our behalf. He has set us free, so that we might be enabled to trust God and to love and serve our brothers and sisters. God raised him from the dead, vindicating his sacrifice and exalting him with power and glory. This exalted Lord has poured out upon us his life-giving Spirit, who calls us to faith and empowers us for worship and witness.

I believe that this happened in accordance with the scriptures. That is, Jesus Christ is the glorious fulfillment of many promises of rescue and mercy God made to his people Israel, promises that are recorded in the scriptures of the Old Testament. And these Old Testament scriptures not only point forward to Jesus Christ but also bear witness to the many and varied ways in which God showed himself gracious toward his people Israel. This people, enslaved and oppressed, he set free, deigning to call them his people. He thus showed himself to be a God who brings oppressors to judgment, sets free the oppressed, and covenants with his people to worship him and act justly toward the whole family of man.

Just as God bore witness to his actions on behalf of Israel by inspiring the prophetic documents we call the Old Testament, so also he inspired an apostolic witness to his decisive action in Jesus Christ, a witness that is recorded in the New Testament scriptures. The early church set these documents apart from other products of the Spirit's ongoing activity among them by declaring them to be the unique apostolic witness to God's action in Jesus Christ. They derive their authority from the one to whom they bear witness, and I affirm their binding authority on my teaching and life because I joyfully affirm his authority and lordship over me.

When Jesus of Nazareth began his ministry, he announced that God's reign was at hand, a reign that would bring forgiveness, healing and justice. I believe that God has inaugurated that reign by the ministry, death, and resurrection of his Son and that he thus already now offers forgiveness and healing and calls us to act justly. By baptism and faith we are united with Jesus and with one another in a

community of forgiveness and healing and justice and thus already now experiente, in a partial measure, the blessings of God's reign As his sons and daughters we share the eucharistic meal that celebrates the inauguration of the reign of God and anticipates its culmination. The God who acted in mercy toward Israel and who acted once and for all in the death and resurrection of his Son continues to act in our day. He continues to offer freedom from sin and every other evil by which men are enslaved. He invites his people to celebrate and announce his presence and to demonstrate this presence by speaking his word and acting justly. His reign is now only partially manifest in a world that still bears evident marks of radical evil. He invites us to live already now as sons and daughters who manifest his reign, empowered by his Spirit. And we live also in expectant hope of the day when our Lord shall come as judge of the living and the dead and raise us up to share perfectly in his life and glory.

The assertion that God continues by his Spirit to act and speak in our time and in our world - as surely as he did in Israel and on Calvary - carries with it the necessity of judging as best we can where and how he speaks and acts today and where he does not. There must be a criterion by which one judges among the diverse voices that claim to speak for God and among the varied persons who claim to act on his behalf. I believe that that criterion is the way God acted graciously on behalf of Israel and especially through the ministry, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. Those who come in God's name are indeed empowered by his Spirit if their speaking and life bear faithful witness to Jesus Christ, the one who came as a servant, to offer God's forgiveness and reconciliation, to set free the oppressed, and to proclaim glad tidings to the poor. Jesus Christ is the norm by which we evaluate God's intention toward the human family in this and every age. For this reason the scriptures, the prophetic and apostolic testimony to God's actions in Jesus Christ, are the norm by which the proclamation and life of the people of God are to be judged. The Spirit who gave these scriptures also enables his people today, using the best tools at their disposal, to interpret them, believe their message, and reapply their words to the ever-new situations in which we find ourselves. That is to say, I believe that he continues to lead us into all the truth.

Wi Jo Kang
Assistant Professor of Missions
Curator of Mission Museum

I believe in God the Father who created heaven and earth and is the father of all people and nations. I believe in God the Son the Savior of all men. I believe in God the Holy Spirit who brings people into the knowledge of Christ, sanctifies the life of believers and strengthens Christian faith through the Means of Grace.

I believe, teach, and confess that the Holy Scriptures are written for the knowledge of our salvation in Christ by the hands of prophets, evangelists and apostles with the language that existed in the time of writing. God used these men of prophecy, evangelists, and apostles to write down the very purpose of God's revelation for the salvation of all men. Therefore the initiator of the writings is God himself, and He is the basis of the Scripture and its authority. Therefore the Holy Scriptures are Words of God and by His "inspiration" the words are written. However, I do not believe such "inspiration" in translations. "Inspired word" should refer to the original writings.

I believe, teach and confess that the three Ecumenical Creeds are true expressions of the Christian faith in the Triune God.

I believe, teach and confess that the confessional writings of the Lutheran church are a true exposition of the Holy Scriptures. However, the understanding of the confessions should be done in the historical contexts. In the Asian milieu the historical background of the confessions is so alien that the church may have to formulate a new confession on the basis of the Holy Scriptures.

I believe, teach and confess that the Gospel is the Good News of salvation in Christ, but this Good News must be proclaimed not only by words and speech, but by deeds and truth. Gospel of Christ motivates us to attack social ills, injustice and meet the needs of people in all situations.

I hold the position that universalism, that is, to recognize the possibility of salvation through all religions, is an unChristian teaching. Christ is the way, the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father but through Jesus Christ. At the same time, however, one should not condemn all teachings and practices of other religions as

devilish. Also Christian mission works in non-western countries should try to accommodate the indigenous cultural traditions in Christian teachings and practices without sacrificing the centrality of Christ.

I believe, teach and confess that the miracles of Christ were "manifestation of his divine majesty" and His "use of the divine nature" (*Solid Declaration*, Article VIII). Performance of miracles by Christ is true evidence of Christ's divine nature and the extension of God's work in Him.

I believe in the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead. However, I do not think the Bible and the Lutheran Confessions are trying to define the resurrected body of Christ. The Holy Scriptures and Lutheran Confessions are concerned about the affirmations of the reality of Christ's resurrection. I do not think it is important for us to define what this physical resurrection is, but what is important is to accept and believe the resurrection of Christ as the reality and true historical event.

Richard Klann
Associate Professor of Systematic Theology

Please recall that in his meeting with the seminary faculty on May 17, 1972, President J. A. O. Preus requested the faculty to make personal or individual responses to him, that each faculty member write him a personal statement regarding his agreement or disagreement with the theology of The Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod, specifically as it was expressed in the statement of the synodical President of March 3, 1972.

I fulfilled the request of the synodical President last spring, and I have received his reply to that effect.

After studying the provisions of the *Handbook* regarding the "Relationship Between the Synod and Districts," I am compelled to conclude from the provisions of the Bylaws that the "request" of the Council of Presidents, to which the faculty resolution cited above refers, is incompatible with Bylaw 3.07 e (*Handbook*, p. 82): "Jurisdiction with respect to everything which is administered by or for the entire Synod resides in the Synod itself, including but not limited to general supervision of doctrine and practice; foreign missions; synodical institutions . . . and the like." That means, obviously, that President J. A. O. Preus, in his capacity under Article XI B, exercises such supervisory functions, and that the District Presidents collectively have been denied by the Constitution of Synod the supervision of doctrine and practice regarding the institutions of Synod, such as this seminary.

I am unable to see how the refusal of the request of the President of Synod, made to the assembled faculty in person on May 17th, and the resolution of the faculty cited above, expressing its willingness to comply with the request of the Council of Presidents, can be interpreted as anything else than an explicit displacement and rejection by the faculty of Concordia Seminary of the supervisory function of the President of Synod ordained by the Constitution of Synod.

I understand the factors pertaining to this faculty resolution to be such that I cannot avoid the point made by the faculty resolution: the faculty is willing to refuse a request made of it by the President of Synod in consonance with Article XI B of the Constitution, but it is contrariwise willing to accept and to heed a similar request made of it by the Council of Presidents, which has no jurisdiction of this faculty.

In view of my subscription to the Constitution of Synod many years ago when I officially entered the full-time service of Synod, I cannot for conscience sake act contrary or rebelliously against the provisions of the Constitution of Synod. For that reason, as well as for the plainer reason that I have fulfilled President Preus' request which he made to the faculty last spring, I do not believe that I ought to file an individual profession of faith with you by October 24, 1972, to be used for the purposes indicated by the faculty resolution.

Apart from the consideration of these regrettable circum-

stances mentioned above, I am willing and ready at the request of the President of Synod, made in the behalf of Synod, to offer a public confession of the faith which I have preached, taught, and professed in my life-time.

Ralph W. Klein
Assistant Professor of Exegetical Theology (Old Testament)

I first professed the Apostles' Creed through the mouths of my sponsors at my Holy Baptism. Each day as I see the rising sun, I remember how my Lord arose early in the morning and how he empowers all of his people, who are buried with him in baptism, to walk in newness of life. Daily I return with repentance to that faith which was nurtured through the forgiveness of sins.

My parents who brought me to the font taught me from early on the contents of the faith gained in baptism. Literally "from a child" I have known the Holy Scriptures which were and are able to make me wise unto salvation through Jesus Christ. By their devout and holy life and by their uncountable repetitions of the good news my parents were special agents of the means of grace.

I believe that God has made and that he does preserve me and all creatures, and that it is "my duty (in Luther's words) to thank and praise, serve and obey him." Genesis 1 and Psalm 8 tell me that God would have all things in subjection to man, that God is so marvelous that he has made me a little lower than the angels or, as some translations put it, than God himself. With the writer of Hebrews we all must confess that we do not yet see everything in subjection to man, and that is because of the universal presence of sin in all men. But we see Jesus, who for a little while was made lower than the angels, crowned with glory and honor because of the suffering of death.

I believe that this Jesus is true God and also true man, born of the Virgin Mary. In fact, He is my Lord who has shown his lordship by living, dying, and rising again for my salvation - that I might be his own, and live under him, and serve him. Jesus is the fulfillment of all God's promises, including especially those of the Old Testament. With Christians of all ages I confess that Jesus is the Christ (that is, the Messiah) and that he is also the prophet who was to come and the Son of Man. I see him as the embodiment of the Suffering Servant, as the one who came not to be served, but to serve, and to give his life a ransom for many.

The piety of my parents and the good gifts God has given me would not have made me a believer. But the Holy Spirit called me through the Gospel, gave me his gifts, and keeps me in the faith. It is this same Spirit who moved the writers of the Old and New Testaments as they recorded their definitive witness to the words and actions of God. These Scriptures are the sole rule and norm of my faith and life. I joyfully thank God for the holy Christian church, pray often for its unity through its one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, and I look for the resurrection of the dead and the life of the world to come.

I would like to comment briefly on some of my goals, ambitions, and responsibilities as a Christian. 1) God has elected me to be a part of that process through which he would extend blessings to all the families of the earth (Gen. 12:1-3). This means first of all the verbal proclamation of God's action in Jesus Christ, which I do often, in sermon and classroom, in home and office. The apostle has written: "Always be prepared to make a defense to any one who calls you to account for the hope that is in you, yet do it with gentleness and reverence; and keep your conscience clear, so that, when you are abused, those who revile your good behavior in Christ may be put to shame." It also means, as the Old Testament prophets make abundantly clear, that I am to defend the cause of the poor and needy, to care for widows and orphans, and to work for the setting free of all the oppressed.

2) God has also called me to the office of the ministry. I guess I never seriously considered any other vocation - and I say this with absolutely no regret. I view the pastor as one who through word and sacraments equips the people of God for their work of service. My manifold academic activities have one goal: that I and my

students might know God and the power of his Gospel, and that we might be strengthened to live and speak for him.

3) I am a Lutheran - by that joyous confession I am not just trying to draw arbitrary distinctions between me and others. Being Lutheran means for me that I believe that I am justified by grace for Christ's sake through faith. One of the great joys of our century is that this is again recognized as a truly ecumenical confession. As an evangelical Lutheran I subscribe without reservation to all the symbolical books of the Evangelical Lutheran Church as a true and unadulterated statement and exposition of the word of God.

4) In addition to believing and witnessing, a Christian is called to praise God and to worship him. The frequent public opportunity for worship in my vocation is an especially great joy. I would like men to say when I die, "This man praised God with his life." In fact, I would be happy to die as my father did - in his vestments, in the sacristy, ready to preach, with a sermon on the word Hallelujah stuffed in his pocket. Standing at his coffin as he lay in state was one of the most joyous, perhaps even happy moments of my life as I was comforted by hundreds of people who had learned Jesus Christ through this father and brother. When my mother purchased a tombstone, she did it with conscious allusion to my father's last intended sermon and with a profound theological basis. On the granite is inscribed one word: Hallelujah.

There is literally nothing that could separate me from Jesus Christ and the joy he has given me.

Edgar M. Krentz
Professor of Exegetical Theology (New Testament)

I BELIEVE, TEACH, AND CONFESS! . . .

Part I

The joint confessional statements of the faculty of Concordia Seminary adopted on 3 November 1970, 24 November 1970, and 21 November 1972 are accepted by me and are part I of this response to the Council of Presidents' request to the individual members of the faculty.

Part II

I believe in Jesus, God's elect Messiah, as my personal Savior from sin, death, and the law (Rom. 8:2). He is the Savior of all men who ever were, are, or will be; all men are alike sinners and need Him as their Savior and Lord. His is the one name under heaven by which all must be saved (Acts 4: 12).

This Lord Jesus, God's agent in making and preserving me and all things (Col. 1:15-18), first called me into faith by the Spirit. As His servant he sends me and all Christians out to bring the message of the Gospel and the ministry of loving care to all mankind.

I first came to faith by baptism, the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Spirit (Titus 3:5). Since then my faith has been nourished by hearing the good news of God's love for me in His Son, by the forgiveness of sins and power for the new life given me with His body and blood in the Eucharist, and by the forgiving Word spoken to me in the fellowship of the church.

By His grace God called me to the ministry of Word and Sacrament. At my ordination I gladly, freely, and without any reservation publicly confessed that I believe and accept "the canonical books of the Old and the New Testament to be the inspired Word of God and the only infallible rule of faith and life." I still hold that confession without change.

I also confessed that I accept all the articles of faith stated in the three great ecumenical creeds: the Apostolic, Nicene, and

Athanasian. I repeat one of these creeds in faith each and every Sunday. Thus I confess my acceptance of such articles of faith as the creation of all things seen and unseen by God; the full deity and humanity of Jesus; His Virgin Birth; His death for me and all men; His bodily resurrection; His lordship over history and the church; His return as judge of living and dead; the work of the Holy Spirit in producing faith and Christian life; His on-going activity in Word and sacraments; the one, holy, apostolic, and catholic church; the forgiveness of sins; and the resurrection of the body and eternal life.

I also publicly pledged myself to the Lutheran Confessions as a correct summary of and statement of the doctrine of the Holy Scriptures. The seven documents included in the *Book of Concord* define what it means to be a Lutheran Christian, as the ecumenical creeds define what it is to be a catholic Christian. I am a catholic Christian and must therefore also be a Lutheran Christian.

The Lutheran Confessions teach the distinctively Lutheran manner of reading the Bible and teaching the Christian faith. They affirm that the Gospel is the central doctrine of Christianity and that the key that unlocks the Bible is the distinction between law and Gospel, for the Scriptures contain law and Gospel. The Confessions make clear that the Gospel is not one doctrine among many others; it is rather the one doctrine of which all other "doctrines" are a part. The Gospel, used together with the law, alone gives clarity to the will of God, forgiveness in our lives, power by the Spirit to live and love, and hope for the future.

The Gospel comes before all other things and beliefs in my faith and life as a child of God. It is the center to which all else must be related and from which all else must be understood. If anything else in Christianity is separated from the Gospel, no matter how good and true it is in itself, it becomes perverted and hostile to God and His saving work. Every heresy, if followed to its roots, is ultimately an article of faith that is either improperly related to the Gospel of Jesus Christ and His atoning work or not related at all.

