



WHAT IS A TRUE LUTHERAN



Bernie Lutz, missionary & pastor

PREFACE

Each page of this paper will point you to a power that is above all powers, past, present and future! You will come face to face with Jesus Christ, true God and true Man. He is the way, the truth and the life and no one can enter heaven without having faith in Him. May the Holy Spirit bless you, and as you read each page, may the Savior of the nations enter your heart with His love and peace.

What Is A True Lutheran had its birth in South Sudan when the Rev. Benjamin Ogiki, General Secretary of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of South Sudan/Sudan encouraged me to plan and finance this seminar for the Acholi Nation south of Juba and into Uganda. The challenge was exciting! It was estimated that there are many, perhaps 15,000 people or more that would be interested in a seminar on Lutheranism. It took some time to develop a plan that was concrete and properly financed for such a seminar.

The seminar was to be five days and to be held at a local hotel that could care for and feed many participants. My task was to develop a seminar that would include the pertinent or chief doctrines and teaching found in the Bible and taught by the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod/Evangelical Lutheran Church of South Sudan/Sudan.

What style of presentation would be needed to effectively communicate True Lutheranism to new Christians of the Acholi nation in South Sudan? What really is True Lutheranism? With many different Lutheran Churches in this world which teaching and practice was to be used in this seminar. The Bishop of the ELCSS/S, The Rev. Peter Anibati Abia supported the seminar idea and requested that the presentation of the material in the seminar be orthodox Lutheran.

I began putting thoughts and ideas to work in 2017 and looked for support to conduct this seminar on Lutheranism. It was difficult to find the financial support and also as my age increased year by year, it became impossible for my wife and I to serve as the superintendents of the seminar.

The fact that I would not be leading the seminar put more pressure on the writing of the material to be presented. It meant that the style and content needed to be self explanatory in a flowing and simple way for new Christians attending the seminar.

The work to actually write the material for this seminar was done in 2020, during the CoVID 19 epidemic. The project gave me plenty of work to do to pass those quarantine days "stay home."

As this project developed and rough copies of the seminar were produced there was a need to find readers to check the manuscript. God made it possible for two angels to appear to read, correct and suggest fresh ideas for the Acholi seminar. These two angels were my wife Ellein, professional missionary, teacher and a missionary co-worker from the state of Michigan, Kathleen Cole, a professional journalist. It was a God given blessing to have their assistance in writing this short but important treatise on Lutheranism. Special thanks to both women.

Because Kate Cole is involved with International Student Organization of the LCMS in Michigan, this paper is intentionally written to include thousands of foreign students who study in the USA.

Lastly, this work is not meant to be an academic project with high research quality, it has no footnotes, bibliography or index. The seminar paper is written to show the reader how the Holy Scriptures leads lost souls to know Jesus as their personal Savior as they read about True Lutheranism.

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WELCOME READER. THIS BOOKLET WILL HELP DISCOVER THE BIBLICAL TEACHINGS THAT MAKE TRUE LUTHERANS UNIQUE. THIS STUDY SHARES TWENTY THEOLOGICAL POINTS OR DOCTRINES THAT TRUE LUTHERANS HONOR AND MAKE THEM A UNIQUE CHRISTIAN GROUP.

HERE IS AN OPPORTUNITY FOR YOU TO LEARN THE ABC'S OF TRUE LUTHERANISM. TRUE LUTHERANISM IS NOT A SECT, OR STRANGE GROUP OF CHRISTIANS, BUT A GROUP OF CHRISTIANS WHO HONOR AND OBEY GOD'S WORD. BELOW FIND TWENTY POINTS THAT TRUE LUTHERANS BELIEVE, TEACH AND CONFESS.

ARE YOU READY? HERE WE GO..... *A BEGINNERS LOOK AT TRUE LUTHERANISM!*

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WHAT IS A TRUE LUTHERAN?

Preface

The Lord called me, The Rev. Dr. Bernie Lutz, to bring His Gospel, called the Good News about Jesus, to the Enga people of the Western Highlands of New Guinea, the Islamic people of the Middle East, Ibibio of Nigeria, and the Azande of South Sudan. In between world adventures of the faith, He has led me to serve in Minnesota, Wisconsin, and Montana. A question that many people asked me, was, "What is the most important truth to be shared with God's people?" As an orthodox (true) Lutheran servant, the Holy Spirit had planted an answer in my heart: "*We live by faith and not by sight.*" God, through His rich grace, has declared me, and all people, justified sinners, through faith in His Son Jesus Christ who died for all!

The Rev. Benjamin Ogiki, General Secretary, of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of South Sudan and Sudan, has been suggesting a seminar discussing true Lutheranism for a few years. The Bishop of the ELCSS/S, the Rev. Peter Anibati, believes that this seminar is a mission project needed to meet the outreach challenge of reaching not only the Acholi nation but many others with the Gospel. This seminar is supported by the ELCSS/S Council because many Acholi are seeking a church that is guided by the Word of God.

THE MISSION FOR THIS SEMINAR

That when this seminar "What is a True Lutheran?" concludes, all who participate, will clearly know the answer to the question. There will be no confusion regarding what a true Lutheran believes, teaches, and confesses. This seminar clearly points to Jesus, the One Sure Way to heaven, He is the Author and Pioneer of our faith. Every living soul, past, present, or future, has two choices to make, one, that there is a heaven with Jesus or the second choice, be damned to the fires of hell with Satan. Both are without end.

Rationale

OK, which religion has the best god in this world? We hear about Christianity, Islam, Hinduism, Buddhism, Animism and Hinduism. Sadly, even among Christian we find that there is division and disputes. We hear people saying, "We are the right ones!" How do I know which is the best god? Is there a special god for each race? Each denomination? If I do good and help other people is there really a god to bless me? How do I know what happens when death comes to me? Where can I go to find help with my life's struggles?

Quite often we hear people ask, "What is life all about anyway?" Is my life like that of other animals, like a lizard, a termite, or a howling dog? We are born, we live, and we die! We ask what is life all about anyway? Are we to enjoy what we can find that makes us happy in life, like food and drink, sex, and pleasure, and then we get old and die? Is there a real purpose for me in this life? As a true Lutheran, we hold answers to these questions: Yes, God gave to each person a soul. There is a life that follows this one, and the only way for this soul to be saved is to know Jesus, the Son of God and Man. Paul writes by inspiration, "*For me to live is Christ, to die is gain!*" Heaven, is a free gift, through Jesus

This Seminar on Lutheranism is planned to help the people of South Sudan, especially the people of the Acholi Nation of East Africa. The contents of this seminar will discuss questions like those above and will find clear and brief answers to these important questions. Hopefully, all readers will find this treatise helpful and be blessed with the new hope that is found only in Jesus. We pray that this study will give God's answers to the many questions people have about life now and the new life in Christ that follow this earthly life in the here and now

What is a seminar? A seminar is a gathering of people who come together to discuss a specific topic. The topic chosen for this seminar is: "What is a True (orthodox) Lutheran?" Good question. (The word orthodox means someone who has a true, traditional, and strict opinion of some matter.) Many non-Lutheran people are invited to attend this seminar to discuss the Lutheran Church and its teachings. Those who attend will find that True Lutherans, differ a great deal from the teaching of other Christian denominations on many Scriptural doctrines. Hopefully, following this seminar many participants will choose to join with the ELCSS/S as an active member.

INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND INFORMATION FOR THIS PAPER

A true Lutheran believes that all theological and spiritual teachings must come from the Bible. They believe that the Bible is God's Word. This means that everything the Bible teaches is correct and true. The Bible is pure or inerrant. True Lutherans believe that it is only through Scriptures that we can know the one true God – the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. A True Lutheran boldly confesses with the Lutheran Confessions: We believe, teach and confess that the only rule (regulation) and norm(standard) according to which all teachings, together with all teachers, should be evaluated and judged (2 Tim 3:15-17) are the prophetic and apostolic Scriptures of the Old and New Testament alone. (FC Ep 1-2) For those who call themselves orthodox Lutheran, the Holy Scriptures are the only source and authority for Christian theology.