Lutheran theology holds that the written Word of God, the Bible, must also be understood in the light of the distinction between law and Gospel, or it is misunderstood. The theologian must seek to relate all teaching in the Bible to law or Gospel, since Lutherans hold that "all Scripture should be divided into these two

chief doctrines, the law and the promises" (*Apology* IV, 5). The Bible exists for the Gospel, that is, it is to make men wise unto salvation (2 Tim. 3:15). If one separates the Bible and its interpretation or use from that divinely given purpose, then the Holy Scriptures are misunderstood and can even be harmful to faith and man's salvation. It is this dynamic Gospel that makes the Scriptures powerful and authoritative, for the God of the Bible is the God of promise and forgiveness in Jesus Christ.

I accept the Bible as God's written Word because I accept the Gospel of Jesus Christ. The Holy Scriptures, when used as God intends them to be used, are infallible; they say what God wants them to say and do what God wants them to do (Is. 55:11). They are inspired by the Spirit as to both word and content. (Thus I accept the "Statement on The Form and Function of the Holy Scriptures" adopted unanimously by the faculty in 1960.)

These Scriptures have a glorious unity, given to them by the Spirit of God who speaks law and Gospel through them. As God's saving purpose is one, so his Scriptures are one.

The Holy Scriptures also have a marvelous, Spirit-given variety. In them law and Gospel are spoken to men in different languages (Hebrew, Aramaic, and Greek), in different cultures (Semitic, Greco-Roman), and in different times and places (urban and rural over many centuries). This variety is part of God's gracious speaking to men in the places and times where they are; it is part of the historical character of God's revelation to men in His son and in His Word. Since the Scriptures share in history, they are to be interpreted in a manner that corresponds to this historical character and best enables one to hear God's variety in unity. In our age that method is the historical-critical method, for it compels minute attention to the text of the Bible in its own world.

Lutherans use this method with convictions and presuppositions that honor God as the Lord of history and the Savior of lost man. Lutherans recognize that the Scriptures as God's written Word are a unique gift to God's people and fulfill the unique role of rule and norm for faith and life. Lutherans see in their confessional commitment a control that guards against individualistic, willful, and capricious interpretation.

The historical-critical method aids greatly in understanding the text of the Scriptures in its original (God selected) language and historical situation. The method serves a ministerial function in helping one to hear the Bible carefully and precisely and thus to proclaim God's law and Gospel with care.

Thus the Scriptures are honored as inspired Word of God and interpreted as what they in fact are, revelation given to man by a merciful God in man's world and history. The promissory character of God's acts and words in the Old Testament and the final fulfillment in the New Testament are given full weight. This method takes seriously that the Old Testament has something old and the New Testament something new.

The Scriptures fulfill their role as judge and norm in theology and preaching. Their message of law and Gospel stands in judgment over all teachers and proclaimers in the church, over the pronouncements and decisions of all synods, councils, denominations and sects, over the actions of all officials and workers in the church. Thus, in a confessional Lutheran church body, one honors and upholds both the church body, its resolutions, and the documents it adopts in the best manner by taking them so seriously as to submit them to careful study under the Scriptures and the Lutheran Confessions. Here also one must put everything to the test and hold fast only to what is good (1 Thess. 5:21).

In this way the Scriptures are honored as God's Word and used as God wishes. They, together with the Lutheran Confessions, keep the church from sectarian division and help to preserve the truth of the Gospel in all its articles. God's Gospel is kept free in all its power, its freshness, its freedom, and its joy.

This I believe with all my heart and endeavor to teach and confess.

Paul G. Lessmann
Director of Field Education
Associate Professor of Practical Theology

My basic Christian faith is simple and uncomplicated. I cannot rationalize it because it is a miracle performed in me by the power of the Holy Spirit, which He initiated and keeps alive in me by Word and Sacrament through the remission of sins in Christ Jesus, who has purchased and won me with His holy precious blood and with His innocent suffering and death, that I might be His own and live under Him in His kingdom and serve Him both now and after my physical death. In short, I believe that God the Father has created and still preserves me and all creatures; I believe that Jesus Christ, true God and also true Man, born of the Virgin Mary, is my Lord, who has redeemed me a lost and condemned creature; I believe that the Holy Spirit has called me by the Gospel to be God's child, and later, His minister. All this my God has done and still does for me, not because my name is Paul Lessmann and I am a Lutheran Christian, but because God is love; His mercies are new every morning!

God knows my faith. He also knows my failings. In Christ Jesus He has accepted me "just as I am," and even ordained me as His minister 28 1/2 years ago, with my latest Call being to work as His servant at Concordia Seminary almost 8 years ago as professor and director of field education.

I was a parish pastor for almost 21 years before coming to the seminary in this capacity. My first eleven years were spent establishing a new mission church and later a Christian day school and bringing both to self-support in Baltimore, Maryland; thereafter I served more than nine years as pastor of a 2,000 member congregation in Peoria, Illinois. During that time I prepared and preached more than 1,500 sermons in regular Sunday and week-day services, at marriages, burials, and special services. I am certain I made the normal amount of mistakes in my parish ministry; yet I do not recall that my doctrine was ever challenged. If someone were to challenge me about my teachings and preaching of the Gospel in the past, I would be inclined to answer (without appearing presumptuous and being fully willing to admit of errors and mistakes in both preaching and practice) as Jesus replied to Caiaphas, "Ask those who heard me, what I said to them; they know what I said I have spoken openly to the world."

I don't believe my preaching or pastoral care has changed radically since coming to Concordia Seminary in this new ministerial capacity. It is the same simplicity and centrality of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. I endeavor to use God's Law with the same directness and severity, as need be. Approaches might be different, since one deals with a unique, educated, near professional Christian young man, much as one relates to brother pastors. My colleagues preach the same Gospel, apply the same Law, as needed.

The substance of my faith subscription is found in the Holy Bible as systematized and defended in the Lutheran Confessions. Luther's *Small Catechism* is an excellent summary of the essentials of that faith. The Gospel of Jesus as Savior is central in all of these. This is beautifully epitomized in the words of St. John (20, 30-31): "Now Jesus did many other signs in the presence of the disciples, which are not written in this book; but these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing, you might have life in His name." Prophets as well as evangelists and apostles give witness to this central fact of faith, as Peter asserts in Acts 10, 43: "To him all the prophets bear witness that everyone who believes in him receives forgiveness of sins through his name." Nor is there any other way or any other Gospel! Jesus said so when He proclaimed, John 14, 6: "I am the Way, and the Truth, and the Life; no one comes to the Father, but by me." Peter underscores this exclusive salvation fact of faith in Acts 4, 12: "There is salvation in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved."

This is the simplicity of the "foolishness" of my faith. I share it with my family; I have believed and preached it from the pulpit; I have ministered it to the sick and dying; I have discussed it with brother pastors without shame or suspicion of others; I have found it unfailingly on the campus of Concordia Seminary, both in chapel services, which I attend regularly, and in classroom, where I have taught some and attended at least two classes for two terms in the Confessions and in exegesis. I have used many professors as resource persons in various conferences for pastor-supervisors, where they, like me, found them to be confessional, theologically sound, professional, and scholarly, as they should be, in a theological school. These professors are dedicated to preparing young men for the sacred ministry. God has very wisely given a variety of gifts to His Church: "His gifts were that some should be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, some

pastors and teachers " (Eph. 4, 11). All ordained pastors are one or more of these; some few pastors are all of these; and in this day of specialization some are more specifically gifted in one area than in another. God has given some very unique, specialized gifts to members of the faculty. With those gifts they are working with young men who have been blessed by God with the basic saving faith in Jesus as Lord and Savior. Our called professors have the task of teaching future shepherds of the Church to think and be equipped with the proper tools for ministry among modern thinking, educated, as well as deprived mankind. They must teach more than the catechism, else what is a theological seminary all about? These young men must learn to use, interpret, preach, and in general relate God's Word and will to people in all their complex needs with purity, reality, honesty and accuracy. No papal pronouncements or well intended white-wash here!

In my opinion, having interviewed, pastored, placed, supervised, and counseled some 1,300 student "products" in the past eight years as director of field education and vicarages, both the faculty and the students are doing a real job. What a pity if Lutheran professors, who have subscribed to the Confessions of our Church, are not allowed to teach theologically and professionally; if the very gifts for which the Church called them to the seminary are used against them, if the clear thinking and writing of the faculty, brother pastors, are turned against them.

I am a product of the same seminary. I honestly believe the present product is better equipped for ministry then we were in our time. Pastor-supervisors of vicars say the same about the faith and professional skills of our students. They out there in the field say with almost monotonous (but beautiful!) regularity, "If this student is typical of the ministerial students being prepared at the seminary, the church has a great future."

Yes, I believe! I believe in My Lord. I believe in His Church. I believe in our church. I believe in our seminary. I believe in my colleagues. I believe in the product.

Erwin L. Lueker
Professor of Systematic Theology

1. By the grace of God I have been incorporated into Christ and His Church by the working of the Spirit through the Word.
2. By the grace of God I am a member of The Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod.
3. By the grace of God I am a minister of the church. I am convinced that the doctrinal commitment for such ministry in The Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod is in harmony with the Word of God.
4. I accept the Scriptures of the Old and New Testament as the written Word of God and the only rule and norm of faith and practice.
5. I accept all the Symbolical Books itemized in Article II of the Constitution of The Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod as a true and unadulterated statement and exposition of the Word of God.
6. I believe that my ordination pledge has the nature of an agreement solemnly made before God by me and the church. It can, therefore, only be altered (expanded-diminished) by mutual consent.
7. I agree with Walther that Article I gives the maximum optimum doctrinal basis for our Church. I also agree with the view of Walther that the *Augsburg Confession* is the basic confession of the Lutheran Church of which later confessions listed in Article II are developments and elucidations.
8. I believe that the *Augsburg Confession* (or, for laymen, Luther's *Small Catechism*) is an adequate and the best *norma normata* for determining the Lutheran stance. I believe that additions to the symbols enumerated in Article II, suggested on the plea of inadequacy of the confessions, should be carefully studied for possible deviations from the Lutheran position.
9. I believe that the unity of the Church is Christo-centric and is attained by preaching the Gospel according to a pure under-

standing and by properly administering the Sacraments.

10. I believe that all who participate in Christ by faith are true members of the Church.
11. I believe that all those who participate in Christ strive for unity in the church (*unitas in ecclesia; harmonia*) including doctrinal unity.
12. I agree with Walther that knowledge in doctrinal matters is in the area of sanctification. Hence no one, including theologians, is free of error in this life. This has three implications: a) Christians should continually forgive each other their errors as they forgive sins. b) Christians should strive together for perfection in doctrine and life, c) Though error dare never be condoned, errorists should not be treated as though they were heretics.
13. There have always been differences in the church like those of Paul and Peter, Luther and Melancthon, Walther and Pieper.
14. There will always be diversity in the church. Such diversity should not always be construed as differences in doctrine. In patristic literature there was extensive diversity on conceptualizations of creation. Luther's conceptualization of the descent to hell need not be shared by those who agree with his doctrine.
15. Proper distinctions must be made between such factors as doctrine, dogmatics, exegesis, historical theology, rationalizations, conceptualizations, logic, world view, etc.
16. Walther is my favorite American theologian although I am aware of his limitations. Particularly significant for me is his view that pure doctrine is attained by relating dogma properly to justification.

Here Walther followed in the footsteps of Luther, who frequently emphasized the Gospel-centered approach in statements like the following:

"Thus all of Scripture, as already said, is pure Christ, God's and Mary's Son. Everything is focused on this Son, so that we might know Him distinctively and in that way see the Father and the

Holy Spirit eternally as one God. To him who has the Son Scripture is an open book; and the stronger his faith in Christ becomes, the more brightly will the light of Scripture shine for him." (15:339)

This basic principle naturally leads to an approach to Scripture through Law-Gospel dichotomy.

17. I believe that a critical study of isagogics has been a prominent presupposition of Lutheran biblical study.
18. Historical critical methodology is a valuable tool also for theologians in the best tradition of Lutheranism. Since it is methodology, no exact rules can be devised for its use (note its use in areas like the following: authorship; text interpretation; textual criticism; origin and understanding of Athanasian Creed).
19. The foregoing are only random statements and are not to be construed as covering all the important points of theology. They pertain to concerns properly or improperly catapulted into current discussion to which faculty members of Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, were asked to respond. They are not a systematic presentation of theological presuppositions.
20. As a teacher I regard it as my vocation prayerfully and humbly to dedicate myself to the interpretation of the Scriptures and the Lutheran Confessions.

Herbert T. Mayer
Managing Editor, Concordia Theological Monthly
Professor of Historical Theology

In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost.
Amen.

I believe in God the Father Almighty, that is, I place in Him my complete trust, confident of His love, guidance and support.

I believe that God the creator is Lord of the universe and controls all human affairs, although He is not responsible for the evil that men do. I believe that He governs the course of the world and its peoples normally through natural and historical cause-effect relationships, although He is free to suspend such observable cause-effect relationships whenever He chooses. (We call such actions "miracles.")

I believe that through His Son Jesus Christ, God created the world, that He created man in His own image, but that man rebelled and by that act introduced sin into the lives of all His descendants. I believe that I am a sinner who deserves eternal separation from God, were it not for my Lord Jesus Christ. I believe that God gave His only-begotten Son into death so that all who believe in Him might not perish but have everlasting life. I believe that His Son was made man through the Virgin Mary, that in all things He was tempted as we are, yet without sin, that He suffered, died and rose again, that He is now seated in glory at the right hand of the Father, still clothed in His human nature, and that He will come again to judge the living and the dead.

I believe that God has sent forth the Spirit of His Son into my heart, teaching me to cry "Abba, Father," for I know that I cannot by my own reason or strength believe in Jesus Christ, my Lord, or come to Him. I believe that the Spirit uses a variety of means to call me to faith and to preserve and nurture me in the faith, including Holy Baptism, the Holy Bible, Holy Communion and the conversation and consolation of the brethren.

I believe that the Spirit has inspired the Scripture to be the record, witness and medium through which God expresses His wrath against sin and His unchanging love for sinners. Through the Scripture, the Holy Spirit accomplishes God's foreign work of judging the

sinner, and His proper work of forgiving the repentant sinner.

In the church the Holy Scriptures is the only norm for establishing and judging doctrine. As they interpret and apply Scripture, Christians are bound to use only those methods that are compatible with the nature of the Scriptures themselves. In my judgment, the use of the techniques of historical-critical research with the specific Lutheran presuppositions spelled out in the CTCR document, "A Lutheran Stance Toward Contemporary Biblical Studies," is a proper and helpful method of interpretation. As I study the Scriptures, I discover that they have become authoritative for me because they testify to Jesus Christ and to my need for him. Thus in my own experience I have come to balance the "Gospel" principle and the "Scripture" principle, for I have discovered that the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ is the object of my faith and that the Scriptures are dear to me because they witness to Him. I cheerfully accept the doctrine that is taught in the Lutheran Confessions because it is based solidly on the divine Scriptures.

I believe that the Spirit continues to guide all those whom He has made members of the One, holy, Christian and apostolic church although no noncanonical writings possess the same authority as the canonical Scripture. However, I find that the Spirit often uses the writings of these fathers to instruct, reassure and educate me. Like the Lutheran Confessors, I refuse to follow any father who contradicts the clear meaning of Scripture. Nor do I accept or believe any doctrine only because it is found in the fathers or in the creeds and confessions of the Church.

I believe that the Holy Spirit continues to give to His church an infinite variety of great and wonderful gifts so that the entire church may move toward the mark of the stature of Jesus Christ. I believe that whenever anyone of these brothers or sisters teaches or corrects me, the Holy Spirit is fulfilling His promise to lead us into all truth.

I believe that the Spirit calls us into the church to follow in the footsteps of our Lord Jesus Christ, Who went about preaching that the kingdom of God was at hand and healing all manner of diseases. I believe that the Gospel of God's grace empowers me to be gracious to my neighbor in all his necessities and to use all proper

means to share with my neighbors the spiritual and physical blessings of God, Who causes His sun to shine on the just and the unjust.

Duane P. Mehl
Assistant Professor of Practical Theology
(Homiletics, Pastoral Theology)

I believe in one God, Father, Almighty, Who has made and still sustains the heavens and the earth; upon Whose Breath and Word all things visible and invisible depend for their existence.

I believe in one Lord Jesus Christ, my Lord Jesus Christ, the only begotten Son of God, precisely God, Who came down from heaven for all men fallen in sin from the family of the Father and thereby worthy of damnation; Who, born of the Virgin Mary as Man, yet God in one Man, was crucified for us in our history under Pontius Pilate; Who suffered, died and was buried for us who have fallen from the Father together with our parents, Adam and Eve. As the Scripture prophesied, Jesus Christ rose from the dead for us on the third day and thus gave us the Way with Him back to the family of the Father. The Lord Jesus ascended for us to the right hand of the Father; and He shall come again for us with glory to judge those of us alive and those dead. His Kingdom, his rule, shall have no end.

I stake my life on Jesus Christ. I believe that the record of His life, together with all God's mighty words and acts as revealed in the Sacred Scriptures, are the sole source and norm of, the infallible witness to, the Christian faith and life. I believe and stake my life upon God's continuing presence in judgment and in grace in a world, visible and invisible, which He alone sustains, He alone redeems, and He alone continues to render worthy of His love through His love.

I believe, therefore, in the Holy Ghost, the continuing Presence of God in our world. I believe that the Holy Ghost is the Lord and Giver of Life, Who proceeds from the Father and the Son, and Who together with the Father and the Son is worshipped and glorified by and in the Church, now and forever. I believe the Holy Ghost spoke by the prophets and evangelists through the Scriptures, and through the prophets and evangelists of the Scriptures continues to speak with Divine authority His Word of judgment and grace in our world today.

I believe in the one holy catholic and apostolic Church, in the family of God raised through and by the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. I believe in the family which together shares the One Baptism in faith for the remission of sins; in the family which together shares in faith around the table of God in communion the real Body and blood of Jesus Christ in anticipation of the celestial meal to which His saints look forward in the age to come. I humbly give thanks to God for granting me membership in His family through His most gracious means. Together with His saints, I look forward in faith to the life of the world to come.

In His wisdom, our Lord called Professor Carl S. Meyer to his eternal home on Sunday, December 17, 1972. Dr. Meyer joined his faculty colleagues in cheerfully confessing his personal faith to the church which he served, His faith and trust in his Savior give us all reason for joy.

Blessed are those who die in the Lord.

Carl S. Meyer ✕
Graduate Professor of Historical Theology

In the first article of the *Augsburg Confession* reference is made to the decree of the Council of Nicaea regarding the Trinity. With that the subscribers to the *Augsburg Confession* profess their continuity with the ancient church.

I, too, would profess my agreement with the ecumenical creeds of the church and with the Confessions of the Lutheran Church because they are in harmony with the apostolic and prophetic Scriptures. I made this vow on the occasion of my ordination on 13 September 1931, when my now sainted father laid his hands on me. I repeated the vow when I was installed as professor of Historical Theology at Concordia Seminary in October 1954. Furthermore, in the preface to the Apology of the *Augsburg Confession* Melancthon said, "I have always made it a point to stick as closely as possible to traditional formulas in order to foster the attainment of harmony."

Like Melancthon I have been ready to use "traditional formulas" in my teaching and preaching, although I have recognized and have also accommodated myself to changing patterns of speech without in any way wishing to negate the power of the Gospel or to disturb the harmony of the church.

I speak to some specific issues below, commending my cause to Christ. "We beseech Him to regard His afflicted and scattered churches and to restore them to a godly and abiding harmony," as Melancthon also prayed.

I. The Holy Scriptures.

The prophetic and apostolic Scriptures were given by the Holy Spirit's inspiration to human authors, who were supplied with the "content and fitting word." These writings are the inspired Word of God in which God "speaks as the infallible and unchanging God, whose message never changes." This Word of God alone establishes articles of faith (*Smalcald Articles*, Part II, Art. II). The Holy Scriptures teach both Law and Gospel, but the chief content of the Holy Scriptures is the Gospel.

God has given us the Scriptures to comfort us with the for-

givenness of sins and reconciliation with Him. Luther was very explicit about his emphasis on Christ and the Gospel. He defines the Word as "the promise and the ministry" (*Luther's Works*, VIII, 181). The Word, the sacraments, absolution are given by God to the church for the consolation of the sinner. The efficacy of the Word is due to the power of God in that Word. In it God reveals to us His Son. "Hear ye Him" (Matt. 17:5). Luther often quoted this passage. Once when citing it he added, "He wants us to hear the Word and to believe it." (*Luther's Works*, V, 348)

There are difficulties and dark passages in the Scriptures and the origins of these difficulties are not always easily uncovered. Nor is their solution always easy or possible. Terms like "verbal inspiration," "plenary inspiration," "inerrancy," introduce dimensions which the Scriptures themselves do not stress. The Apostle Luke says that "many" compiled accounts from eyewitnesses and that he, too, since he had paid close attention to what was happening, wanted to record his "orderly account." Luke is concerned about giving an accurate report. Yet he does not add that his record is truthful because of inspiration although he might have. There are many passages in the Scriptures that assert, "Thus says the Lord," or words to that effect. The fact of inspiration is closely coupled with the functions for which God gives His Word.

II. The Historical-Critical Method.

Biblical exegetes approach the sacred writings with presuppositions and assumptions regardless of what method they use. It is only proper that they should state their presuppositions, assumptions, and beliefs, or make them evident. However, it is not proper to make a **method** of biblical interpretation the criterion of orthodoxy. Luther, for instance, said of the method of interpretation that found four senses of Scripture that he would not disallow it, so long as it would not make Scripture uncertain. He asked that any interpretation based on that method be "supported by the authority of Scripture, by the custom of the fathers, or by grammatical principles" (*Luther's Works*, XXVII, 311). Luther used the most up-to-date tools for Biblical interpretation at his disposal. In our day scholars who use the historical-critical method should not rely on unsupported speculations; Lutheran scholars should not allow their conclusions to depart from the doctrinal position to which they have subscribed.

Historians subject their sources to examination. They want to know the date of the composition of a given document, the place of composition, its originality, in fact whatever may be known about the origin of the source. Its authenticity or genuineness is not necessarily dependent on its authorship; an anonymous document may be authentic. In the transmission of a document from the time of origin to the present there can be changes and variations.

Historians are also concerned about the content of the source. They wish to establish the real sense of the testimony. Language is not static. Moreover, the nature and the purpose of the document is important to them. They examine the accounts of two or more witnesses of the same event, if at all possible.

The writers in their telling of events come with their interpretations. Historians in reading the documents come with their presuppositions and make their interpretations.

Biblical interpretations must ask about the composition of the Biblical books, the nature and purpose of each of the books. They apply the canons of the historians of literature. Such canons must be used with the proper safeguards. Naturalistic suppositions, theories which discredit any evidence of divine actions, hypotheses which rest on the imagination of the critic and not on fact, and the like must be avoided in the interest of sound Biblical scholarship. Conclusions that negate the doctrinal teachings of the Lutheran Confessions are not permitted to the Lutheran practitioner of the historical-critical method.

III. Creation and the Fall of Man.

The God who rules, governs, and preserves the universe is the God who made it and all creatures. His creation was not a once-for-all time action, even as His providence is not a one time act. God operates through natural forces, various factors in history, men, and supernatural beings. His acts may be cataclysmic, revolutionary, sudden; they may follow the processes of growth, development, change, continuity, and discontinuity. The Biblical accent on the creative acts of God must be kept. One account is in Genesis 1. Psalms 104 and Job 38-42, e.g., also tell about God's work of creation. The earth, the waters, the living things in them were created by God. God, not chance, is the author of nature, the controlling force, whose ways

are often hidden to us. When God reveals Himself to us, He reveals Himself primarily in His Son.

By His Word, His Son, He created the heavens and the earth and all things in them. His creation, even as His providence, is a continuous process. However, God has not made us privy to the deep mysteries of His creative or providential activities.

Luther in his comments on Genesis 1:14 says that the Holy Spirit "has His own language and ways of expression." The philosopher and the astronomer, too, uses his own terms. Luther says: "Every science should make use of its own terminology, and should not for this reason condemn the other or ridicule it; but one should rather be of use to the other, and they should put their achievements at one another's disposal." (*Luther's Works* 1, 48)

To me the evidence points to a specific, deliberate, creative act of God in making man. He who in the fullness of time sent His Son, also at a specific time made man. This man was made in righteousness and holiness.

Man fell into sin by an act of disobedience. The account in Genesis 3 is obscure. Luther, recognizing this, said: "This account is so obscure in order that all things might be held over for Christ and for His Spirit, who was to shed light throughout the entire world like the midday sun and open all the mysteries of Scripture" (*Luther's Works*, 1, 145). Since man's fall all men are sinners.

God is not the author of evil. Demonic forces are active and they try to negate the good, the true, and the beautiful in the continuous creative and providential activities of God.

Creation and Providence, the conquest of evil and the restoration of righteousness, hope and comfort are all in all in Christ and come to us through His Word, His sacraments, absolution, and the ministrations of His church.

IV. Miscellaneous Questions.

It is not necessary, I believe, to comment on every issue that has been raised in the present situation. However, several questions have been raised that need to be touched on.

He who made all things and upholds all things by the word of His power certainly can, has, and does perform miracles. We may not always recognize them and His intervention may be indirect rather than direct.

The physical resurrection of Christ is fully attested in the Scriptures even though there were no actual eyewitnesses of the event itself.

The Virgin Birth is confessed by the Christian Church. The Virgin Mary conceived by the power of the Holy Spirit.

In the Lord's Supper we have the communion of the Body and Blood of Christ in communion with the members of His Body, the church.

The sacraments grant, convey, and seal to us the forgiveness of sin and reconciliation with God.

The third function of the law is set forth in Article VI of the *Formula of Concord*. There is a distinction between Law and Gospel, as Article V of the *Formula of Concord* testifies. The fruits of the Spirit are evident in the life of the believer. Because he is sinner and saint (*simul iustus et peccator*) both Law and Gospel are preached to him. "We hear God when He addresses us in Baptism, in Holy Communion, in confession, and in His Word as it proceeds from the mouth of the men who proclaim His message to the people." (*Luther's Works*, XXII, 202)

V. The Confessions and Synod's Doctrinal Stance.

"The Church is the pupil of Christ; and although it teaches, it does not teach anything except what has been entrusted to it by Christ. Even the Spirit of God does the same thing (John 16:14): 'He will take what is Mine'" (*Luther's Works*, II, 356). We subscribe to the Confessions of the Lutheran Church because they agree with the Scriptures. They exalt Christ. Absolute and complete agreement in all points of doctrine, not merely in the chief articles of faith, or agreement in the interpretation of all Scripture passages is not demanded by the Confessions. (See John Gerhard's *Loci Theologici*, V, 1095)

Melanchthon in his treatise on "The Church and the Authority of the Word" (1539) emphasized that the ancient writers "must be judged according to the Word of God, which abides always as the rule of doctrine." The church does not originate articles of faith, he maintained. He added to that: "The synods of the church which, while disputing about the Word of God, do teach and admonish us, are to be heard. But let judgment be used and when they yield us things that are true, let us believe them because of the Word of God."

Eldon E. Pederson
Director of Health and Physical Education

I think of my faith as being very simple; perhaps best expressed by the Apostle's Creed and its explanations in Luther's Small Catechism. The witness and guidance of my Christian parents and the instruction I received during my confirmation classes formed the foundation for my faith in Jesus Christ as the Son of God, my Lord and Savior. His death on the cross and His resurrection from the dead paid for my sins. So out of His great love for me and other sinners, I am assured of everlasting life. God says that He will give eternal life to me and all believers, but to believers only.

"God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life."
(John 3:16)

My faith has grown and matured over the years. God has put me through trials and experiences that have challenged and tested the strength, sincerity and depth of my faith. I've had to make some choices regarding my relationship to God. My faith had to be put into action if I was to claim Christ as my Savior. Through the help of

prayer and the Holy Spirit, I have put my problems in God's hands, then tried my best to do what I thought would be pleasing to God and finally accepting His will without my second guessing.

I believe the Bible to be the inspired Word of God. The Bible and the working of the Holy Spirit have built and strengthened my Christian faith. I regard the Bible as my guide to Christian living.

I am saved by faith, not by what I do. Because of my faith and the Word and the Spirit working in me, I believe that I live my faith daily. If I am going to claim God as my Father, then I should act as one of God's children. If I don't use my faith, I feel I will surely lose it. As a follower of Christ, I should reflect my Christian faith by loving others, serving others, being patient and gentle with others, being courteous to others, setting an example for others, forgiving others as God forgives me, not judging others, edifying others, praying for others, and having a thankful heart.

I know that I fall short in my Christian living because I am a sinner and not a saint. But I believe I should try to do my best in living my Christian faith and sharing it with my fellowmen.

Through a life in athletics, most of it spent coaching and directing the program at Concordia Seminary, I have attempted to teach and witness in accordance with what I have stated as my confession of faith.

Arthur Carl Piepkorn
Graduate Professor of Systematic Theology

I believe in one God, the Father, the Almighty, the maker of the heavens and the earth, of everything that is seen and everything that is unseen.

I believe in one Lord Jesus Christ, the unique Son of God, eternally begotten by the Father. I believe that Jesus Christ is true God from true God; that he is begotten, not created; that he is identical in being with the Father; that through him everything was made and that without him nothing came into being (St. John 1,3); that for us human beings and for the salvation of all of us he came down from heaven without ceasing to be in heaven (St. John 1,18); that he was born out of the Holy Spirit and the Virgin Mary, the Mother of God (*Formula of Concord, Solid Declaration, 8,24*); that he became a human being, like us in everything, except that he was sinless (Hebrews 2,14; 4,15); that for our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate; that he suffered the death penalty; that he was buried; that on the third day he rose again in fulfillment of the scriptures; that he ascended into heaven; that also as a human being he has entered into the full exercise of his divine power (*Formula of Concord, Solid Declaration, 8,26*); that he will come again in glory to pronounce judgment on the living and on the dead; and that his kingly rule will have no end.

I believe in the Holy Spirit, lordly and life-giving (*to kyrion kai zoopoion*). I believe that the Holy Spirit proceeds from the Father through the Son; that together with the Father and the Son the Holy Spirit is worshiped and glorified; and that the Holy Spirit has spoken through the prophets.

I believe in (*eis*) one holy catholic and apostolic church. I believe that our Lord Jesus Christ founded the church and that it has never ceased to exist and that it will continue to exist upon the earth until his parousia (*Augsburg Confession, 7,1*). I believe that to enable human beings to obtain the faith that forgives sins our Lord Jesus Christ established the sacred ministry in the church and gave to the church the gospel and sacraments, by which God communicates his Holy Spirit to human beings (*Augsburg Confession, 5,1-3*). I believe that through these means the Holy Spirit creates in human beings faith in the gospel, namely, that human beings receive forgiveness of their sins freely for Christ's sake alone when they believe that they are indeed received into God's grace and that their sins are indeed forgiven for Christ's sake (*Augsburg Confession, 4*). I believe that through these means the Holy Spirit continually calls the church into being, gathers it together from all the nations of the earth, enlightens it,

makes it holy, and keeps it loyal to its Lord and Head in the one true faith (*Small Catechism*, Creed, 6). I affirm that the church's chief mission on earth is to proclaim this gospel to all human beings (St. Matthew 28,19; *Smalcald Articles*, III, 4).