The name Lutheran comes from a faithful servant of God by the name of Martin Luther. Luther lived in a country called Germany in the 14th and 15th Centuries. Luther loved and honored the Word of God. He truly trusted it completely. In his day, he found that the Roman Catholic Church was teaching many things that the Bible forbid, and they were forbidding many things the Bible approved. As a priest in the Roman Church, Luther pleaded with the leaders of the Roman Catholic Church to return to the Bible and then discuss each issue publicly and come to a decision on each issue on the basis of God's Word.

Many Christians agreed with Dr. Luther and joined with him also believed that the Bible was God's Word, and that Christians should follow the Word of God. The Roman Catholic Church rejected Luther's suggestions for discussions, the followers of Luther acted as a group and began to worship with the new changes that Martin Luther had suggested. The Roman Catholic Church condemned Luther as a heretic (a person accused of false teachings). When the words "Lutheran Church", are used in this paper, we will refer to the beliefs of a True Lutheran. There are many Lutherans who no longer accept and believe that God's Word as inerrant. Through the passage of time, many faithful Lutheran bodies have drifted from God's truth. We note that a true Lutheran Christian Church refuses to be numbered with those who have joined the liberal ranks, in their liberal views. The word liberal means to be independent and free. A liberal Lutheran is one who wants to be free from the demands of the inerrant Word of God. A liberal

Lutheran would call a true Lutheran a legalist because of his commitment to the inerrant, infallible Word of God.

This seminar will demonstrate how the practices of the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod (LCMS) and those in fellowship with the LCMS are faithful and true to Holy Scriptures. This needs to be emphasized, because there are so many people who doubt the Word of God. We point out the fact that many liberal Lutherans do not accept the Word of God as pure and inerrant. The seminar discussion will use the Book of Concord to demonstrate the biblical stance of True Lutherans. All Lutherans use the Book of Concord to defend its doctrines and its teachings regarding God's Word.

As we listen, study, participate, and learn about "Lutheranism," participants will remember that what we read and hear about the doctrines of "True Lutheranism" always point to the infallible Word of God. This study will clearly demonstrate that the teachings of the LCMS are based on Holy Scriptures which we believe, teach, and confess are the basis for our theology and doctrine. The LCMS/ELCSS/S teaches that every Word of the Bible is to be believed and is without error. The Word of God offers great power and hope when reading and studying it, and the result is a rich spiritual blessing. Miracles such as: Six-day Creation, The World Flood, Jonah swallowed by a large fish, Jesus walking on water, become very special and exciting, because of the trust and the personal faith that is produced by the Holy Spirit through the Word of God.

Most current seminaries, including most Lutheran seminaries, teach and use the Historical Critical Method theory for the interpretation of the Holy Scriptures. These critics believe and teach that the Bible contains myths and fables that are not factual. The HCM theory has been accepted as the chief method to interpret the Bible by many biblical scholars and as a result have rejected the God breathed inspiration and the inerrancy" of the Bible. The HCM uses human reason to interpret the Word of God. These HCM critics claim that the Bible is filled with contradictions and error. These biblical scholars believe that the contents of the Bible cannot be accepted as the infallible Word of God. Some teach that the Gospel is what is important in the Bible and that all other information found in the Bible are man's words and not important. They say that God's truths must carefully be sought and found before the Word is trusted. This theory does not sound bad, but it destroys the truth that Gods Word is infallible. The HCM clearly undermines the truth that Scriptures are inspired and inerrant.

Many church bodies use the Word of God in a questionable way. How is this done? They first do not consider the Word of God "truly God breathed" or given by God. The Word of God is treated as a human book filled with errors and mistakes. They teach the Gospel but refuse to accept the teachings of the books of the Bible as God's truth. True Lutherans reject these liberal teachings that reduce Holy Scriptures to a book of myths and fables.

True Lutherans faithfully confess, that God's Word is true and reliable. God's Word is trustworthy. As Scriptures state, "*All Scripture is God-breathed, and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness.*" (2 Tim 3:16). When the Bible is reduced to a worldly book, one filled with errors, this surely does not meet God's demands to love, honor and obey Him and His Holy Word. True Lutherans publicly and boldly believe, teach, and

confess that the whole Bible has been specially given to us by God, that is what is meant by the term, the inspired Word of God.

The term, "Thus says the Lord," is found over 400 times in the Old Testament, and "God Said" occurs 42 times. And that "God spoke" is found nine times in the Old Testament and three times in the New Testament. These facts convince the orthodox Lutherans to accept the Bible as the Word of God! True Lutherans know from the Bible that Satan is a very deceptive power, he is powerful and that his goal is to destroy the Christian Church here on earth.

We know that Satan is where YOU are, in the very place you are standing or sitting, right now, indeed, he is alive and well! We do not have to go far in this world to see evil and hate, anger, and division. Right here in this town, in this country. Satan constantly tries to enter the hearts of the faithful and turn them from the Gospel to the way of the world. We observe how Satan over the years has infiltrated the teachings and doctrines of many Christian Church bodies. A Christian who is faithful to the Word of God, enjoys reading, studying, and memorizing it, using the Word to be his lamp and light. As a faithful student of the Word, he must be cautious and wise and even refuse membership and fellowship with those who question the power, majesty, and truth of God's inerrant Word.

We will have the challenge to single out and consider some of the chief teachings of the Lutheran Church. We will discuss what doctrines it publicly teaches and confesses. For example, here are a few samples of True Lutheran teachings. A True Lutheran does not accept the practice of homosexuality or the marriage of same sex people. They do not permit women to serve as a pastor. The Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod / ELCSS/S does not permit a woman to choose the abortion of an unwanted baby. A True Lutheran does not accept euthanasia to end life. A True Lutheran eagerly Baptizes infants. Holy Communion is receiving the true body and blood of Jesus, in with and under the bread and wine. A sinner cannot come to faith by his/her own power, but only by the power and the work of the Holy Spirit.

Because of man's sinful nature, serious weaknesses occur that treat the Word of God in a human way. These weaknesses are to be found in the doctrine and practice that divide the Lutheran Church bodies. I believe the main weakness is the use of the HCM method to read and study God's holy Word. Because human reason is used to make decisions that deal with things that are beyond reason, God's Word is denied and changed to meet man's weak reasoning. Always, God's Word is to be respected and held above man's sinful reasoning ability and the Word of God rules. The Word of God is to always set the control of man's reasoning regarding doctrine and practice. It is His Word that is loved, obeyed in life's circumstances, and teaching, even when it at times is not understood. Often, sinful men simply cannot understand what God is saying but then through faith in God, we fully trust His Word. For example: the Holy Trinity, conversion, Jesus is God, Jesus is Man, the presence of Christ is. Human reason is important and necessary for dealing with the temporal and physical matters of life. If a house is on fire, we leave the house! In spiritual matters, God's Word is above the reasoning of men, and so we trust it with our lives.

To repeat again, to be a true Lutheran is to "acknowledge, teach and believe that a sinner is justified by grace, through faith, and is declared righteous through the suffering death and resurrection of Jesus Christ". This is the central teaching of the Bible. True Lutherans recognize

the truth that everyone born is by nature sinful and an enemy of God, and cannot come to faith by our works. Without faith in Jesus, man is damned forever and without hope. In God's great love for sinners, He gave His only Son Jesus, to take on human flesh, to become a man, so that He could become man's substitute. Only Jesus was able to pay the full price and then to offer salvation free for all who accept Him and believe in Him as Savior and Lord. These gifts are by and through the grace of God, through and by the work of the Holy Spirit, the third Person of the Holy Trinity.

The Book of Concord, a book that contains the Lutheran Confessions, and a true Lutheran accepts these confessions because they are based upon the Word of God. The Lutheran Confessions help to distinguish between the two important teachings in the Bible: Law and Gospel.

Dr. Luther commented on Matthew 7:15, "*Watch out for false prophets. They come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ferocious wolves.*" Luther said, "Christ tells us that as Christians we have the right to judge all doctrine and what has been set up for us to hold or not to hold." True Lutherans hold clearly to this teaching as Christians who accept Scriptures as the inerrant or pure Word of God. We join now to discuss 20 articles of faith that reveal the major teachings of a True Lutheran. (SL.XI.1394,3-4)

1. CHRIST ALONE

Jesus answered, "I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me." John 14:6

True Lutherans place Christ Alone as the first and most important topic to discuss in this seminar, "What is a True Lutheran." Christ Alone, is what makes a person a True Christian, because Christ is what makes the church CHRISTIAN.

Salvation by and through Christ alone singles out the key to eternal life. The importance of Jesus Christ, and the redemption of each sinner's soul clearly sets this work as the highest of blessings God has given to sinful mankind. It is the most important belief that a sinner confesses, as we learn from Holy Scriptures.

Christ Alone is the key teaching/doctrine that underscores and stresses the only way to eternal life: is through the work of Jesus Christ. (Rom 10:4 – Christ is the end of the Law so that there may be righteousness for everyone who believes.) This teaching, based on Scriptures, is an important part of True Lutheran theology and its identity because the Bible tells us that Christ is the only way to eternal life. We read in I Corinthians 3:11, "*For no one can lay any foundation other than the one already laid, which is Jesus Christ.*"

In his preaching and teaching, Martin Luther, the founder of the Lutheran Church, held that anything that downplays Christ and His work of salvation is heresy. (Heresy, is an English word, that is used to accuse someone of teaching false doctrine.) Luther wrote, "All prophecy slanted towards works and not leading genuinely to Christ or to your own consolation is not in agreement with faith, no matter how pleasant it may be, like the pilgrimages, fasts and the search after the merits of the saints." (SL.XI.1398.14-15.)

In the book of Acts of the Apostles, Chapter 4, verse 12 we read, "*And there is salvation in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be*

saved." The Word is clear, leaving absolutely no room for human reason to suggest that man can merit God's blessings of heaven through his good works. Jesus, in the Gospel of John, chapter 14 says in verse 6, "*I am the way, the truth and the life, no man comes to the father except through Me.*"

When sharing the Gospel with the Enga people of New Guinea,(1967-1975) after the Gospel was heard and accepted, the question was often asked, "What will God do with our ancestors who did not know Jesus as Savior and Lord?" The Bible clearly answers that question, "He that believeth and is baptized will be saved, he that doesn't believe will be damned." (Mark 16:16) Christ Alone, is the answer that God gives to each of us here today.

Some people refuse to believe Mark 16:16 and make up their own religion of faith. For example, the Roman Catholic Church has rejected God's plan to save souls through Christ Alone through faith, and have developed a plan where a sinner may avoid this very important teaching from the Word, and they falsely say that God will receive men into His heaven by their good works. (Roman Catholic Catechism) It is true, God's Word crushes the heart, and the thought of suffering the fires of hell without end is very thought-provoking. The Roman Catholics have invented a place called Purgatory, where those who are not perfect must pay their way into heaven with good works and money.

We read these Words from Scripture, "*God would have all men to be saved, and to come to the knowledge of the Truth.*" (I Tim 2:4) Yet the Roman Catholics despise His Word and publicly teach in their catechism, "It may be supposed that such persons would have desired Baptism explicitly if they had known its necessity" and, by extension, God may permit them to attain salvation."

True Lutherans believe, teach, and confess that a sinner is saved by grace through faith in Christ Alone. There are Church bodies who call themselves Christians, and yet publicly teach that sinful man can do good works, works that merit eternal life. (e.g. help my neighbor, clean the church yard, give food to a hungry person etc.) True Lutherans, because of the Bible, strongly believe, each and confess that eternal life is a gift from God, a blessing given only through the work and merits of Jesus and His work of redemption. On the basis of the Bible, True Lutherans reject any effort or work on the part of man, that even in the smallest of ways, can merit God's love or in the least way, cooperate with God's gift of eternal life. Orthodox Lutherans teach that eternal life is a gift from God, through the work of His Son Jesus, and is totally unearned or deserved.

There is only one road that leads to heaven and that road is to believe in Jesus and that road is based on the work of Christ Alone (Solus Christus). John 3:16," *God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son. Anyone who believes in him will not die but will have eternal life.* "True Lutheran's emphasize that Christ alone must come first before any other teaching, for without His redeeming work, all other teachings would have no meaning.

True Lutherans teach that sinners are saved by Christ alone, grace alone, by faith alone and by Scriptures alone. Each of these truths will be discussed in the next three lessons. While it is true that these teachings are important, these teachings follow, the most important truth, Christ alone. (Solus Christus). Orthodox Lutherans boldly teach Christ Alone as the first and most

significant doctrine of the Christian faith. It is true that grace alone, faith alone, Scriptures alone, are each very important and have been properly emphasized by the Christian Church for centuries, however, True Lutheranism places Christ Alone first along with these four important "Alone group". As True Lutherans, we confess and confirm, that Christ Alone is the key to the Christian faith.

The Bible contains 66 books found in the Old Testament and the New Testament. The Bible is written in a way that makes Christ the center of every book and every teaching. Luther said, "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." (American Edition: Luther's Works. vol 15 pp 339)

Because the Holy Bible emphasizes the importance of Christ in the coming to saving faith, True Lutherans believe, teach, and confess that a person can come to know God only through His Son, Jesus. In John, chapter 14 we learn from Jesus that we come to know God through His Son. Philip, one of Jesus' disciples asked Jesus to show them the Father. Jesus, replies, *"Have I been with you so long, and you still do not know Me, Philip? Whoever has seen Me has seen the Father. How can you say, 'Show us the Father?'"*

From the beginning of time and the Fall into sin, men have sought out the presence of God. Through the passing of time, many spiritual leaders have claimed ownership of some form of God. This is blasphemy! Showing contempt or lack of reverence to God!

There are 3400 religions found in the world. The continent of Africa has vast array of different religions, such as Islam, African Religions, Buddhists, Hindu, Muslim, Hindu and many more, whose leaders claim that they have found the way to God. These religions teach that the way to reach heaven is by doing good works and being good. Every religion in this world, except Christianity, have this teaching in common: Heaven can be earned through doing good works. The bottom line is that all world religions teach what man must "do" to reach heaven or make God happy. The True Christian religion teaches what Christ has "done" for sinners so that in Christ, they can please God, and enter heaven as a free Gift

Both the Old and the New Testament of Scriptures teach that Jesus Christ is the one and only source who has redeemed and paid the price for the salvation of all with His precious blood. His suffering, death, and resurrection from the dead, have won for all people a place in heaven. All that is required is to believe in Jesus, and to be baptized into His name, to have faith in Him. Therefore, we look at Solus Christus, Christ Alone, first in our seminar topics.

CONCLUSION

True Lutherans believe teach and confess that Christ Alone is to be placed first among all doctrines because (1) Jesus is the only way to an eternal life. (2) Jesus paid the costly price of winning heaven for sinners with His precious blood. (3) The sinner's good works cannot earn God's love, only faith in Christ can do this. (4) Christ Alone is the purpose of the Holy Scriptures (5) Christ Alone assures Christians that their prayers will be answered.

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

1. If you died right now, this moment, would your soul go to heaven? Discuss
2. Why is the doctrine of "Christ Alone" so important? Discuss
3. Discuss the importance of living with the teaching that Christ Alone is all I need.

2. FAITH ALONE

For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God—⁹ not by works, so that no one can boast. Ephesians 2:8-9

True Lutherans believe, teach, and confess that sinful man is not able to come to saving faith by his own power because he is dead and helpless in his trespasses and sin. Ephesians 2:1 state, *"As for you, you were dead in your transgressions and sins."* With, Scriptures we hold that *"we live by faith and not by sight. (II Cor 5:7)*

Holy Scriptures state through Apostle Paul in II Corinthians 5:7, *"We live by faith and not by sight."* What does live by faith mean? What is saving faith? The Gospel of Mark in the sixteenth chapter, verse 16 state, *"Whoever believes (have faith) and is baptized will be saved, but whoever does not believe will be condemned."*

Scriptures teach that everyone who enters this life enters with deadly sin. Psalm 51: 5, *"Surely I was sinful at birth, sinful from the time my mother conceived me."* It is the sacrament of Holy Baptism that brings forgiveness and eternal life to each and every sinner. We were dead and without spiritual life. Now, with new faith, the sinner is born again and looks forward to a blessed life in heaven forever.