I acknowledge one baptism for the forgiveness of sins. I affirm that in the sacrament of the altar the consecrated bread and wine are the body and the blood of Christ (*Smalcald Articles*, III, 6,1); that through reception of the holy communion God's people are united in one body (*Apology*, 10,3) and obtain forgiveness of sins, God's own divine life, and liberation from the consequences of their native sinfulness and of their sins (*Small Catechism*, Sacrament of the Altar, 6). I affirm that in holy absolution Christians who have rejected their baptismal grace are restored to the communion of the church (*Apology*, 28,13). I affirm that when pastors ordain qualified candidates to the sacred ministry such ordinations are valid by divine right (*Treatise on the Authority and Primacy of the Pope*, 65,72). I affirm that marriage, divinely instituted at the beginning of human history, is a symbol of the union between Christ and his church (*Apology*, 13, 14; *Small Catechism*, Marriage Booklet, 16).

I await the resurrection of the dead at the end of this age and the fulness of the life of the age to come.

Apart from this general statement of my convictions, I have two further observations to make:

1. The specific issues on which I am asked to state my stand -- the relation of law and gospel; the purpose, authority, infallibility, unity, and interpretation of the sacred scriptures; the relation of the gospel to the sacred scriptures; the "canonical text"; Old Testament prophecy; and original sin -- are not of equal theological importance nor are they, taken as a whole, the most important theological issues confronting the church. I speak to these issues specifically because I have been asked to do so and I take them up in the order in which I do because that is the order in which they have been proposed to me.

2. In all of these issues, and in all theological issues to which I am required to speak in carrying out my duties as a professor of systematic theology at Concordia Seminary, I cheerfully accept the doctrinal content of the Lutheran symbolical books. I conscientiously try to let the doctrinal content of the Lutheran symbolical books

inform my public and private teaching on these issues and on all other theological issues.

1. **The Relation between the Law and the Gospel**

I regard the conventional Lutheran law-gospel polarity as a denominational construction which is derived from data of the sacred scriptures, although the sacred scriptures do not explicitly distinguish the law from the gospel, as Lutherans understand these terms. I hold that in the sense that the terms have in Lutheran theology, the law and the gospel are ultimately functions of the word of God. That is, for the Christian every word of God, however conveyed, has both a law function and a gospel function. Every word of God calls the Christian's attention to the divine demand for holiness and to the divine judgment upon our human sinfulness, as well as to God's concern that we see him as the merciful and gracious God who in Christ has reconciled the world to himself. (This observation is not intended-obviously-to deny that at the level of Christian experience, many passages in the sacred scriptures will appear to be primarily "law" passages and others will appear to be primarily "gospel" passages.) To stress the fact that the law and the gospel, as Lutherans understand the terms, are functions that inhere in the word of God, I prefer to speak of a law-gospel polarity (rather than of a law-gospel antithesis).

In my theological use of the law-gospel polarity I feel myself bound by the definitive Lutheran exposition of this subject in Article 5 of the *Formula of Concord*. I would stress that the law-gospel distinction is a particularly useful hermeneutical criterion in dealing with the sacred scriptures; but it must not, in my view, be exalted to the place where it is the primary or the exclusive hermeneutical criterion. When it does become the primary or exclusive hermeneutical criterion, the tremendous "bite" of the law-gospel distinction is lost.

In the cited article I find especially helpful the priority that the gospel function of God's word receives as God's proper and hence most "godly" work over his "strange" work of punishment. I also find the definition of the gospel as "everything that comforts sinners and offers them the favor and the grace of God" (*Formula of Concord, Solid Declaration*, 5,21) as highly helpful.

According to that article our life in Christ is a ceaseless rhythm

in which the gospel constantly reassures us that God has forgiven our sinfulness and our sins and empowers us more perfectly to do his will and in which the law presents us with impossible demands that even as forgiven children of God we cannot meet, so that we stand in constant need of forgiveness.

2. The Purpose of the Sacred Scriptures

I see the purposes of the sacred scriptures defined in the sacred scriptures themselves. These purposes are to disclose to us the being of God and his purpose to enlighten us through his written word in our native darkness (Psalm 119, 105), to create and confirm in us faith in Jesus Christ as the Son of God (St. John 20, 21); to provide us with instruction (*didaskalia*), to reprove us, to correct us, and to train us in righteousness, so that as children of God we may be complete, equipped for every good work (2 Timothy 3, 16); to give us a right mind-set (*nouthesia*) (1 Corinthians 10, 11); to provide our hope with encouragement (*paraklesis*) (Romans 15, 4). He did not give us his revelation to satisfy our curiosity (even about spiritual things), to play games with it, or to give us information about the subject matter of secular disciplines like mathematics, history, astronomy, physics, and geography. Where the sacred scriptures in incidental fashion speak in these areas, we must recognize (1) that the documents of the sacred scriptures reflect the scientific and historical information of their times; (2) that a concern for meticulously exact descriptions of the historical, physical, and other scientific details that attended the episodes which the biblical record reports obviously does not characterize the sacred scriptures; and (3) that in many parts of the sacred scriptures -- especially in the Old Testament -- literary forms are used in which the historical, physical, and scientific data are not integral to the religious purpose of the sacred scriptures.

3. The Authority of the Sacred Scriptures

I do not find the sacred scriptures talking about their "authority." Certainly the common English meaning of the term which attributes to authority coercive power to decide issues and exercise jurisdiction does not apply to the sacred scriptures. When James Andrea calls the sacred scriptures the one eternal judge in controverted articles of religion (*Formula of Concord, Epitome, Of the Summary Concept, 7*), this is as much a metaphor as when the symbols call the sacred scriptures a fountain.

As long as there has been a church there have been sacred scriptures. Precisely what this term included at a given time is only relatively clear. The Jewish canon was not fixed until late in the first century of our era and exactly what happened at the council of Jamnia we do not know. In broad outlines the Christian church took over the "canonical" scriptures of Judaism, with all the ambiguities as to details which this statement implies. Again, the early church operated with a growing canon, which was not the same at all points in time or place. Indeed, even today the historic churches are not in total agreement about the scope of the Old Testament canon. The early church never officially defined the canon of either Testament. The canon that the Western church, and ultimately the Church of the *Augsburg Confession*, worked with was one the outlines of which were determined more by liturgical usage than by any other factor.

Among all the historic churches, the Church of the *Augsburg Confession* is the only major communion which did not undertake to list the books of its biblical canon in the 16th century.

This is all germane to the question of the "authority" of the sacred scriptures. The church historically has accorded to its canon for the time being a unique status not shared by any other collection of documents. It saw in these documents, in a sense that it was never able adequately to explain or account for, the written word of God. The term referred not only to the passages that explicitly profess to be divine oracles, but in a general and inclusive way to the totality of what the church regarded as sacred scriptures.

The "authority" of the sacred scriptures lies in the fact that at the supernatural level they have God as their author. This ancient reverence for the written word of God I share.

Although my specific tasks as a teacher of theology are primarily in the historic-systematic field, I have a responsibility to try to determine what God is saying to me, to the church, and to the world through his written word. On the "high articles of the divine majesty" I see myself as standing in agreement with all Christians; in the articles which the Lutheran symbolical books discuss I see myself as standing in agreement with all who with me are committed to the acceptance of the doctrinal content of the *Book of Concord*; in many points of teaching beyond these issues I see a wide range of positions both on points of synthesized and formulated theology and on the

interpretation of individual passages of the sacred scriptures where there is no unanimity.

In this last area I see it as my task (1) to try to discover, with all of the means available to me, what a specific passage of the sacred scriptures is affirming and (2) to integrate these insights into my understanding of the doctrinal content of the *Book of Concord* which is for me the normative interpretation of the biblical message. In this area I must expect to find disagreement on the part of theologians among themselves and with my own conclusions. As long as these views do not contradict "the high articles of the divine majesty" as the "catholic" creeds set them forth, I cannot read those who dissent from my views out of the Christian community; as long as these views do not contradict the doctrinal content of the *Book of Concord* I cannot read those who dissent from my views out of the Lutheran community.

To summarize: I see the "authority" of the sacred scriptures in the fact that at the supernatural level they have God as their "author." For the term "authority of the sacred scriptures" as it is commonly used in theological discussion, I should prefer to substitute the term "normative character of the sacred scriptures" that is, the sacred scriptures are the standard by which all teachings and all teachers are to be evaluated (*Formula of Concord, Solid Declaration, Of the Summary Concept, 3*).

4. The Infallibility of the Sacred Scriptures

"Infallible" as applied to the sacred scriptures is a theological, not a biblical, term. It does not occur in the *Book of Concord* in this context. The closest biblical category would be "truthful." The closest symbolical category would be "veracious" (*wahrhaftige/certissima*) (*Formula of Concord, Solid Declaration, Of the Summary Concept, 3*). As in the case of the parallel word "inerrancy;" the most that the sacred scriptures can say of themselves and that we can say of them is that they are truthful and dependable.

It is my understanding that "infallible" is intended to say precisely this: When the sacred scriptures make a statement to me about God or about his saving purpose in Christ for all human beings and for me, or about his will for the ordering of the life of the people of God and of my life as a member of his people, such a word is com-

pletely true and dependable. I can follow it without having to fear that this word of God either goes astray or leads his people or me astray.

5. The Unity of the Sacred Scriptures

The unity of the sacred scriptures arises from the fact that at the supernatural level they have one God as their author and his one plan for the salvation of all human beings in Christ as their subject. Certain elements are unchanging. God is throughout the one who disposes of the future according to his own sovereign will. He is always the one who thinks and acts in a totally different way from the way we think and act. He is always merciful and gracious, long-suffering, compassionate, and forgiving. He is always in the process of directing the course of history toward the conclusion when he will be all in all.

As we look back we can see that during the era of the Old Covenant he was revealing the manner of his ultimate salvation with cumulatively increasing clarity, until in the incarnation of the Son of God in Jesus of Nazareth, in his life, in his death, and in his exaltation God has finally and as fully as he ever will revealed himself as eternal Love. Precisely because the biblical documents that come to us out of the Old Covenant were written prior to the coming of our Savior, the unity of sacred scriptures is something that we can affirm only in the Holy Spirit, only in faith, and only in the recognition that God's purposes were constantly moving toward that climactic point in human history when his Son would enter our history to be our Savior and our Redeemer.

6. The Interpretation of the Sacred Scriptures

The interpretation of the sacred scriptures is both like and quite unlike the interpretation of any other written document.

The sacred scriptures themselves give us no list of principles of interpretation. The frequently invoked principles of the unicity of the literal sense (*sensus literalis unus est*) and of internal consistency (*scriptura scripturam interpretatur*) are rational principles used in the interpretation of secular texts as well.

To be able to see the sacred scriptures as the written word of God is a gift that the Holy Spirit must impart. There are no criteria

that we can devise that will prove such a thesis. To be able to see in the sacred scriptures what the Holy Spirit designed them to disclose to us requires the illumination of the Holy Spirit that presided over their production. It is the experience of the church and of individual Christians that in these areas scriptures are unlike any other document and their interpretation requires more than linguistic and historical competence.

On the other hand, God chose to use a variety of human authors, who wrote their messages in human words over a long period of time, in at least three different languages, in quite varied historical circumstances, in a variety of literary forms (not all of which are immediately obvious to us in our culture, and who were as limited in their scientific and historical knowledge as their contemporaries were. The way in which the individual documents came to be, the manner in which their component parts were compiled and edited, the mode by which they were transmitted from generation to generation - all these processes are amply illustrated by what we know about other but similar documents that come to us from the same period and the same cultural matrix. From these aspects, the interpretation of the sacred scriptures does not differ significantly from the interpretation of other contemporary documents. We must proceed to establish the text as well as we can, we need to know as much as we can about the historical circumstances that attended the production of the document, we need to know as much as we can about the language, the grammar, the syntax, the vocabulary, the literary forms, and the underlying world-picture that we encounter. We need to take due cognizance of the theological emphases of the author, as well as of the broader and immediate contexts of the passage that we are studying. By God's providence we know much more about these things than any previous generation and many passages of the sacred scriptures have gained in clarity as a result; at the same time, some commonly accepted past interpretations, based upon inadequate information, have had to be abandoned.

In applying the principle that "Scripture interprets Scripture" (*scriptura scripturam interpretatur*) we discover which scripture is in the nominative (*scriptura*) and which scripture is in the accusative (*scripturam*) not from the bible immediately, but from our theological tradition.

7. The Relation between the Gospel and the Sacred Scriptures

The term "gospel" has two meanings in Lutheran theology (and in the sacred scriptures). Taken strictly, it can mean the glad announcement of God's saving action in Christ; taken broadly, it can mean the whole Christian religion, of which God's saving action in Christ is the cardinal datum. Since God's saving action in Christ - or speaking more generally so as to include the Old Covenant, God's merciful, gracious, and compassionate disposition toward human beings - is the one decisive religious datum which human beings can know only through divine revelation, the specific contribution that the sacred scriptures make to our religious knowledge as the written word of God is to document God's saving action in Christ. In this way God's saving action in Christ is the core, center, heart, and chief part of the sacred scriptures. Other areas of religious data in the sacred scriptures are ultimately significant as they relate to this central datum. Some are so very intimately related to this central datum that they are substantially an integral part of the central datum - the biblical teaching about God, about the church, about the ministry and what theology calls the sacraments, and about the relation of the present age and the age to come, to cite a few examples. Others are less directly, although importantly, related to the central datum - the biblical teaching about creation, about secular government, about personal and social ethics, and about the sacred scriptures themselves, to cite examples. These less directly related data are important, but they are not autonomously so; they derive their Christian significance from their relation to the central datum which they subserve.

In summary: The gospel in the narrow sense is not one doctrinal datum in the sacred scriptures among many, but in the hierarchy of verities that the church has always taught it is the crucial, decisive, and unique item; all the other items derive their ultimate significance from their relationship to it.

8. The "Canonical Text"

"Canonical text" I know as a Roman Catholic theological term, which describes the text of the Latin "Vulgate" version, not as either a biblical term or one that the *Book of Concord* employs. I have spoken about canonicity above. The closest that the Lutheran symbols come to "canonical scriptures" on their own is their reference to the "prophetic and apostolic writings," which may, however, be

nothing more than a circumlocution for "both testaments." As far as I know, "canonical scriptures" occurs only once in the Lutheran symbols, but this is in a quotation from St. Augustine (*Augsburg Confession* 28, 28 Latin), whose canon included the deuterocanonical books of the Old Testament that we commonly call the "apocrypha."

The Lutheran Church knows no "canonical text" just as the sacred scriptures themselves know no "canonical text" if we are to draw any conclusions from the way in which they quote biblical documents. The New Testament, for instance, makes very extensive use of the Septuagint text.

Lutheran biblical scholarship is understandably concerned to recover, as far as it is possible to do so, the original Hebrew, Aramaic, and Greek texts, but Lutherans have always recognized that the Holy Spirit can make use of any edition of the text that has not been deliberately mutilated and of any version that seriously tries to reproduce the sense of the original in order to create and confirm faith in those who hear it proclaimed or who read it themselves.

One observation may be in place here: The sacred scriptures with which Lutheran theologians work is a collection of completed documents. While theologians may legitimately use all the available techniques of literary analysis, of form and redaction history, and of similar methods, in order to improve their understanding of the best available text of a biblical document by considering possible earlier forms and possible sources, the biblical documents themselves, as the Holy Spirit permitted them to come down to us, are the basis for our theological construction.