True Lutherans believe what the Word of God says when it declares that "faith saves!" To be a True Lutheran means to accept saving faith as a work of the Holy Spirit which is a gift from God. True Lutherans believe that a sinner is justified before God through faith alone in Jesus Christ. The Bible states in Philippians 1:29, *"For it has been granted to you on behalf of Christ not only to believe on him, but also to suffer for Him."* Apostle Paul, in the book of Romans, 10:17, writes, *"So then faith comes by hearing and hearing by the Word of God."* Faith justifies, that is, faith believes that God declares me a sinner, forgiven!

Faith is a Gift from God. Faith must grow stronger or will die. Faith can be lost. True Lutherans believe what the Word of God says to us about saving faith. To be a True Lutheran means to accept saving faith as a work of God which is a gift from God. True Lutherans believe that the sinner is justified before God by grace through faith alone in Jesus Christ. The Bible states in Philippians 1:29, *"For it has been granted to you on behalf of Christ not only to believe on Him, but also so suffer for Him."* Paul writes in the book of Romans, 10:17, *"So then, faith comes by hearing and hearing by the Word of God."* Faith justifies, that is, it believes that God declares me, a sinner, forgiven.

Luther wrote much concerning the Christian Faith. He said that faith is the basis on which we rely for blessings which we do not yet see, or in other words, I must wait for a blessing that I can neither, nor hear but can only hope for. As soon as faith begins, reason must be shut out

from that time, or granted "leave of absence". Human reason and faith often work together, but the more human reason raises itself above God and His Word, the less it is in true union with God's purpose found in His Word. (SL.XI.1368, 6-7)

The "Apology of the Augsburg Confession," speaks of the importance of faith. "Therefore, we want to show first that faith alone makes a righteous man out of an unrighteous one, that is, that he receives the forgiveness of sins. "Even though our human reason may question a theological point, True Lutherans accept the inerrant Word of God as fact and fully accept the Scripture teachings as God speaking in the present."

Saving faith is not just an opinion regarding the doctrines that flow from the Word of God, saving faith is based on facts that are historic events, they are real life events that took place in history. Most importantly, Jesus was a real human person, born, lived, suffered, and died. People saw Him and recorded these events. Because He is God, He arose from the dead and ascended into heaven. These events are beyond the reason of the human mind, yet true because they come from the Holy Spirit. Jesus truly lives eternally, past, present, and future, with all power, honor, and glory! By faith we believe and accept these mysteries that bring sinners much comfort.

True Lutherans believe that when a person confesses that he lives by faith and not by sight, that clearly means that he trusts in God and His promises. He knows what Christ has done for him to give eternal life and accepts the Word of God as without error.

It is especially important to read and study the Word of God, so that we know what God is saying, and what He demands of us. There are people who know about Jesus, where He was born, what He taught and what people did to Him, but this information is not saving faith. We must go beyond the facts and knowledge about Jesus and what He did. There is no saving faith in only knowing about Jesus. Saving faith requires that a person trust the Word and the promises that God makes to His followers. Finally, all these truths about how a person is saved, must be accepted personally, and agreed upon completely and faithfully in his heart.

When the Call from God came that my wife and I were to do mission work in Lebanon, it was scary! While serving in Beirut, Lebanon someone suggested that I meet with some Hezbollah, outside the city of Beirut, up in the mountains, and at night! I was filled with fright! The Hezbollah are highly active Muslims group, who do not hesitate to cut the heads off Christians. After prayerful thought, and a Lebanese friend's encouragement, I went with him, up to the mountain site and spoke to 30 Hezbollah men. It took a strong faith in God to carry out this assignment! One leader asked me, "Dr. Lutz, where do you get your inner peace!" I spoke for 90 minutes. God blessed the evening with success. I spoke about the faith that God had given to me in my life and that it has truly brought a lasting peace to me.

Based on the Word of God, True Lutherans teach that faith is more than merely knowing facts and being totally convinced that the Word of God is true in every way. Faith consists in accepting Jesus Christ truly in the heart and soul as the Son of God and yet True Man. Saving faith means that a follower of Jesus is convinced, confident and committed to Jesus Christ as His Lord and Savior. By faith, a Christian believes, trusts Jesus as his Savior from sin and death

and has granted eternal life to him through faith. In Hebrews, Chapter one, verse 1 we are told, "Faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen."

Three important facts help to describe saving faith. Saving faith consists, or is made up, of knowledge, trust, and assent (I agree). First, we consider the knowledge part of saving faith. Many people may say, "O I know about Jesus." Merely knowing about Jesus is not saving faith. People all over the world have heard of a Christmas Tree or seen a cross and know about Jesus. But knowing about Jesus does not include trust or that a person believes that Jesus is the Son of God. Or, that Jesus died on a cross to take away all my sin. Each of the three parts of saving faith must be present to possess saving faith.

As God blesses each of us with a new day, every day, each of us finds that some of our days are good days and other days are filled with hunger, sickness, and failure. Our lives change from day to day. As we live out each day, one day at a time, we know that we make mistakes and hurt ourselves and other people too. It is important that each sinner must admit that we fall short of what God has asked us to do. We sin. As sinners, then, by our faith, we recognize that it is only by God's grace, that there is a wonderful God who gives each of us the gift of saving faith, a faith that assures us that God that covers all our sins. Knowing this, trusting these words, and accepting Jesus as Savior, we are filled with joy, peace and thankfulness that is indescribable. These emotions of joy and peace make us happy, however these are not a part of saving faith but a result of having faith in Jesus, the Savior of the World!

Faith needs an object and that object is Jesus Christ! Saving faith is a special blessing that the Spirit gives to those who convert to the Christian faith. 1 Peter 3:15 b, "*Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have.*" The disciples were historical witnesses of Christ's suffering, death, burial, and resurrection from the dead. This important truth was part of history. Undeniable. True Lutherans teach that the Scripture teaching of Christ and His resurrection is based on an historical fact. Lutherans teach that the forgiveness of sin is obtained only through faith in Christ. Forgiveness of sins does come because of love or works. Lutherans believe that love and good works follow from saving faith.

Faith justifies! To have saving faith means to trust in Jesus Christ for our personal salvation. Because of Jesus and the fact that He took our place on the cross God now wants to be reconciled to us! What a wonderful, loving God, so filled with mercy, grace, and compassion. These blessings the Christian experiences can only be accepted by and through faith.

The disciples had difficulty in accepting the truth that their Teacher and Prophet had arisen from the tomb. The Disciples, even after Jesus appeared to them in the flesh, were doubtful of His resurrection from the dead. In response to their lack of faith in accepting the resurrection, Jesus spoke to Thomas, a disciple of Jesus, in John 20:29b," *blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed.*" Saving faith is a faith that is convinced that Jesus arose from the dead and sits at the right hand of God as well as in the believer's heart. Paul writes in I Corinthians 15:17, the great resurrection chapter of the Bible, "*If Christ has not been raised, your faith is futile.*"

CONCLUSION

FAITH ALONE is the key to eternal life: (1) A Christian is saved by grace through faith in Jesus. (2) The difficult journey of life is placed in the hands of the Almighty God by faith. (3) Faith grows stronger and is granted as we ask God to increase our faith through Jesus Christ. (4) Faith rises above human reason as we place our trust in Jesus (5) Saving grace by and through faith is free and for everyone. (6) Faith can be lost. (7) Faith justifies.

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

1. Why aren't good works included in considering the salvation of our soul? Discuss
2. What are the three aspects of faith? Discuss the role of each aspect in having Saving Faith?
3. What did Jesus mean when He said, "Blessed are those who believe, yet have not seen?" How does one obtain saving faith? Discuss

3. GRACE ALONE (Sola Gratia)

"And if by grace, then it cannot be based on works; if it were, grace would no longer be grace." Romans 11:6

True Lutherans believe, teach, and confess that a sinner is saved by God's "grace alone." This teaching or theological point makes True Lutheranism unique.

How does True Lutheranism's teaching of God's rich grace make it somehow unique? Here is the answer: The Word of God tells us that eternal salvation is through divine grace and that salvation cannot be earned through good works. Eph 2:8-9 states, "*for it is by grace you have been saved through faith, and this not from yourselves, it is a gift of God not by works so that no one can boast.*" God gives sinners a clear-cut answer to how eternal life in heaven is received, but mankind in his sinfulness resists God's grace and adds good works to His gift.