9. Old Testament Prophecy

We should look at Old Testament prophecy in terms of the sacred scriptures, rather than in terms of a theological construction given by our dogmatics or by a traditional interpretation of certain texts. When we do so, we learn that it is too simplistic to think of Old Testament prophecy as the forecasting of some future event of history in so obvious and explicit a fashion that when the event occurs every reasonable person acquainted with the prophecy sees the event as the enactment of the prophecy. It is true that short-term precognition, often with the rehearsal of considerable detail, is, like related phenomena, extensively documented in both testaments. But

long-term prophecies are obviously of a different order and are usually described in general terms. (Apocalyptic, with its generous use of symbolic details, is a special case.) It is true that God in the Old Covenant made his saving purpose that was to eventuate in Christ's atoning work increasingly clear during the Old Covenant and (looking back from the vantage point of the New Testament) in the intertestamental period. He did so through a wide variety of indications. Some of these were recognized as such only when his purpose was realized in Christ's reconciling work and only by people whom the Holy Spirit had specially illuminated.

The link between the "prophecy" and the "fulfillment" is not always obvious, even when we have a statement in the New Testament asserting that a "prophecy" was "fulfilled." No one explanation will account for all these cases. In some instances, we can postulate two or even a series of "fulfillments," one contemporary with the "prophecy," the other, or the last, taking place in a preeminent way in the life and work of Christ. In other cases, we can hardly say more than that the analogy between the Old Testament "prophecy" and the New Testament "fulfillment" is such that both are seen as the parallel or analogous actions of the same God accomplishing his saving purpose at different stages of history.

10. Original Sin

"Original sin" is not a biblical term. It is not a catholic term, in the sense that it has been in use at all times, in all places, and by all Christians. In the West it does not appear to antedate significantly St. Augustine of Hippo (died 430). The East has never on its own adopted the term; sometimes, in the interest of a specious accommodation to the West, it has spoken of "the original sin" of our first parents.

The doctrinal content of the term as it is used in the Lutheran symbolical books is the native sinfulness that characterizes every human being and the retroactive persistence of this native sinfulness as far back as human history goes.

This native sinfulness is not merely the **absence** of the kind of trust, love, and obedience that God as the creator of human beings has a right to demand, but the native **inability** of human beings born in this world to give God that kind of trust, love, and obedience.

Baptism takes away the guilt of this native sinfulness, but it continues to infect us as long as we live. While the Holy Spirit assists us in restraining its vicious effects upon our lives, this process is always imperfect, and underlines the necessity for the daily repentance to which Christ calls us.

Robert D. Preus
Professor of Systematic Theology

Dr. Robert Preus requests that President J. A. O. Preus' "Statement of Scriptural and Confessional Principles" be considered as his personal confession of what he believes, teaches, and confesses.

Arthur C. Repp
Professor of Practical Theology (Christian Education)

I believe and confess that God has made me and all creatures. With this I acknowledge too that God's creative activity did not come to an end some time in the distant historical past but that God continues to create all things by his will and by the power of his might: This is vividly portrayed for me in the creation psalm, 104.

The precise details as to how the creation of matter, time and life took place we are not told. But what is clearly revealed to us, and what is much more important for our daily living, is God's purpose in creating mankind, namely that we are "to live for the praise of his glory" (Eph. 1:12). This is portrayed so vividly for us in Psalm 96.

On the basis of God's word I believe that our first parents rebelled against God and by their action brought all mankind under God's judgment and eternal wrath. Because of this, I too was born a sinner, lacking the fear, trust and love for the very God who created me and as such, I was marked for eternal death.

But God, who had provided man with physical life in the first place and who had planned for the human race to enter the eternal Sabbath (Heb. 4:1-11), in his mercy provided for all the world a redemption in his Son so that in the fullness of time all things might again be united in Him (Eph. 1:10). They who by grace through faith accept this redemptive work will, as new creatures (Eph. 2:10), be able to enter that eternal rest.

This gracious act of God in Jesus Christ came to me personally when through the sacrament of Holy Baptism I was declared to be his child, dying and rising with Him through the water of Baptism (Rom. 6:1-11) and thereby sharing in his death and resurrection and with it his mighty victory over sin and death. By the Word of God, who came to me in Baptism, I was incorporated into his church, God's people, and with them became an heir of eternal life.

As the years went by, God's providence continued to nurture me physically and spiritually. Christian parents, together with other of God's people, helped me through the Gospel to learn my identity as a child of God. Through the continuous power of the Spirit I came to believe that Scripture was God's word too, that the same Word that had given me the spiritual life had by inspiration moved men to write Scripture empowering it with His Spirit and thereby becoming for me the sole rule and norm of faith.

To speak of this unique inspiration of Scripture is to be mindful too that the same Spirit who "authored" it comes to us today with the same power through Word and Sacrament. When we use his means of grace he breathes upon us so that our words too are em-

powered to regenerate people, to keep and nourish them in the faith, to forgive and to retain sins and to impart the blessing of God on his people.

As stated above, it is this gift and power of the Spirit that has led me to accept Scripture as true and reliable in all its parts. I do not believe this because I have found it to be so by my reason or strength, by some process of rationalization, but because of a conviction and the gift of faith that the Spirit has created in me.

In view of the present climate in the Christian Church I do not find the word "inerrant" a useful way of describing Scripture. In many instances this word has led to an *a priori* tendency to assert that every declarative sentence must be taken literally and as a result it has spawned a host of divisions and sects in the church. I prefer, instead, to operate with the assumption that every word in Scripture is true and that it is reliable for God's intended purpose in revealing it to us. Therefore my purpose as a child of God must be, with the help of the Spirit, to get at God's intended meaning in the light of the Gospel, rather than accept surface meanings that literalism is satisfied with.

The center and heart of Scripture is the Gospel. It is the focal point for all of Scripture and every article of faith in Scripture. Indeed every article of faith must be related to the Gospel or it will become meaningless. When we fail in this we approach the beginnings of heresy. For example, when we teach creation without a christological emphasis we have sheer law, making us responsible to a sovereign God under whom we stand in judgment: Similarly every miraculous event in the New Testament taught without the Gospel implication leads to moralism or makes of Jesus a *Wundermensch* whose power we can only marvel at or debate, even as did many of the original witnesses.

The nurturing power of the Word of God becomes apparent also in the Lord's Supper where we partake of the body and blood of our Lord under the bread and wine. Through this mysterious sacramental union, we become contemporaries of the past, remembering that through his death and resurrection we have the assurance of our forgiveness. In taking that very body and blood of our Lord, we become participants of his grace and with it, confess his future return, expressing and holding on to the hope of eternal life. Through the

sacrament we anticipate our own resurrection. In partaking of this sacrament we confess not only our union with our Lord, but simultaneously give witness to our fellowship with all believers.

To all of this I am led to say, Amen. How can I be so certain? Even when I share with others share at the hands of brethren? I know that it has been granted to me that for the sake of Christ I do not only believe in Him, I shall suffer also for His sake. Both the believing and the suffering are marks of His grace. For Christianity is the religion of the cross under which stress the Spirit bears witness that I am a child of God. It is the already/not yet of the eschatology.

And the future? It lies in heaven with Christ. A glorious experience to be shared with all of God's people. There I will be clothed with a spiritual body, whatever that means, yet with a body. It will be me! Praise God!

Alfred von Rohr Sauer
Faculty Marshal
Chairman of the Department of Exegetical Theology
Professor of Exegetical Theology (Old Testament)

Born at Winona, Minnesota on the Feast of St. Nicholas the first week in December, 1908, my new birth in the city of Zion (Ps. 87:5) was recorded at St. Martin's less than a fortnight later. It was my maternal grandfather, then president of the Wisconsin Synod, Pastor Philip von Rohr, who administered regenerative water to me as his last public act before he was translated from the glory of an earthly Christmas to the glory of a heavenly Zion. With a double measure of his spirit, I was reared in a parsonage that had all of the earmarks of German culture and Lutheran religion. Parochial school training from 1914 to

1921 introduced me to the Catechism of the Great Reformer as well as the exploits of the Big Bertha and the rousing sentiments of "The Watch on the Rhine." Confirmation instructions were an unforgettable bilingual experience.

After a four-year exposure to "American" public high school education I entered the ministerial training program of the Lutheran Church-Wisconsin Synod and completed its college and seminary requirements at the height of the depression, May, 1932. During the last three years at seminary I met the man who has left the deepest imprint on my professional career, Prof. August Pieper, brother of Missouri Synod giants Francis and Reinhold Pieper. What impressed me about this man of God was the warm, pastoral concern with which he dealt with his students. One had the impression that every time "Pips" entered the classroom, he stood before us primarily and preeminently as a proclaimer of the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

It is significant that as early as 1916 this eminent theologian took as the starting point of his theology the memorable words of the apostle Paul in Gal. 1:15-16: "IT PLEASED GOD TO REVEAL HIS SON IN ME." As I look back, it was A. Pieper's deep conviction that it had pleased God to reveal His Son in him which enabled him to get through to his classes so effectively. The Spirit of God saw fit to implant and preserve and extend a similar conviction in the hearts of those students who sat at his feet. God's great pleasure in revealing His Son to men provided the basic motivation, the underlying drive, the necessary push to involve young seminarians in the ministry of Christ and His Church.

In the fall of 1932, however, the revelation of God's Son in me was confronted with a major crisis: I enrolled in a program of graduate study at the Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago. Between October and January of that academic year all hell broke loose in an effort to undo the faith of a very immature young seminarian. Unfaith and agnosticism crowded in from every hand. After six weeks of frantic wrestling with spiritual chaos I desperately looked up A. Pieper in Milwaukee. He seemed to have only one concern: "Do you still pray?" When I assured him that I did but that I feared I was no longer a Christian, he unabashedly advised me to relax and get back to my Semitic studies in Chicago. Thus this mature man of God showed his utter confidence in the God who had revealed His Son in both of us. The crisis subsided and I actually came through the experience with

a stronger faith than I had had before.

Could there be an explanation of this crisis and its faith-strengthening outcome? The answer would seem to be that the dimensions of faith had been more sharply defined in the process. If, as Hebr. 11:1 affirms, "faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen," then the crisis of 1932 taught me to be very clear about what that assurance and conviction really means. The revelation of God's Son in me took on far greater importance than acceptance of certain views about the origin of the books of the Bible and about their literal interpretation. Surviving this crisis proved to be the first step in a long period of maturation which gradually made clear to me that problems of Biblical introduction are not properly in the realm of faith at all.

On the other hand, when the miracle of God's revealing His Son took place in me, a long series of other miracles followed in quick succession. I was enabled by the Spirit to recognize God as my real creator and preserver, as the one who produced the vast universe and who keeps it functioning according to His divine law. The same Spirit enabled me to appreciate the divine-human factor in the person of Jesus Christ and the combination of God and man both functioning in the production of the Bible. The same Spirit brought me the insight into his own great work of faith-producing and faith-preserving which is so essential to the life of the church. At the same time Word and Sacrament took on ever new significance as the media through which God continued to reveal His Son in me. Especially in the Eucharist the Presence of Christ brought ever repeated assurances that the bond of fellowship with God was secure and irrevocable. The permanence of such a relationship was based on the conviction that, as Christ triumphed over death and the grave, He would enable me one day to rise with Him and to share in His glory.

As a result of this "tower experience" my role as a pastor was clearly cut out for me. The Lord taught me to ask: What can I do in my professional life to help Christians young and old cope with their spiritual and theological problems? Nine years in the parish ministry gave me an opportunity to minister to lay people in large and small parishes of our church. Seven years of university work helped equip me to take up my teaching ministry at Concordia Seminary. Here it has been my objective for well nigh 25 years to show seminarians what the revelation of God's Son means in their lives and in the life

of the church.

In the meantime I have expressed my views in a number of areas that may be regarded as controversial. For example, I regard historical-critical methodology as very helpful in enabling us to understand what the Scriptures say. I hold that it is possible for us to use this method as long as the Scriptures in all their parts are recognized as God's Word and as the only norm for our faith and life. I recognize the presence of Messianic prophecy in the Old Testament and I see its fulfillment in the New Testament. But after careful study of the Old Testament I see various kinds of prophecy in it. In some the real meaning of the Old Testament prophecy was not known to the contemporaries, but the New Testament made it clear. I have learned that in matters of interpretation it may sometimes be advisable to take the text of Scripture in something other than a literal sense. I maintain that these may be legitimate differences of interpretation, provided the integrity of Christian doctrine is retained.

I have emphasized that the anonymity or the diverse authorship of Biblical books in no way calls into question their authority of inspiration. I have learned from experience in the field that archaeological work has an important contribution to make to our understanding of the Bible and that we should welcome the results of such research. I have enjoyed the benefits of two sabbatical leaves in 1960 and 1970, especially the leisure to pursue research work without the responsibility of classroom teaching. I have observed that the broadening influence of travel, of mingling with other nations and other religions, can be of great help in the promotion of the Christian Gospel.

Whatever I have said or written in these controversial areas has been a direct outgrowth of the conviction that God has revealed his Son in me. Such is the Gospel which rules my own life and which I would convey to my students in classroom, chapel and counseling session. Such a pastoral objective is my one and only reason for continuing to serve at Concordia Seminary.

Edward H. Schroeder
Professor of Systematic and Historical Theology

I

The first word of God we confess is that He is Creator and we are his creatures. Our own existence is thus a gift from him. Every other creature, human and non-human, is also gift. Thus our existence is derivative; we are not self-made men. Our existence continues in the posture of dependency. This basic premise underlies the admission: "for all of which it is my duty (N.B., "schuldig bin") to thank and praise, serve and obey him." Thus the Christian confession about God the creator centers on the personal lived relationship that constitutes creaturely existence. Questions of how it all began, **how far back** the beginning was, **whether** "the man" (Adam) of Gen. 2-3 is a literary figure or a person who lived on the earth, are irrelevant to the givens of our being God's creatures.

Thus creation is unquestionably a good gift of the creator, even though we sinners cannot hear this first word of God as an unmitigated good word. The gifts of our creaturely existence are the vehicles we use to live out our sinfulness. It is we, not Adam of ancient history, who are the cause of our own sinfulness. Consequently "this article would humble and terrify us all if we (really) believed it." Since the creation is now populated with sinners, the gifts of creation are also the agents for God's criticism of sinners. Therefore we do not call God "Father," a term that confesses personal good relationship and positive loving care, merely on the basis of the ambiguous "first word" that God is our creator and we his creatures. We need the data of the second article, concerning the "only-begotten son," before we can faith-fully confess the creator to be our Father.

II

The second word of God we confess is Jesus Christ our Lord. He is God talking to us in person, keeping faith with ancient Israel in the promise he pledged to them, and also addressing us in our day with a surprisingly promising word: "Take heart, my son, your sin is forgiven." This is what makes him our Lord. He is our Savior, our rescuer, our sin-forgiver. He extricates us from the all-pervasive dilemma called sin, and does so by confronting and conquering the power (dynamis) of sin, which, as St. Paul says (I Cor. 15:56b) is the law. Jesus' death and resurrection silences the "bad news" which the "law

of sin and death" constitutes for every sinner. Thus He in person is God's good word to sinners countermanding the law's "bad news" for them.

This word holds high promise for the future as well. In fact, "promise" is the very term frequently used in the Holy Scriptures for the surprising good news of God's forgiving sinners. Promise is this historical gift of forgiveness which is uniquely incarnate in Jesus, and which lies at the center of our confessing him to be Son of God, Christ, Lord, and Savior. The future for sinners is bleak apart from Christ precisely because of the continuing operation of God's "incarnate" criticism and killing of sinners (Deut. 32:39, John 3:36). The graveyards of the world are evidence of how "down to earth" this action of God is. But just because of that overwhelming evidence of the "law of sin and death," the work and word of Christ is such a happy surprise. It bodes well for our lives now, and even better for the future.

Our confidence that He is our Lord and Savior is grounded in the concrete historical events wherein he achieved this Lordship over us sinners by lording it over the law of sin and death. These biographical data include the entire path from the Virgin's womb to Calvary and the empty tomb, and even beyond that to His ascension and coming again. We cling to this promissory word in the face of considerable evidence to the contrary in our own lived experience. Our faith in Christ's promise does not go unchallenged - by our own old Adam, by the manifold voices of the tempter, by God's own law as it continues to carry out its verdict in our daily lives. Thus our redemption, Christ's lordship in our individual biographies, is "not yet" complete. In trusting his promise we trust that he will prove himself to be our Lord yet in the future by resurrecting us from our own sinner's death (1 Cor. 15).

We also confess the Holy Ghost, the holy Christian church, etc. The chief work of the Spirit is to get sinners connected to the Lord Jesus and keep them connected. The church herself, the preaching and sacraments of her ministry, and the Scriptures are vehicles whereby the Spirit carries on this work. The church in her concrete life on the earth is herself an object of faith -- we believe that sinners calling Christ Lord are indeed His holy people even though

the evidence to the contrary may seem overpowering. Thus the "forgiveness of sins" is expressly confessed in this article to keep the eye focused on the one thing needful for the church to exist at all. The church becomes apostate only when she moves away from this one base which is the source of her existence.

The chief difference between church, understood here as the locus for the Spirit's promoting the forgiveness of sins, and the world is the difference between forgiven and unforgiven sinners. The presence of the Spirit is not necessarily accompanied by "signs and wonders" of supernatural power and explosiveness. For the natural powers themselves are just as much God's as any supernatural ones might be. Instead the unique mark of the Spirit's active presence is the concrete re-presenting of Christ and his word of forgiveness. Where that is made present, there the Spirit is at work. This also applies, of course, to the inspiration of the Holy Scriptures. The picture here is not one of a supernatural power commandeering men to write and speak whatever the power makes them say. It is rather people already connected to God's forgiveness ("holy men of God") promoting that same Word via the "normal" channels that are available to them. According to the Gospel of St. John that is what is meant by "being moved by the Holy Ghost." The goal of the Spirit's work is the goal of Christ's: "He takes what is Christ's and declares it to us."

Kenneth J. Siess
Associate Professor of Practical Theology (Counseling)

I believe teach and confess that which I have heard from the fathers, experienced myself, and accepted in faith. Born into a Christian home I was made a member of the Body of Christ through the Sacrament of Holy Baptism. In and through that gift the Holy Spirit

began to work in me the miracle of faith; convincing me that God is, as he has always been, and always will be; teaching me that he is the Maker of heaven and earth; assuring me that he has also made me as a unique, individual being for whom he exercises daily care.

The experience of life however soon began to confront me with some harsh realities as well. I quickly began to learn that living in this world was far from ideal or perfect. I learned living involves pain, sorrow, separation and death. I learned too that there were definite limits to what I could be or have or do. This raised feelings of frustration and anger, because I had the mistaken notion that I was not just unique and important but that I was the center of the world. This notion, I know now, is one that I share with all men since Adam and is the cause for God's condemnation. I must confess however that I have not totally given up that delusion. A part of me still wants to believe that and act on it. Therefore I experience an ongoing daily struggle between that part of me which is deluded and perverted, and to which God says "no" on the one hand, and that part of me which is of God through his Spirit on the other hand.

Of course that raises a serious dilemma. If God says "no" to one part of me and "yes" to another, then where do I **really** stand with God? The solution to this conflict was provided by God himself and witnessed to by his people, all of whom share my dilemma. It was this testimony of the people of God who have gone before me that pointed me to the Way. Their word was that God ruled his "no" by placing that negative judgment on the one and only human being who carried no negative judgment on himself: Jesus, who is the Christ. This One took on himself all the condemnation which was coming to the world and suffered and died from it for us all. Then God was able and ready to speak his decisive "yes." He did it, the witnesses testify, by raising Jesus from his death. He then revealed himself to his followers, who have passed their witness on to me. So I believe, even in the midst of unbelief, that God will forever say "yes" to me so long as I say yes to him. I further believe that he will go on helping me say "yes" to him in both word and deed through the same means by which he made it possible for me to say "yes" to him in the first place, namely through reception of his Sacraments and Word.

At this point I feel compelled to deal with the issue of the nature of the testimony of God's people, its purpose, authority,

unity and infallibility. It should be understood from the outset that what I say here is entirely a matter of **faith**. I **believe** that this testimony is faithful and true and that it is God's own message. I cannot prove that, nor will I succumb to the temptation to try to do so in an arena of empirical tests and measurements. To do that would be to forsake my faith in favor of reason.

I believe that from the beginning God has desired and intended to communicate with men and women to let us know the nature of the relationship between himself and us. Primarily he wants people to know that ourself-centered revolt against him violated his original intention for us, broke his relationship of trust and put us under his condemning judgment; and therefore our only hope is in his forgiving grace, which is the only way the relationship can be restored. God established a covenant of grace with his people who passed on his word. They also recorded the historical events which were intended to demonstrate God's judgment or grace in action. That covenant reached its climactic fulfillment in the historical Christ event, as anticipated by the faithful among the Jews, and witnessed and recorded by Christ's followers. Because these records were and are God's own means of communicating his will and way to men he guaranteed their accuracy by giving his Spirit in a peculiar way to special people who became his interpreters and scribes. What they wrote has been heard, believed and taught and transmitted through the community of the faithful. These writings carry the authority of God himself because they are the very words and messages of God. For those who believe they show the way to salvation and provide a guide for life. For those who do not believe they are a scandal.

Finally I believe and teach that my citizenship in the community of the faithful is a great gift of God's grace because in and through this fellowship my faith in God's saving love is strengthened as I experience love from my fellow believers. This is what makes it possible for me to go on working and loving even when others are suspicious of me.

Robert H. Smith
Assistant Professor of Exegetical Theology (New Testament)

I believe in the holy eternal triune God. God has created all that exists. From him I have received all that I am and all that I have except for sin, and to him alone I owe the gratitude of worship. He has called me to live under him in the world, caring for his earth and loving the people who are his creatures.

I acknowledge that I am a sinner dwelling in a fallen world. Nevertheless I rejoice that God has not only created the world but has also redeemed his world. In the miracle of his mercy he came in Jesus of Nazareth to perform for me (and all people and his whole world) what I could never accomplish for myself: my redemption, reconciliation, salvation. This he did by his works and words, his suffering and death, his resurrection and ascension.

That I might know him and his grace and be reconciled to him, the same God sent the Spirit, the Lord and Giver of life and the Consummator of the purposes of God. Through the word of reconciliation, focused on Jesus Christ and his cross, the Spirit has called into being a new community in which the Gospel is preached and the sacraments are administered. I rejoice that in and through that community I myself have been called, forgiven and enlightened by the Spirit, and that by the same Spirit I have been sent to share with others the word and work of reconciliation.

Issues

1. By confessing God as Creator and declaring that the world is his creation I speak in the first place of the present: he is (not merely was) the Creator and wills moment by moment my existence and the being of all that is. Speaking of creation involves at least two distinct judgments regarding the world: all that is, as creature of God, is good and God is to be praised for his creation; and yet the world is always dependent upon God and subordinate to him and to worship anything in creation is idolatry. God alone is eternal and all that is came to be and will pass away. As long as the world has existed it has been God's creation. Thus creation refers to the past, present and future relationship of the world to God and not only to six days some few thousands of years ago. (Creation)

2. Original sin refers to the state of sinfulness which is the origin of all my individual thoughts and words and acts of sin. Furthermore my condition from the moment of my origin is such that I am not only God's good creature but also fallen, in need of redemption and restoration if I am to live the life for which God intends me. (Original Sin)

3. I cherish the Bible as a unique gift of God, holy and inspired. The Bible does not function for me as a guarantee of the truth of the Gospel. Rather I find that the Gospel I have learned in the Christian family is attested with original force, profundity and breadth in the pages of the Bible. The Bible is the cradle in which Christ as Savior is laid, and it is the place "where Christ proclaims Christ most purely." Therefore it is the only rule and norm for judging all the church's teaching and proclamation. Not councils, not administrators, not theologians, but only the Scriptures determine what shall be taught as our church's dogma or doctrine. The Bible is the normative proclamation of the Gospel. (Bible and Gospel)

4. In the whole Bible from beginning to end, on every page and in countless ways I hear God speaking as Judge, confronting, exposing and condemning sinfulness. And I hear God speaking as Savior, promising, forgiving, reconciling, calling to new life. The salvation of the world is God's aim, and even God's word of judgment is in the service of his mercy, preparing the way for that new life which springs up where and when I (and others) trust his offer of grace. The one great purpose of the Bible is to bring to bear God's offer of forgiveness and so produce new life. The Scriptures are "prophetic and apostolic" witnessing in all their parts and with great consensus to "the Son of Man (who) came to seek and to save the lost." I have not properly understood and expounded any portion of the Bible until I have related it to God's work as Judge and Savior. Indeed no interpretation of any portion of the Bible can be called "true" in any religiously significant sense until that relationship has been grasped. (Priority of the Gospel)

5. The essential message of the Bible -- the Gospel of the grace of God in Jesus Christ -- appears to be foolishness and weakness when judged by secularist standards. God himself as Holy Spirit moved prophets and apostles to believe the promise and to bear witness to their faith through the words of Sacred Scripture. The same Spirit who once "spoke by the prophets" is still at work today. Through

many means ("baptism, absolution, Lord's Supper, sermon, the mutual conversation and consolation of the brethren") the Spirit overcomes objections to the foolishness and weakness of the Gospel, moving people to faith in Jesus as Lord and Savior, and prompts them to share their faith with others. The Bible is inspired and given by inspiration, that is, it was produced neither by the strength nor wisdom of man but by the activity of the Spirit opening people up to the treasure of the Gospel. (Inspiration)

6. The authority of the Bible differs from the authority of just any accurate historical report. The Bible has the unique authority of God the Redeemer who in and through its pages offers mercy and newness of life to the sinner, the lost, the outcast. Because it has pleased God that his word of judgment and grace should come to us in and with and under the words of historical men, it is right and appropriate to study the words of Scripture with the best available tools of literature and history. As I approach any Biblical passage I am mindful of the following aspects of any full interpretation: study of the ancient manuscripts, investigation of the literary form, inquiry into the historical situation in which the passage was written, the meaning of the words for the original audience, the message of the passage on the background of the ancient near eastern world and in the light of the whole message of the Bible. Following carefully these steps keeps me from reading into the text ideas foreign to it and throws light on the words of Sacred Scripture. At the same time I recognize that it is only the Spirit of God who enlightens a person concerning the real subject matter of the Bible, namely the Gospel. (Method of Study)

7. The Bible seems to contain statements in conflict with one another, quotations that are not verbatim, numbers that apparently are not literally accurate statistics. Nevertheless the Bible speaks the truth and hits the mark unerringly. The Bible indeed has the perfection and wisdom and inerrancy of the Gospel, of "Jesus Christ and him crucified." Its wisdom and power and infallibility are hidden under the cross and to any eye but the eye of faith the Bible with its message of the Gospel is foolishness and weakness. I am not offended at the weakness or lowliness of the words of the Bible. The Bible has the form of a servant and performs its service infallibly. The Bible is God's holy and inerrant word, and I rejoice in the treasure and do not stumble at the shape of the vessel. (Inerrancy)

8. The Bible is "the prophetic and apostolic scriptures of the Old and New Testaments." The Bible is a rich and diverse set of documents from many centuries in many idioms, forms, styles and vocabularies, and yet it is perfectly one in its ultimate origin in God our Savior, in its message of Law and Gospel in its purpose of absolution and redemption. The prophets of the Old Testament bore witness to the same God and the same promise and the same salvation to which the apostles point as having come in Jesus of Nazareth. I recognize and appreciate the varying accents and differing perspectives in the chorus of Biblical witnesses, and I rejoice in the song of salvation which they sing. (Unity of the Bible)

Gilbert A. Thiele
Professor of Historical Theology

In opening my response to the request from the Council of Presidents for an assurance to the church of our individual and collective Biblical and confessional stance, I declare that I believe in Jesus Christ. He is the Subject of salvation and the Object of my faith.

Within this understanding of Christian faith, that it is concerned with a Person, the incarnate Son of the Eternal God as the believer's personal Redeemer and Eternal Savior and the Head of His Church, everything else falls into its proper place. But no amount of declaration and commitment will convince anyone of another's Christianity and Faith in Christ. The endless proliferation of persons and groups who over the years since Christ, but especially in more recent times, have laid claim to acceptance of an infallible, authoritative, inerrant Bible and have come up with one heretical and sectarian idea after another, offers the strongest possible indication that commitment to Scripture is not coextensive with being a believing

Christian, not to say Lutheran.

Therefore in setting down in writing my own personal Confession of Faith I want it clearly understood that, with all the value I place on the Bible and what it says, I believe in Persons, God, His Son, and the Holy Spirit. No one and nothing else saves. Christ is all in all.

What I Believe about Law and Gospel

The Law, by which is the knowledge of sin, and the Gospel by which is Life and Salvation, are discoverable in many parts of the Scriptures. That is to say that the uncovering of sin, iniquity, and guilt can happen in response to both Old Testament and New Testament passages. The Gospel, in its fullest sense the good news of Salvation in and through Christ, is chiefly known through the New Testament. However since God's love is the cause of salvation we can accept that when that Love is spoken of and revealed in Old Testament times and in the Old Testament as well, then essentially those ancient persons also heard and even saw the Gospel. Distinguishing Law and Gospel without separating or confusing them is said to be the highest skill of the theologian -- or anyone. This simply means that using the Gospel to uncover sin and condemn it or using the Law to comfort the contrite sinner are misuses and confusion.

Holy Scripture

My commitment at ordination and installation in this present position as a teacher in the Seminary is by definition to Article II in the Constitution of the Missouri Synod (*Handbook* 1971 ed. p. 15). As to Holy Scripture, its purpose is to make men wise unto salvation with all that that implies about the purpose and effect of the Law and the Gospel.

The authority of Holy Scripture in its canonical books derives from its internal power as the Word of God to men -- God speaks through Scripture. The Scripture's authority, unfortunately, can be compromised and hampered by men, but its authority can in no way be increased or extended by men.

The word infallibility is not an expression found in Scripture, but since John 10:35 can be and usually is cited as proof of infallibility, it is proper to state that the word of the Lord refers to its

witness to His Saviorhood and that on that Scripture can not be misleading or wrong.

Interpretation of the Bible is the right and duty of any reader of its words. But what is the Bible or Holy Scripture? If certain facts are ignored here only trouble can ensue. Example: We do not have the originals of any portion or portions of the Scriptures. We have only copies and copies of copies, and then translations of those copies and translations of copies of copies. Of translations as of the textual sources it can be said that there is much disagreement on what words are original and what translations are accurate. Despite these complicated circumstances, known and unknown as they may be to the reader of Scriptures, we know that reading and expounding the Scripture leads to faith and strengthens faith in Christ. Interpretation means, of course, explaining what the words we read in these copied texts and translated editions mean. When it is said that Scriptures interpret themselves this is simply applying a basic canon of interpretation to biblical studies. But since the Scriptures carry their own power of creating and nurturing faith, we are helped greatly by as large a body of knowledge in ancillary disciplines to give us their results and an appreciation of the Bible's importance to its original recipients and to us.