Because all men sin, God brings death upon everyone. Sin is disobeying God in our thoughts, in our speech and in what we do, our works. Because of sin we cannot please God. And because of sin we deserve God's wrath (anger) and finally suffer the punishment of hell, forever and ever. (without end) But, this wonderful God of love and compassion chose to save sinful people like you and me, like us from the fires of hell by offering His very own Son, Jesus. Jesus came to take our sin, all sin, upon His shoulders, and in this way please God the Father who demands perfection from each one of us. Perfection is being able to do everything without error or any mistakes.

God's grace is what moves Him to take this loving action. Grace is defined as: GOD'S RICHES AT CHRIST'S EXPENSE. The first letter of these five words spell GRACE! Romans 4:16a states, "*Therefore the promise comes by faith, so that it might be by grace;*" The Holy Scripture is clear that our salvation is only through and by God's rich grace!

Sangaman was a very wealthy man who lived in New Guinea. He was a leader, with many wives, he possessed much wealth and was a person with great power. Sangaman was invited to be Baptized in the 1950's but he refused to learn about Jesus and His love. Twenty years

later a serious famine came to the area, people were without food, Sangaman was suffering the famine with hundreds of other people. I had the privilege of working personally with Sangaman in keeping 25 bridges open between Wabag and Sirunki, a very mountainous area. We needed these bridges for the small trucks to bring food to the hungry. It was during these painful days that the Spirit of God, through His Word brought Sangaman to the Christian faith, a faith that understood God's rich grace and love for all people. Sangaman was willing to live a monogamous life and share his wealth with the poor and hungry. Sangaman became a believer and follower and thanked God for His rich grace that had come to fill his heart with Christ.

True Lutherans believe teach and confess that before a person comes to faith in Christ, he is too weak and unable to convert himself to God and serve God faithfully. But, after the Holy Spirit has made its beginning in a sinners heart, and God's rich grace is offered him, upon hearing the Word of Hope, he is now able to help, cooperate, and to prepare for grace. He will joyfully apprehend and accept God's grace and believe the Gospel. Sangaman is an example of receiving this blessing of God's grace. Perhaps you, too, are an example of this truth. (Epitome, Art. II, Tappert pp 471:4)

In the English language the term "grace" has several meanings. The term grace is used for a girl's name. But when we speak of grace here it refers only to "saving grace! Some Christian churches teach that sinful mankind has some good within himself and that he can use this goodness within himself to come to faith in Jesus by his own power. When these Christians say they are saved by grace, they are including this goodness within themselves. This is a false teaching. Man is unable to help come to know Jesus by his good works or use these works to help save his soul from hell. Jesus has done it all! The Word from Romans 11: 6 states. "*And if by grace, then it is no longer by works; if it were, grace would no longer be grace.*" Jesus fully and completely satisfied the demands made by God by suffering and dying for the sins of everyone in this world.

God's rich grace is for everyone, we call this universal grace. Titus 2:11 states: "*The grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men.*" According to the Bible only a few people are saved, while many are on their way to hell. Matthew 7:14, "*But small is the gate and narrow the road that leads to life, and only a few find it.*" The Bible clearly tells us that God would have all men to be saved, and that no one would go to hell. (I Timothy 2:4) God's grace is universal, for all people, and it is by God's grace alone saves souls for heaven.

How does God's wonderful grace come into our hearts? The grace of God has the power to cause us to believe and trust in the Word of God. Grace offers sinners eternal life: man, now has the power to accept this goodness and truth or to reject it. The reason that many people walk away from this saving truth is that the sinfulness in the heart of man refuses to accept this sacred blessing. Acts 7:51, "*You always resist the Holy Spirit!*" Saving faith means that a person has accepted, believes and trusts God's promise of forgiveness and the blessings of eternal life. Such a person receives forgiveness of sins and is reconciled to God. There is now peace between God and the sinner. When a person has saving faith in his heart, this happens because of the grace and mercy of God.

This saving faith, through grace, now gives sinners the power to love and serve God joyfully and faithfully. It is the work of the Holy Spirit that frees sinners from death and brings true peace to them. It is grace that makes sinners acceptable to God rather than love, which is the effect resulting from it. Some Christians teach that love is what brings us into fellowship with God. If faith receives the forgiveness of sins on account of love, the forgiveness of sin will always be unsure. We know that we never love as much as we should! In fact, we do not love at all, unless our hearts are sure that the forgiveness of all our sins has been given to us. (Apol of Aug Conf 123:110-116)

CONCLUSION

GRACE ALONE is one of the chief doctrines of a True Lutheran because: (1) This doctrine is based on the Word of God. (2) grace assures sinners that they are saved by the Grace of God and not by their works. (3) Grace is seen in God the Father who sends His only Son to become the sinners substitute. (4) God's grace is universal, meaning for everyone.

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

- 1.How does the grace of God come to comfort you as a sinner? Discuss
- 2.Is it possible to confuse grace with good works? If so, how does this happen in us lives?
- 3.Why do you think Grace Alone is important as a Lutheran doctrine?

4. SCRIPTURE ALONE

"But these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name." John 20:31

True Lutherans hold Scriptures to be the inerrant Word of God. Lutherans believe, teach, and confess that the Holy Bible is the only source and norm that all teachings of the church may be judged.

Apostle Paul, a special envoy personally called by Christ, writes in 2 Timothy 3:16," *All Scriptures is God breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking correcting and training in righteousness.*" Paul writes in 2 Thessalonians 2:13, "*And we also thank God continually because when you received the Word of God which you heard from us, you accepted it not as the Word of men, but as it actually is, the Word of God.*"

Holy Scripture is God speaking to the world, speaking to you. In the 66 books of the Bible, 39 found in the Old Testament and 27 books in the New Testament God reveals His divine will for you. Sinful men were chosen to write the God breathed texts found in the Bible. These divine words are what is called "verbal inspiration" of the contents of all Scriptures. In the book of 2 Peter, chapter 1, verse 21 we read," *For prophecy never had its origin in the will of man, but (holy) men spoke from God as they were moved by the Holy Spirit.*" Jesus speaks boldly in Matthew 5:18, "*I tell you the truth, until heaven and earth disappear, not the smallest letter,*

not the least stroke of a pen, will by any means disappear from the Law.” (Bible) God the Holy Spirit faithfully protects the Word of God as it is read, written, or spoken.

One day a missionary family came driving into our Nigerian Lutheran Church headquarters amazingly fast. Their vehicle was dusty, broken windows had many fresh dents and paint scratches. This missionary family were translators of the Gokana language in Nigeria. West Africa. Armed Militia had suddenly entered their compound, shot up their house, taken all the food, destroyed everything except a computer on the missionary’s desk. The missionary and his team of language specialists had completed the entire New Testament in the Gokana language, and it was ready to print! The Lord protected His workers and His Word.! Not one bullet went into the missionary’s laptop with His Word ready to be brought to the Gokana. God’s Word states.” For truly I tell you, until heaven and earth disappear, not the smallest letter, not the least stroke of a pen, will by any means disappear from the Law until everything is accomplished.” (Matt 5:18) God will protect His precious Word.

True Lutherans teach and confess that verbal inspiration of Holy Scriptures must be accepted because the Bible says so. Period. Holy Scriptures are God speaking to us. If any kind of doubt arises concerning verbal inspiration, the result would be that one could never be certain and sure who was speaking, man or God. The original copies of the books of the Bible no longer exist as in time the material used to write God’s Words on, became deteriorated, that is old and decayed, and no longer usable.

Some things that God inspired these writers to record, are beyond human reason. Even though they may be beyond human reason, or human understanding, these mysteries are believed and taught. Some things that are written in the Bible, the writers knew firsthand and had witnessed what they were permitted to record. Some information that we find that these writers recorded was learned through inquiry and they personally sought to find the information recorded. True Lutherans believe that whatever the writers of Scripture wrote are the words that God intended and prompted them to record His Revelation, the 66 books of the Bible.

True Lutherans believe, teach, and confess that the Word of God must be studied carefully, read correctly and truthfully understood. We use language to hear the Word and apply correct grammar in seeking to understand the Word. We are to use human reason to understand the Word of God and search for the true meaning of each word. We teach that personal views or judgments are out of place when God’s Word seems impossible or unclear. We use the clear Word of God to help us understand those parts of the Bible that are unclear. True Lutherans believe that a Bible passage has one meaning only and finding the truth of a passage is important.

There are a variety of readings of Scriptures because each Bible was hand copied by humans, who are not perfect. New copies were needed to replace the original copies which deteriorated. In this process of copying the Holy Scriptures human error occurred at times. Most of these human errors were not that serious and did not change or destroy any doctrine or teaching of the Bible. Considering the number of people God used to record His will for humankind the Bible is a powerful witness of His rich grace, mercy, and love.

Three important purposes of the Bible are listed in this seminar for the Acholi. First, God has given His Word to the world, to us, to point out the way to eternal life. God has given sinners the roadmap, the directions, the guidelines on how to overcome sin and through death enter heaven. The message of how God restores mankind into His grace is a beautiful picture of God's love. John 5:39, "*These are written that you might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing you might have life through His name.*" Scriptures Alone assures the sinner that through faith, he is saved through the blood of Jesus. His sins no longer divide and bring shame because they are forgiven, forgotten, and set free forever.

A second purpose of Holy Scripture is to educate sinners. This seminar is an example of the second purpose of the Bible. We come here to hear, study, and learn about God and His great love and compassion for sinners. We open our hearts to the Word of God as He speaks to each one of us. Psalm 119:105 reads, "*Your Word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path.*" Lutherans hold Holy Scripture in high regard and teach and confess that God speaks through His powerful Word. Romans 1:17-17 read, "*I am not ashamed of the Gospel because it is the power of God for the salvation of everyone who believes; first the Jew, then the Gentile.*" Scripture is like dynamite, immensely powerful. The Word of God is a Means of Grace, that is it is efficacious, faith giving. The Word of God creates and sustains saving faith.

Finally, the third purpose of the Word of God points out that God demands, deserves all praise, honor, and glory. We read from I Peter 4:11, "*If anyone speaks, he should do it as one speaking the very words of God. If anyone serves, he should do it with the strength that God provides, so that in all things God may be praised (glorified) through Jesus Christ. To Him be the glory and the power for ever and ever. Amen.*" When the Word of God speaks then we as His followers listen and obey, the right of judging stops. We willingly and joyfully seek to find ways to give God honor and glory. The faithful look with fondness to enter an eternal relationship with God that will never end. Heaven is about thanking God for His love and blessing here on earth and accepting His promises of giving eternal life.

True Lutherans believe, teach, and confess that there are teachings and truths in the Bible which are impossible to understand or comprehend, yet we accept these teachings as God's Word for us. Because Holy Scriptures is a Means of Grace, Lutherans stress the following:

1. We desire to hear the Word of God faithfully and often.
2. We want to read and study the Word of God, personally or as a group on a regular basis
3. We accept the Word of God as inspired and true
4. We enjoy meditating upon the Word of God.
5. We strive to use Scriptures in our lives and activity
6. We share the Word of God with family and friends. (mission)

We are comforted knowing that death is the door, the entrance to heaven and eternal life. True Lutherans love and respect the Word of God and use it to defend a God pleasing way of life and avoid using the Word to defend false teachings and practices. Lutherans avoid misquoting the Word to prove a point. With help from the Holy Spirit we seek and find the truth. False teaching is everywhere.

Often false teachings look and sound so close to the Word of God. At such times Lutherans trust the Word and depend upon it to lead to a God pleasing end.

Lutheran Heritage Foundation, located in Macomb, Michigan, founded in 1992, with the mission to get the Word of God out to all nations. Presently they have Luther's Small Catechism available in 92 languages. Their catalog has a long list of materials that help young Christians grow in the faith. All materials are mailed at no cost to the subscriber. Rev. Dr. Matthew Heise, CEO, stated, "Our ministry is to translate, edit and distribute God's Word to new Christians around the world! It is all about putting God's Word in print so the lost may find Christ."

CONCLUSION

True Lutherans believe, teach, and confess that Holy Scriptures are the inerrant Word of God because: (1) God tells us that His Word is inspired and infallible. (2) The Bible is more than a book of faith, it is an historical account of the creation. (3) It is an historical record of Jesus, the Son of God who became a Man to die for the sins of all. (4) Jesus called the Holy Scriptures God's Word (5) We believe the Word of God to be verbally inspired by God because the Bible teaches this truth; and without this truth we could not determine if the word read was man's or God's word.

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

1. Why is Scripture Alone so important in this modern age of ecumenism and joint fellowship?
2. What are some reasons that Christians fail to read, study, and hear the inspired Word of God?
3. What can be done to help develop a healthy Scripture Learning program? Discuss

5. BIBLICAL CANONICITY

"All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting, and training in righteousness, so that the servant of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work." II Timothy 3:16-17

True Lutherans believe, teach, and confess that God's Word was given to man in special ways. God used His voice, visions, dreams, angels to communicate with each biblical writer. Biblical canonicity reveals how the Bible was assembled, put together, and became a united force for God's children. Special rules were followed to accomplish the task of creating the Holy Bible.

Let us illustrate the following to make a point. A married couple has a young child that is about school age. The parents want to send their child to the school nearby. The school has rules that must be followed for that child to attend that classroom. The child must be five years old, physically healthy, be able to purchase a uniform and be obedient in the classroom. In a similar way each book of the Old and New Testament had to meet certain rules (canon) to be included in the Bible. The Bible did not drop out of the sky as a complete book. The term "canon" is a Greek word and means a measuring rod. The process used in completing the assembling of the Bible was guided but the Holy Spirit. Each Word of the Bible is God given, all 66 books together are one unit, one book. God watched over the task of creating Holy

Scriptures. This task was particularly important and was done faithfully by God's people who honored and appreciated His Word. This chapter on biblical canonicity is an especially important teaching for Lutherans.

A biblical canon or canon of scripture is the measuring rod, ruler, that accepts a set of texts (or "books") acceptable to a religious community as authoritative scripture. Once more, the English word "canon" comes from the Greek κανών, (can-on) meaning "rule" or "measuring stick". (Google). In the Woo Acholi language, we say *Rwot*, a measuring unit or a ruler. The Bible did not just drop down from the sky as one complete book and ready to be used by people here on earth. The putting together, the assembling of the Holy Scriptures, was a painfully long process which took centuries of time to meaningfully piece together what we have today, Holy Scriptures. Lutheran believe that biblical canonicity was guided by the Holy Spirit.

The twenty-seven books of the New Testament are said to be canonical, that is they have met all the measurements, rules for the human judgment of each book. It must be stated that there are seven New Testament books that have contents that were completely acceptable to be included in the canon. The books of the New Testament that met the guidelines set for canonicity were placed in one group that authorities of the time all accepted as "inspired by God."

In those first years after Jesus ascended into heaven, the leaders of the Church for centuries to come, accepted the challenge to complete the task of completing the work of gathering all the sacred, inspired writings of scriptures and make one book for all writings. They used the rules or guidelines called, canon to accept each book of the Bible. The reason being, there were several religious books being used and read in different places. They needed to make a list of books that the church believed to be inspired by God and which books were not to be included in the Bible. The word "canon", meaning "measuring stick" or "rule" helped these early Christians to use unified rules to choose those books which were inspired and to reject those books which the rules said, were not inspired by God. Gods faithful servants carefully assembled the "Canon", the Bible, a gift for the entire population of the world.

This task of gathering all the written books and putting Scriptures together as one Book was enormous. One of my seminary professors suggested five principles the early church leaders used to accept a written text as inspired by God. I will share these principles, below, each principle is underlined and with an asterisk.