Holy Scriptures are the vehicle in which the Good News of Salvation (John 3:16, Rom. 1:16f, Rom. 3:21-28, Gal. 3, Eph. 2: 8-10, to cite only a few of many texts) has reached us. As the swaddling clothes and manger of Bethlehem contain the Incarnate God and Savior of mankind, so the Scriptures bring us Him and all He did and still does for all especially for those who believe. The Gospel is preached to many and all who believe are saved. One should not try to drive wedges between Holy Scripture and Gospel but neither should one say that "Gospel" means every word in Scripture. It is all God's word, but only what concerns itself with Christ and salvation is Gospel.

Without citing many examples of Old Testament prophecy and what has been considered as such, one has to affirm on the basis of the present state of knowledge of history and Scripture, that some predictive prophecies were fulfilled soon after their announcements, e.g. deliverance from Egypt, conquest of Canaan - while others were understood as still lying ahead and maybe not to be fulfilled within the lifetime of either speaker, writer, hearer or reader. If we speak of

prophecy it means, strictly speaking, speaking **for God**. If we mean predictive speaking it may under certain circumstances refer to Christ, but this is often apparent only in retrospect.

Original Sin

Original Sin in the terms of the Lutheran Symbols (*Augsburg Confession 2*, *Apology 2* and related passages in large numbers: Tappert Index p. 694) is an innate corruption of human beings in their ethical and moral capacity, which includes "deadly concupiscence (evil desire) and absence of fear of God and faith." Original sin is not removed by Baptism but with divine help we receive faith in God and the power to curb evil desires. Original sin is a disease for which the only available cure is forgiveness by the grace of God to all who believe. But it persists in us till death.

Arthur M. Vincent
Associate Professor of Practical Theology
(Homiletics, Church and Society)

I have been called upon to state what I believe, teach and confess, particularly in my capacity of Professor at Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, Missouri.

I was ordained as a minister on July 20, 1947. At that time I cheerfully gave my ordination vows. I repeated them at my installation at Concordia Seminary eighteen years ago. I have joined the entire faculty repeatedly in public statements to the synod assuring them of my unchanged convictions regarding my ordination vows.

I believe the canonical books of the Old and the New Testament to be

the inspired Word of God, and the only infallible rule of faith and practice.

I hold and proclaim and profess the doctrine of the Evangelical Lutheran Church laid down in the symbols contained in *The Book of Concord* of 1580, that is, the three ecumenical Creeds, the *Augsburg Confession*, the *Apology to the Augsburg Confession*, the *Smalcald Articles*, the *Small Catechism* and the *Large Catechism*, and the *Formula of Concord*, to be the true doctrine of the Holy Scriptures. By God's grace, I have endeavored faithfully to discharge the duties of the holy ministry in accordance with the Holy Scriptures and the Symbols of the Evangelical Lutheran Church.

When I was accepted into the membership of The Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod, I signed its constitution and I subscribed then and I still subscribe wholeheartedly and without reservation, to the entire constitution, including Article II, the confessional basis of the Synod: I accept "without reservation the Scriptures of the Old and the New Testament as the written Word of God and the only rule and norm of faith and practice." And I accept all "the symbolical books of the Evangelical Lutheran Church as a true and unadulterated statement and exposition of the Word of God."

Along with all Christians who confess The Apostles' Creed and The Nicene Creed, I believe in the one true God, the triune God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, my Maker, my Redeemer, and my Sanctifier.

I love the Lord Jesus Christ, who was sent from the Father and who led me to know God as my Father in Him, and who has sent His Holy Spirit from the Father to me, as He promised. I believe this Lord Jesus Christ is true God, begotten of the Father from eternity and also true man, born of the Virgin Mary. I accept as historical what the Scriptures say about His birth, His life, His ministry, His mighty works, His suffering, His death, His resurrection, and His ascension. I believe He sits at the right hand of God the Father Almighty and that He shall come again to judge the living and the dead.

As I have studied, expounded, proclaimed the holy Scriptures, the author of these same Scriptures, the Holy Spirit Himself, has worked in me the conviction and the faith that all the Scriptures are given by divine inspiration, both in their content and in their word. I believe that the Scriptures are dependable, reliable, true, infallible, and in-

errant. They have never led me astray and I have learned that God is faithful and keeps His Word to His people in any and all conditions and trials. I believe in the clarity and the power and the effectiveness of the Word of God, and I have seen also the written Word of God in all my ministries effectually work in the lives of people. I have always been able to preach Biblical texts confidently as the Word of God; and if I did not believe wholeheartedly that God Himself is speaking in and through the Scripture text, I would not be able to stand in a pulpit before any congregation.

When I have found differing accounts, emphases and sequences of events among the various authors whom God inspired and moved to write His Word and have been unable to explain them, I am willing to let them stand, because I know that in this life we know only in part. Indeed, I have learned with maturity to look for the distinctive and the unique purpose and plan of each writer and to appreciate these in the light of what each writer says. For me varying accounts add to and do not detract from the power of the Scriptures to teach in a fresh way the truths of God's Word for different people and different circumstances.

I believe in the divine character of the Scriptures, because through them the Holy Spirit has brought me to know Christ as my divine Savior.

I accept and use the Law-Gospel principle as basic for a correct understanding and interpretation of the Bible. Dr. C. F. W. Walther's *Proper Distinction Between Law and Gospel* I still find a clear and useful book and I recommend it to students.

In interpreting the Scriptures, I proceed from faith in Christ Jesus as Lord and Savior. "Scripture alone" must also be kept Christocentric. All my theology begins, centers, and climaxes in Christ Jesus, the Gospel, or justification by faith for Christ's sake. This is the key that unlocks the meaning of sacred scriptures, I believe.

I rejoice that our holy Christian faith is a historical faith. I believe in the great acts wrought by God in the course of human history for the salvation of all mankind. The Scriptures of the Old and the New Testament witness to these events. I believe all of God's words of judgment and forgiveness spoken through historical persons which preceded, accompanied, or followed the events in which God acted.

Since God's acts and words have a historical character, I believe they should be interpreted and expounded with a rigorous historical methodology.

I have found a number of techniques which now belong to historical critical research useful for interpreting the holy Scriptures. When I study a biblical text for preaching or teaching I use a number of techniques: 1. Establish the text or determine the original reading as accurately as possible. 2. Make a linguistic study of the words and sentence constructions of the text to apprehend what they meant to the original writer and his readers or hearers. 3. Ascertain the literary form of the passage. 4. Determine the historical situation or setting. 5. Understand the passage in the light of its total context and of the background out of which it emerged.

As a Christian interpreter I want to use the best tools available to uncover as far as possible the exact meaning of words and passages of the Scriptures. At the same time, I ask the Holy Spirit to give me humility and awe for the unique authority of the Scriptures as the Word of God. In the use of this method of interpretation, I am cautious lest I set myself up as an authority over the Scriptures, or fail to do justice to the data of Scripture, or in any way distort or discredit the witness of the Scripture.

I believe that the mission of God is the work the Triune God has done, is doing, and will do to deliver, help, reconcile, and preserve mankind.

I believe that the one, holy, apostolic, catholic church is the result of and instrument for God's own mission to the whole world. The mission of God has become the church's mission and that means God's people and Christ's disciples are to do the same works that Jesus did when He was sent by the Father into the world. These principal works are to evangelize, witness, proclaim, practice fellowship, worship, nurture, and serve or minister. I believe these functions operate effectively by combining both word and deeds; that they are interrelated and inseparable; that they can be distinguished from each other but not divorced. In this mission of God, the proclamation and witness of the Gospel for the salvation of mankind has priority in principle -- but not always in practice, because God's people, guided by His spirit, must discover in each situation what others need most immediately and urgently. I believe that all these functions are empowered by the Holy Spirit working through Word and Sacrament.

I believe an evangelist is a messenger from God who proclaims with joy, to both Christian and non-Christian, the good news of God's actual victory in His Son, Christ Jesus, so that the effective power of this message may bring them into a relationship of faith and obedience to God in Christ and they will have the benefit of God's total salvation.

Carl A. Volz
Associate Professor of Historical Theology

1. I believe, teach, and confess the three Ecumenical Creeds (Apostles' Nicene, and Athanasian).
2. Regarding the **Fall and Original Sin**, I believe that every person born into the world is naturally alienated from God and is a captive of sin, Satan, and death. Together with all other persons who have preceded us in creation (excepting Jesus of Nazareth) we share this stain of Original Sin. The Scriptures attest to the presence of Original Sin, and human experience confirms it.
3. **The Holy Scriptures** (66 canonical writings) are the source and norm of Christian faith and practice. The Scriptures reliably express what God wants them to express, and they accomplish what God wants them to accomplish. The truth of Scriptures is something to be evaluated in terms of their own criteria and of the qualities they themselves exhibit. The Sacred Scriptures have the Holy Spirit as their principal Author, they are the Word of God, and they are true and dependable.

The purpose of the Sacred Scriptures is to make known to mankind God's saving acts in the past, His will for man in the present, and His promises for the present and the future. This all-embracing

purpose includes **God's Law**, that is, His demand for man's total commitment to Him in faith and life. The Law also judges and condemns man. In addition to the Law the purpose of the Sacred Scriptures includes the Gospel, that is, the Good News that through the life, death, and resurrection of God's Son, incarnate in Jesus Christ, man is offered pardon, release from bondage, and the promise of life with God including the hope of eternal life. All of the Scriptures are authoritative for man, but the heart of the Bible is the Good News that Jesus Christ has come to bring us salvation. Since this Gospel is the key to the Scriptures, Christians see various Old Testament promises and events as pointing to the coming Messiah, although such Old Testament references may also have found a proximate fulfillment in their own day.

Regarding canonicity, the Early Church considered a large number of writings and traditions to be inspired, including those which ultimately formed the New Testament canon. Together with the criterion of inspiration the Church required that canonical works also bear the marks of apostolicity and usage. The Scriptures themselves derive apostolic authority from personal association with Jesus and from having been eyewitnesses to the risen Christ (Acts 1:21-22). St. Paul defended himself from the attacks of his critics by using this two-fold definition of apostolicity (and therefore of authority, 1 Cor. 9:1, Gal. 1:1, 12). St. Peter based his authority on having been an eyewitness of the resurrection of Christ (Acts 2:32, 3:15).

Ultimately, the reliability and the authority of the Scriptures remains an article of my Christian faith, neither capable of proof or demonstration. The desire to prove the authority of Scripture through such categories as verbal inspiration and inerrancy displays a fear that the Person, Words, and Work of Jesus Christ are not a reliable ground of faith. Attempts to apply such categories to Scripture reflect an underlying doubt in quest of certainty, which is basically a rationalistic enterprise. Faith is the result of the work of the Holy Spirit, Who has called me by the Gospel and Who still works through the Word of God and the Sacraments (means of grace).

4. Throughout its history, the Christian Church has interpreted Scriptures in various ways. The Church has exercised extreme economy in its pronouncements of dogma. These are basically contained in the three Ecumenical Creeds and in the doctrinal conclusions of the first four ecumenical councils. That which is not dogma

represents exegetical (interpretive) tradition, which dare never become static or absolutely binding. The application and interpretation of God's judgment (Law) and His Good News (Gospel) may vary with the times and the circumstances. Thus there is both continuity and change in the life of the Christian Church. Difficulties arise when one exegetical (interpretive) tradition assumes the status of dogma, for it stifles the work of the Holy Spirit, Who is the very Agent and Source of change.

5. The Church includes all those who believe in Jesus Christ as their Savior from sin and death. Various interpretations of the meaning of this truth have led to the formation of denominations. I believe that all believers in every denomination are my brothers and sisters in Christ, but I also believe that the **Lutheran Confessions** reflect truly and accurately what the Scriptures teach. These Confessions are normative for me because they clearly express what the Scriptures express. Justification by grace through faith because of Jesus Christ is the cardinal teaching of the Faith, as it is clearly set forth in the *Augsburg Confession*. At the same time, I deplore all efforts to bring uniformity of belief into the Church through coercion or threat since such unity is solely the gift of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit continues to bring men to faith in every Christian sect and denomination, Eastern and Western.

6. I rejoice in the hope of eternal life, where we shall be gathered together with all the saints, and we shall be at peace with God and each other.

Walter Wegner
Dean of the School for Graduate Studies
Professor of Exegetical Theology (Old Testament)

Joyfully I confess my Spirit-given faith in the one true God who has made Himself known to mankind through His Holy Spirit and who has revealed Himself preeminently in His Son Jesus Christ, my Lord.

I believe that God is the Maker and Preserver of all that exists. Everything has its origin in Him and it is He who empowers and sustains all things and all living beings, including myself. It is He who gives me and my fellowmen the commission to represent Him in exercising care and dominion over all He has made. (Gen. 1 and 2)

I confess my innate human inability to do and to be what my Creator God expects of me. I confess my rebellion against Him, my active disobedience toward Him, my inborn tendencies to be independent of God, even blasphemously to usurp God's place and to be a god in my own right. It is this human rebellion against God which places me under His divine judgment. (Gen. 3)

I confess that rebellion against God is the source of all ills and disorders in His created world. My broken fellowship with God is the source, e.g., of friction between me and my wife (Gen. 3); it results in my broken relationships with my brothers and sisters; it leads, in fact, even to violence and murder. (Gen. 4)

I believe that all people without exception share this inborn human attitude of rebellion against God. All of us together stand under His judgment and under threat of death and destruction - like that portrayed in the Biblical account of the Flood. (Gen. 5 to 8)

All of us continue to display our attitudes of insolent defiant rebellion against Him and thus also to deepen those divisions among men which make true human brotherhood impossible. In our human rebellion we have destroyed both our communion with God and communion among mankind. (Gen. 9 to 11)

Nevertheless I believe that the God whose wrath I have incurred is preeminently a merciful God whose wrath is tempered by His mercy, yes, over-ruled by His love! The divinely inspired Scriptures which make me aware of my sinfulness and God's wrath on sin emphasize

above all the message of His amazing grace toward fallen men! I believe that it was His unmerited love for rebellious humanity which moved him to single out one man - Abraham - and to speak to him the Word of Promise assuring him and all mankind that through him and his descendants God would again bring His divine blessings to "all the families of the earth." (Gen. 12)

I believe that the entire Old Testament record that follows the statement of that Word of Promise is simply the record of God at work in human history bringing that promise to fulfillment for me and all mankind (Gen. 12 through Malachi 4). As the Old Testament era closed, the Word of Promise was only partially fulfilled; but the New Testament follows to complete the record of its culminating fulfillment in the person and work of Jesus Christ, "the Son of Abraham" (Matthew 1:1) and above all the beloved Son of God (Matthew 3:17). The entire New Testament testifies that the Word of Promise that went forth from the mouth of God to Abraham did not return empty but accomplished that which God purposed and prospered in the thing for which He sent it. (Matthew 1 through Revelation 22)

I believe that in Jesus Christ God Himself became man, entering into our humanity so that He might fulfill the divine Word of Promise "to Abraham and His descendants, that they should inherit the world." Abraham benefited from the promise because of his trusting faith which was reckoned to him as righteousness. Such God-given faith, which is fully convinced that God is able to do what He has promised, continues to be reckoned for righteousness to me and to all who believe in Him who raised from the dead our Lord Jesus, who was put to death for our trespasses and raised for our justification. (Romans 4)

I believe that my faith-union with Jesus Christ was initiated when I "was baptized into His death." But I was buried with Him by Baptism into death that as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father I too might live a new life. In fact, all who are so united with Christ are dead to sin and alive to God in Christ Jesus. My broken communion with God has been restored by Him, and with it carries the restoration of communion with all the sons and daughters of God; a communion kept alive by my Lord's living presence in my life mediated through His Word and His Sacrament of Holy Communion. Slavery to sin has been replaced by obedience from the heart to God. Death, the wages which my sin had earned, has now been replaced by

God's free gift of eternal life in Christ my Lord.

I believe that God has redeemed me through Jesus Christ so that I might now serve Him with my life, dedicating my life out of love to Him to the service of my fellow men, to minister to them in Jesus' name in all their human needs. I recognize my fellow man's greatest need to be the restoration of his fellowship with God. To help meet this need, I have by God's grace and Spirit dedicated my life to the Gospel ministry in which it is my privilege to serve under the Church's call in carrying out the Church's Christ-given commission to proclaim His message of redemption to all mankind. As a minister of the Church of Christ I share with all who are His the privilege of serving the God of our creation and redemption as His messenger to bring to the fallen sons and daughters of Adam the message of the Last Adam, Jesus Christ, and through that Gospel to share with our fellow creatures the blessings of God's New Creation for time and eternity.

Because of my Spirit-given faith in my Lord Jesus Christ I accept His testimony regarding the divinely-inspired Scriptures, whose message I have endeavored to summarize in the preceding paragraphs. I believe the Scriptures, by virtue of their divine inspiration, to be the Word of God written in the words of men. In their word-of-man aspect the Scriptures come to us in languages and forms of ancient human literature which had their origins in the historical and cultural contexts of their own day; that is why I consider it essential to employ all pertinent linguistic, literary, archaeological, historical and cultural evidence and to utilize all available methods of research in attempting to determine as fully as possible the origin, nature and meaning of a given text of the Bible. In their Word-of-God aspect the inspired Scriptures are the Holy Spirit's message written and preserved for the purpose of witnessing to our Lord Jesus Christ; that is why as an interpreter of Scripture I consider it essential to invoke the on-going guidance of the Holy Spirit, convinced that just as "no one can say 'Jesus is Lord' except by the Holy Spirit" so no one can gain from the Scriptures their Christ-centered meaning "except by the Holy Spirit" - regardless of which exegetical methodology is employed.

I not only cheerfully reaffirm my commitment to the Lutheran Symbols as a true and unadulterated statement and exposition of the Word of God but I also renew my personal affirmation of the statement in the Preface to the *Book of Concord* relative to my work

as a professor of theology: "We desire particularly that the young men who are being trained for service in the church and for the holy ministry be faithfully and diligently instructed therein (i.e., in Scriptures, Creeds and Confessions), so that the pure teaching and confession of the faith may be preserved and perpetuated among our posterity through the help and assistance of the Holy Spirit until the glorious advent of our only Redeemer and Savior Jesus Christ."

Robert J. Werberig
Director of Cultural Activities
Associate Professor of Practical Theology (Pastoral Theology)

1. I believe that God has created all things, and that by His power and presence He sustains them all.
2. I believe that God's love for a fallen mankind moved Him to send deliver up to death, and raise again, His Son, Jesus Christ, so that men might receive again the life that was the forfeit of their fall.
3. I believe that God's Spirit is in the world working through the Means of Grace to call and lead God's people to fulfill their role as the one, holy, catholic and apostolic Church. It is this same Spirit whose presence and activity causes individual members as well as the corporate body of the Church to both mature and grow up into Christ-likeness.
4. I believe that God imputes righteousness to the sinner because of Christ, and that having been reconciled to God through faith, the Christian is a free man, in bondage to nothing more, or less, than Christ's law of love.

5. I believe that the Scriptures are the inspired Word of God-that they were given to, through, and for men, and that the Symbols of the Evangelical Lutheran Church are a true exposition of that Word of God.
6. I believe that the proper distinction between Law and Gospel is the key which unlocks the Scriptures for their application to the human condition, and that any interpretation which begins with acceptance of the Gospel and ends with its proclamation is valid. Furthermore, it is my conviction that the commitment of the interpreter will, under the guidance of God's Spirit, ensure the correctness of his interpretation.
7. I believe that the Gospel is the love of God in action. That love was most concretely demonstrated in Jesus Christ. Such "love in action" is the vital context in which the Church is called to proclaim the Gospel to the world in which it lives.

Andrew M. Weyermann
Chairman of the Department of Practical Theology
Associate Professor of Practical Theology
(Homiletics, Ethics)

I believe, teach and confess that God has created me and all creatures. By His continuing creative Presence, God preserves me and the whole cosmos.

I believe that I together with every other human being enter and exist in this life without true awe for and trust in God. We not only do not wager our existence on God alone, but we cannot by our own reason or strength so trust in God. We live our life out under the

tyranny of sin, the law and death. For this reason all attempts at self salvation are self defeating. I can alter what I do, but I cannot alter who I am. I am a man driven into himself by the tyranny of sin so that even the good that I do falls under God's criticism because it was not done in the freedom of faith.

I believe that God in His grace entered into our world in the person of Jesus Christ our Lord. Jesus Christ is true God and true man born of the Virgin Mary. In the life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ God has covered the sins of all men in His forgiveness and has overcome every evil power that tyrannizes us. God raised His Son from the dead as the sign to those who receive that Spirit that we are sons of God and not slaves, and that we are saints in Christ and not disenfranchised sinners.

I believe the Holy Spirit of God, who proceeds from the Father through the Son to the people of God, has called me by the Gospel and created and nurtures my faith that God is my Father and that I am free from the fear of guilt over past mistakes, or anxiety over my future fate.

The Spirit is present to me and gives me a new identity in baptism by linking my life with the life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. Through the body and blood of our Lord in the Sacrament of the altar the Spirit creates and nurtures a new brotherhood called the Body of Christ. This brotherhood is revolutionary because it is formed and maintained on the basis of the forgiveness of sins alone. I believe I am a new being in a new order in a new age already present through the Presence of Christ, yet I hope for a full realization of God's rule of grace at a point beyond my death and beyond history as we now know it.

CONFESSIONAL COMMITMENT

I reaffirm the confessional commitment that I made at my ordination and that is outlined in Article II of the constitution of The Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod.

THE THEOLOGICAL TASK

I distinguish carefully between my trust in the Promise of God in Christ and my attempt to articulate the full implications of

this faith in the Gospel in my theology. The doctrine of the Gospel which is the object of the Catholic Faith is not negotiable, but the articulation of the full implications of that doctrine must be critically reviewed. Almost all of the controversy in The Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod today has to do with theological formulation and not with the essential confession of the dogma of the Church. Many of the issues are not even theological, but they have to do with the proper use of tools to get at what the Scriptures assert and with an honest difference of interpretation of certain specific texts.

The real theological task for the Church is to articulate the full implications of the Gospel of Jesus Christ for our age. Luther stated, "True theology and knowledge of God lies in the crucified Christ." The Coming of God in Jesus Christ is the Word of God to which all the coming into words of the Word of God are related. The knowledge of God which is given in Jesus Christ does not constitute a particular item of doctrine which supplements the general knowledge of God, but it is the beginning of all true knowledge of God and His relation to men. The theologian seeks to consistently relate what he says about God and His relation to the world to the Gospel of Jesus Christ. He seeks to make explicit the full dimensions of the necessary content of the Gospel.

This is not to say that the only activity and Word of God is about His activity of grace in Jesus Christ. God's judging and retributing activity is expressed in the Word of God Lutherans call "law." The point is, no activity or Word of God can really be understood in terms of its intention and depth, much less accepted for what it really is, apart from the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

The theologian's task is to evaluate the theology and practice of the church. He tests every theological assertion and practice in the Church evangelically, i.e., he seeks to show whether it is properly related to the Gospel. He asks, "What are the adequate foundations of the Gospel itself and for asserting that this particular article of faith or quality of action can be called Christian?" The only sufficient reason for affirming a given article of faith is that it is necessitated by the Gospel of Jesus Christ. The fundamental critical question is, "Why is Jesus Christ necessary in this theological construct or system?"

THE SCRIPTURES AS RULE AND NORM

The Scriptures are a unique rule and norm under which my

own theological statements are reviewed and criticized. The task of the theologian is the exposition of the Word of God in the Holy Scriptures. He does this when he interprets the Scriptures in accord with that stated intention of the New Testament writers that these things were written that we might believe Jesus was the Christ and have hope. True biblical interpretation means interpreting every text in terms of its intended meaning. The key and ultimate intention of every text can be understood only when the text is related to the Gospel of God's redemptive activity in the life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ.

HISTORICAL CRITICAL METHOD

I support any method of interpretation that will throw light on the original intended meaning of the text. I reject any philosophical or religious presuppositions that would result in a reduction of the original intended meaning of the text. I personally have discovered tremendous new insight into the original intended meaning of the texts of Scripture through the use of textual, historical, form and redaction criticism. I believe these tools for interpretation can be employed without having to accept certain ideological assumptions that some users of the methods have as they come to their conclusions about the meaning of a text. The text must be interpreted honestly in terms of its own form and intended meaning, and the proper use of the historical critical method has facilitated this task.

LUTHERAN CONFSSIONAL THEOLOGY

I am committed to the Lutheran Confessions as a true exposition of the Word of God. The Confessors professed the Gospel of Jesus Christ and its implications for the total faith and life of the church in their time. Through my study of the Lutheran Symbols the Spirit of God has called me by the clear confessional witness of the Gospel in the Lutheran Symbols to a radical trust in Christ alone and in the God's grace alone. I intended to be faithful to this confessional commitment by teaching a theology that maximizes the merits of Christ in the spirit and direction of the Confessors. At the same time, I will resist the temptation to deal with theological or methodological differences in a way that turns the brotherhood of faith that lives by differences in a way that turns the brotherhood of faith that lives by God's grace in Christ into a legal and sectarian institution. The truly evangelical and Lutheran character of The Lutheran Church-Missouri

Synod is embodied in its repeated reaffirmation of commitment to the Holy Scriptures and the Lutheran Confessions.

Leonhard C. Wuerffel
Director of Placement
Professor of Practical Theology

In the first days of my earthly existence my good parents as faithful children of God brought me to the Lord Jesus in Holy Baptism. As Christians they believed their Lord's will for salvation to be found in Him who was revealed to them in the Sacred Scriptures as their God and Savior. With them I now know and confess that as I was born into this world of sin I too needed salvation from the corruption common to all men. This salvation is found only in the Lord Jesus Christ, the benefits of whose life, suffering, dying, and resurrection became my own in "the washing of regeneration" at that early age.

By the life and teaching and the blessed influence of my parents and many others I was confirmed in my faith in the God who makes Himself known to us in the Bible and through which He strengthens our Christian faith. I see the Bible as God's revelation to all men and as a product of the Holy Spirit who employed human beings to make known the Good News in Jesus Christ, the Gospel. I hold the Gospel as central to all that is revealed in the Word of God or as Luther put it, Scripture is the cradle that holds Jesus Christ before men, In our Lutheran tradition we hold in careful balance and distinction the two teachings commonly known as Law and Gospel, the former reveals God's will toward moral rectitude before Him and the latter shows the righteousness established for us in the work of Jesus Christ and made our own by faith in Him as our personal Redeemer

Across the years the study of these Sacred Scriptures has strengthened my faith in God as the Creator of all things in heaven and earth as well as the Preserver of life from day to day. He it is who has sent His Son, born of a Virgin, into the world of sin to accomplish for me and all men what man under sin could not achieve. He has fulfilled all the demands of God's holy law for me and has suffered what I deserved by my sins and sinning. Daily He assures me by the power of the Holy Spirit of this forgiveness and has led me to the joy of serving God's people as an ambassador of this Gospel. I see all of this as God's undeserved mercy and grace in my life. By the strengthening of His Spirit I have also been led to believe wholly in the Sacred Scriptures as the rule and norm of my faith, life and ministry to His people and I view the Lutheran Symbols as a correct exposition of the doctrine of the Gospel which is the content of the Sacred Scriptures.

Accordingly in doctrinal matters I attempt with the gifts with which God has endowed me to teach only what is taught in the Sacred Scriptures holding forth the Gospel in all its fullness and sweetness as the source of redemption and eternal joy. In addition, I join with God's people at the Table of the Lord to receive His sacred body and blood as a pledge and assurance of forgiveness and as a strength to perform better the task of "mutual conversation and consolation of, the brethren" which is always found where the Spirit's gift of unity in the faith is granted.

I believe, teach, and confess that this Christian faith has been planted in my heart for the purpose of also spreading the Gospel into all the world and living that Gospel and its benefits in day to day existence as a witness to God's mercy and grace. This means that I not only need to renew my commitment regularly as a minister of the Gospel but that I also need to put forth every effort to increase my skills in helping others as I have been helped in so many and varied ways. As to the Sacred Scriptures this will mean to use every means at my disposal. to understand what God is saying and by the power of His Spirit to apply the truths of the Word to the needs of the hour. I may not achieve this goal as well as I ought but what a joy to be associated with brothers dedicated to the same cause, holding the same conviction, and pursuing the same commitment. A merciful God and Father has in so many ways prompted the brothers to minister to one another to the glory of God and the confirming of faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. I shall always praise God and thank

Him for the privilege of this communion of teachers who have shared the faith as efforts were made in training men for the office of the holy ministry.

Lorenz Wunderlich
Professor of Systematic Theology

In compliance with the resolution of the faculty of Concordia Seminary of October 10, 1972, that each member of the faculty "prepare a statement of his confessional position," I herewith, in consonance with my ordination vow and with Article 11 of the Constitution of The Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod, affirm:

In my faith, confession, and teaching, I accept without reservation "the Scriptures of the Old and New Testament as the written Word of God and the only rule of faith and practice:"

and "all the Symbolical Books of the Evangelical Lutheran Church as a true and unadulterated statement and exposition of the Word of God, to wit: the three Ecumenical Creeds (the Apostles Creed, the Nicene Creed, the Athanasian Creed), the *Unaltered Augsburg Confession*, the *Apology of the Augsburg Confession*, the *Smalcald Articles*, the *Large Catechism* of Luther, the *Small Catechism* of Luther, and the *Formula of Concord*."

In a very real sense, more than this I could not say, less than this I would not say. However, additional explanation may be desirable.

What this means for me personally as a child of God and as a pastor in The Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod is that the prophetic and apostolic writings of the Old and New Testaments are truly God's Word in every detail.

In these divinely inspired Scriptures God reveals Himself as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

He is the Creator of the universe and of all which was a part of that universe at the beginning, terrestrial as well as celestial, according to the account of creation in Genesis. This creation included the first human beings, Adam and Eve, the angels plants and animals, planets, and all which the Creator determined for their continued existence and welfare.

Because Adam and Eve were unfaithful to God and thus sinned, I am an heir to that legacy and stain of sin, sinful from birth. But I am also a sinner on my own, a sinner in my thinking, saying, and doing.

Accordingly, God in His grace also revealed His plan of salvation in the prophetic writings of the Old Testament and effected this salvation in the New Testament through His Son Jesus Christ, Who became man by His birth of the Virgin Mary. Though sinless He took upon Himself the sins of all mankind and by His sinless life He completely met all the demands of God's holy Law and through His suffering and death and resurrection He effected the reconciliation of mankind with God.

This reconciliation is now proclaimed by the Holy Spirit in and through the Word of God as we find it in the infallible writings of the prophets and apostles of the Old and New Testaments. Law and Gospel reveal both sin and grace in order to accomplish God's glorious purpose for the salvation of human beings.

Through Word and sacraments the Holy Spirit makes it possible for me to believe that the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ was for the sins of all. Thus, and thus alone, sins are forgiven and Christian faith and life are established.

In God's own appointed time our Savior will return as the Judge of all and as the Redeemer Judge of all of His saints.

By God's grace, this is my faith and my confession.

My prayer is that the Holy Spirit will continue to preserve and sustain me in this faith and confession to the end of my life!

Gratefully and joyfully submitted.

Professors Mark Bangert, Ralph Bohlmann, and Martin Scharlemann were on leave and off campus at the time of the publication of these documents. Professor Arlis Ehlen, though not teaching, was on campus and was invited by the faculty to join in offering a confession of his faith to the church.