Authoritative

Prophetic

Authentic

Dynamic

Was the Book used, read by the people

These faithful Christians developed a system that helped them place those books with authority into the inspired books. They considered whether the book was **authoritative***. That is, did the text speak with authority? Some books in the Bible that we read today have more authority

than other books. For instance, the Gospels, Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John have more authority than does the book of James or Jude. (brothers of Jesus)

Another quality used by these early biblical scholars was, is this book **prophetic***? Here prophetic concerned itself with being Messianic, that is does this text referred to Jesus as the One who fulfilled Old Testament prophecies. Being prophetic discusses a special revelation from God. The one charged with speaking speaks for God and presents God's words and His ideas. Of course, in the Old Testament, prophecy is most prominently a way of calling Israel back to a righteous religious and ethical life through repentance and sorrow and promise to be faithful to God. In the New Testament, prophecy can also have the same meaning (especially in dealing with Jesus' life and work), but it can also be extended to make known truths about God's work in and through Jesus.

Another helpful test was asking the question: Is this book **authentic***? There were many religious books written after Jesus ascended into heaven. Many of these books were written by well-intended persons, but their writings were not authentic. They were not inspired by God but were founded on human wisdom alone. If the text being considered as a book of the Bible was written by one of Jesus' disciples or under the tutorship of an apostle, that writing was also to be accepted as authentic. We see this in the writing of the book of Luke, and Acts of the Apostles. These books were written by Luke, who traveled with Apostle Paul.

These faithful servants also included the concept that each book contained life transforming contents or being **dynamic***. A dictionary meaning of Dynamic is something that is marked by a usually continuous and productive activity of change. It includes being energetic or forceful. A potential Book to be considered inspired by God and for inclusion in Scriptures means that as time passes the book evolves, that it becomes obvious that God is speaking. Being dynamic, the book was helpful as a tool to present God's Word, not just an interesting piece of literature for the moment but served God's purpose to save lost souls.

The fifth criteria were whether the book was being read and used* in the Christian churches. **How well was the book received?** * Used? Many of the books being used were well accepted and faithfully used. There were several books/texts being used that were questioned for several reasons. For instance, texts that had no known author caused problems on whether to be included by the canon and accepted as an authoritative book of the Bible.

True Lutherans do not accept the apocryphal books as part of the canon. These religious books have no canonicity because the majority of those who work with the Bible and its canonicity believed that it was questionable that God inspired these books. These apocryphal books are human documents that cannot be used to defend or establish Christian doctrine. The Roman Catholic Church has placed fourteen apocryphal books into their canon of accepted books of the Bible. These books were written between the sacred writings of the Old Testament and the inspired writings of the New Testament. True Lutherans do not accept the apocryphal as the inspired Word of God.

True Lutherans believe that a book of the Bible is received as canonical, not because a church says so, but because God called certain people to write and witness boldly to the sacred contents. The Christians of the early church did not determine the books of the canon, but

because God chose definite writers, who were legitimate, the texts were divinely inspired by God, and were accepted by the Church as God's Word.

True Lutherans accept the Bible as God given, inspired, and the actual truths that God wants His children to know. The Word of God is a comfort for each Christian as he/she travels through life because each book of the Bible fits together with all books, and that is to praise, honor and serve God by sharing the Gospel. Well versed and knowledgeable Lutherans want to be ready to defend the Bible as God's true and honorable Word. Lutherans support and teach the following: "*Preach the Word; be prepared in season and out of season; correct, rebuke and encourage-with great patience and careful instruction.*" (2 Timothy 4:2)

CONCLUSION

True Lutherans believe, teach, and confess that biblical canonicity is necessary for the correct understanding of the Word of God. (1) God pleasing rules guided faithful men to evaluate each book being considered for the Canon, the Bible. (2) Readers of the Word of God must use common reason to understand the Word of God, language, grammar, context. (3) The rules used by the faithful to form the books of the Bible avoided the placing of non-inspired books into the Holy Scriptures.

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

1. What does the word canon mean? How is this term used with Holy Scriptures? Discuss
2. What is the one basic topic that can be found in each book of the Bible? Discuss
3. In what way did the faithful people play a part in putting the Bible together as One Big Book? Discuss

6. THE MEANS OF GRACE

**"...that God was reconciling the world to himself in Christ, not counting people's sins against them. And he has committed to us the message of reconciliation."
II Corinthians 5:19**

True Lutherans believe, teach, and confess that the Word of God and the Sacraments are the only means of grace that God has provided for sinful mankind to come to saving faith. These are called the Means of Grace because God's promise is connected to all three sacred acts.

The term "means of grace" is the way, the instrument, the plan by which God's rich grace is extended or communicated to the sinner. Grace is defined as: God's Riches at Christ's Expense. God determines how salvation was provided for the world, and that is through the life and death of Jesus, His beloved Son. God alone determines which means are to be made available to provide salvation for lost souls. The word love is a good replacement for the term

grace. God's grace brings the sinner the very opposite of what what we deserve. Lutherans believe and teach that the Law is not a means of grace. Prayer is not a means of grace. Good works for serving God are not a means of saving grace.

The means of grace show Gods eternal love for sinners and demonstrate how He reaches out to the lost. True Lutherans believe that a sinner cannot come to faith by his own doing. Only by and through the Holy Spirit, who alone has the power to convert and change a heart filled with sin to a heart filled with love and forgiveness. This teaching by true Lutherans is denied by many churches.

The Gospel states that Jesus, the Son of God, suffered, died, and rose again from the dead, to save sinners like you and me. How does God bring His saving truths to sinners? If you now believe in Jesus as your personal Savior, how did you come to know this wonderful Truth? The answer is, The Means of Grace.

(Luther, quoted from Smalcald Articles, Tappert, pp 313: (9-10) Luther "Accordingly, we should and must constantly maintain that God will not deal with us except through His external Word and sacrament. Whatever is attributed to the Spirit apart from such Word and sacrament is of the devil." Without the written Word of God, even the writers of the Bible would not be holy, and the Holy Spirit would not have moved them to speak while they were still unholy. They were holy, St. Peter says, because the Holy Spirit spoke through them. As we heard in the previous topic, True Lutherans hold that the Word of God is errorless. Also, it is to be read, studied, trusted, and believed. True Lutheran's do not hesitate to use the Word to guide, direct and establish their thinking on all theological matters. Some Church bodies teach that God brings people to saving faith through the Holy Spirit without any means or hearing of the blessed Gospel. Lutherans believe that only through the means of grace can a saving faith and the understanding of Christ's efficacious work be found.

True Lutherans reject and condemn the idea that God draws men to Himself, enlightens them, justifies them, and saves them without the means of grace. We believe that the Word of God must be heard, and the sacraments must be available and used. Only through God's Word and Sacraments does He permit His means of saving grace to pour into our sinful hearts.

The means of grace are the Gospel and the Sacraments (Baptism and The Lord's Supper). These offer forgiveness of sins and eternal life. Taken together, we say that the means of grace is an instrument or thing through which God gives or shares His blessings. There are two ways this means may come to us, a general way and a narrow or a specific way. The general, or wide way, includes health, food, and shelter. The specific way or narrow way refers to saving grace, the salvation of man's soul. The means of grace are the Word of God, Holy Baptism and The Lord's Supper.

A "sacrament" is a thing of mysterious and sacred significance, a religious symbol. The term sacrament was used by the Roman government at first, when a Roman soldier took an oath or vow. In the year 200 AD the Christians used the word "sacrament" when Christians were Baptized or when the group celebrated the Lord's Supper. At this time, it signaled a sacred pledge the faithful made to God as they were Baptized or when they celebrated the Lord's Supper.

True Lutherans believe that on the basis of Holy Scripture a sacrament is a sacred act that is instituted by God, that has visible means connected with God's Word and in which God offers, gives and seals the forgiveness of sin. Some churches have seven sacraments and some Christian churches have no sacraments. Lutherans believe, teach, and confess that there are two sacraments, Holy Baptism and The Lord's Supper.

True Lutherans, based on the Bible text, teach that there are four important points that make a sacrament. The Sacrament must be (1) Instituted by God (2) Commanded by God (3) Have visible elements and (4) offers the forgiveness of sins.

God's sacred blessings come to the sinner from the outside and are not because of the sinners will and work. They come from God. Holy Baptism and the Lord's Supper are part of God's Means of Grace. The Means of Grace come from the hand of God not the work of man. The Gospel, a means of saving grace, is made know to us through the preaching, teaching, and reading of God's Word.

This blessing is offered to us through absolution, the forgiveness of our sins. This blessing or pronouncement that our sins are forgiven, come through the sacraments, namely Holy Baptism and The Lord's Supper. The means of grace are given to sinners by the Lord. The means of grace is God's plan for saving of souls, His way not ours. The means of grace offers saving benefits to hungry sinners seeking new hope for eternal life. The means of grace depends on the Lord, for it is His plan that has worked saving faith in us. The Holy Spirit communicates the benefits of Christ into the life of the sinner. The work of coming to faith belongs to a loving, caring and all-powerful God, who through the means of grace, offers eternal life to all who accept the Gospel and believe in Jesus.

True Lutherans follow the leading of the first Lutheran leaders who said, "Through this means (namely, the preaching and the hearing of His Word) God is active, breaks our hearts, and draws man, so that through the preaching of the law man learns to know his sins and the wrath of God and experiences genuine terror, contrition, and sorrow in his heart, and through the preaching of and mediation upon the holy Gospel of the gracious forgiveness of sins in Christ there is kindled in him a spark of faith which accepts the forgiveness of sins for Christ's sake and comforts itself with the promise of the Gospel. And in this way the Holy Spirit, who works all of this, is introduced into the heart." (The Formula of Concord, Solid Declaration Article II (Tappert pp 531:54)

CONCLUSION

True Lutherans believe, teach, and confess that God's Means of Grace are Holy Scriptures and the two Sacraments, Baptism, and the Lord's Supper. (1) The Word of God, Holy Baptism and the Lord's Supper are the means that bring God's grace to sinners. (2) The Gospel is the only means by which God's forgiving love, grace and mercy are imparted to a sinner. (3) Faith is the hand that receives God's promises in the Word, Baptism, and the Lord's Supper. (4) The Word of God is never a powerless, lifeless, or dead power, but is like dynamite. (5) God's power does not depend upon who the speaker is, clergy or laymen, whenever the Gospel is spoken it has power! (7) The Gospel is always faith giving but can be resisted and rejected by the hearer.

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

1. What are some reasons that a person may reject the means of grace? Discuss
2. Discuss how the Holy Spirit relates to each of the three means of grace blessings that bring faith and New Life to the sinner?
3. Discuss why the means of grace imply/assumes that God is gracious to sinners for Christ's sake?

7. Law and Gospel

"Do your best to present yourself to God as one approved, a worker who does not need to be ashamed and who correctly handles the word of truth." II Timothy 2:15

True Lutherans believe, teach, and confess that the ability to distinguish between the Law and the Gospel is a difficult challenge for Christians who read God's Word. When the Law and the Gospel are co-mingled, as when the Gospel is presented before the Law or sanctification before justification or faith before repentance and good works before God's rich grace.

Correctly dividing the Law and the Gospel is very important. For an example of co-mingling the Law and the Gospel. If you tell someone to "be good or Jesus will not love you!" This statement is not true. Jesus always loves us for we are all sinners. When the Gospel is made to be a Law by centering their teaching on the love that man should have for God and the neighbor make the Law into the Gospel. Or when the Gospel is made into a new Law. This when we teach that God makes demands on us in the Gospel. There is not to be even the slightest contribution of good works for his salvation. We ask: What must I do to get to heaven? If someone answers, "be good and do good." This answer misses the mark completely.

True Lutherans believe, teach, and confess that both the Law and the Gospel are the Word of God in every way. They both are from God for sinners. They are both to be given to sinners at the same time, yet the Law and the Gospel are quite different and must be distinguished. The Law was written in the heart of man, Adam, and Eve. After the Fall, this Law is only partial and

not complete. The Law tells us what to do or not to do. The Gospel tells us what God has done and still doing for us as sinners. The Law promises eternal life to all who keep the Law perfectly. The Gospel promises eternal life free and is unconditional and is accepted by and through faith. The Law convinces us of our sin while the Gospel shows us God's love and grace. The Law reveals God's anger and wrath against all sin. The Gospel comforts those who are down and out, depressed, and despised.

True Lutherans place a great deal of importance on the distinction of the Law and the Gospel. For Lutherans, the first and most important doctrine is justification by grace through faith in and through the work of Christ. There is no greater blessing than for a sinner to be declared just and righteous through faith in Christ. Here, God no longer sees the sin that we have committed. However, next in importance, is the doctrine of the Law and the Gospel. When studied, the Bible seems to have many apparent contradictions, even on how a sinner may come to saving faith. In one place the Bible says all men are forgiven and then in another place it says forgiveness is withheld. Or again the Bible says that saving faith is for all men and in some other places it states that the sinner must do some good work to be saved. This is a serious concern, but this concern is rapidly solved when we understand that the Holy Scriptures speak of two different teachings, one that is of the Law and the other of the Gospel!

Reading the Bible and trying to be good without the Good News about Jesus is moralizing. That is, letting only the Law of God guide, rather than being moved by the power of the Gospel, the Good News about Jesus. The Law and the Gospel are to be properly learned and practiced in our lives. Christ's love is to be the chief motivation in the trust, hope and love of God. The Law kills. It cannot motivate or move the sinner to serve God properly. Only the Gospel of Jesus Christ can fill a sinner's heart to desire to follow Jesus and obey His Commandments.

True Lutherans use the Book of Concord for a definition of the Law and the Gospel. The following is a summary: Question (1) Is the preaching of the Holy Gospel strictly speaking only a preaching of grace which proclaims the forgiveness of sins, or is it also a preaching of repentance and reproof that condemns unbelief, since unbelief is condemned not in the law wholly through the Gospel?(2) True Lutherans teach that the distinction between the law and Gospel is an especially glorious light that is to be maintained with great diligence in the church so that the Word of God may be divided rightly. The law is a divine doctrine which teaches what is right and God-pleasing and which condemns everything that is sinful and contrary to God's will.(3) Everything which condemns sin is and belongs to the proclamation of the law.(4) The Gospel, strictly speaking, is the kind of doctrine that teaches what a man who has not kept the law and is condemned by it should believe, namely that Christ has satisfied and paid for all guilt and without man's merit has obtained and won for him forgiveness of sins, the "righteousness that avails before God," and eternal life. (5) When the Gospel is used in a way that means the entire doctrine of Christ which He proclaimed personally in His teaching ministry and which His apostles also set forth, then it is correct to say or write that the Gospel is a proclamation both of repentance and of the forgiveness of sins. (7) When the law and Gospel are opposed to each other the Gospel is not a proclamation of contrition and reproof but is, strictly speaking, precisely a comforting and joyful message which does not repose 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 acquired

through the merits of Christ.(9) When only the law is preached and they hear nothing about Christ, the veil of Moses covers their eyes and then they fail to learn the true nature of sin from the law, they become conceited hypocrites. So, Christ takes the law into His own hands and sinners see how fierce God's anger really is. Sinners now see for the first time the demands of the law, none of which the sinner could fulfill. Now the sinner sees his righteousness in Christ.

The first parents, Adam, and Eve were created in the image of God, and God's will, His moral Law, was placed into the heart of Adam and Eve. Col 3:10 refers to the renewal in knowledge in the image of the Creator. The Fall into sin changed the heart of man, but the Fall did not totally remove the moral Law that is written in the heart of every person. This Law is not perfect, but present.

In cultures where people do not know the Triune God, (Father, Son and Holy Spirit) there are laws that control the society in which the people live. For instance, in Papua New Guinea, the fingers of children were chopped off if they disobeyed their father. Women, who committed adultery, had their nose cut off. These, and other horrible practices were a part of the culture before Christianity came to change practices that were not compatible with God's Word.

God gives a conscience to everyone. God also gives an emotional feeling that guides the sinner to make the right decision when tempted to do wrong. This conscience is a gift that animals do not possess. We see this when a decision a person makes on a moral issue is based on his conscience that urges him to do the correct thing. The conscience is a feeling of compulsion, that is to say "yes" or "no" to a moral decision. The conscience lets the person know he did the right thing, or if he does the wrong thing, condemns him for having done what he believed was wrong. For example, the person steals a neighbor's watermelon and eats it, and after he eats it feels the wrong that he did. The Law brings on the guilt, the Gospel brings forgiveness and peace when there is contrition and sorrow and a desire to never do that sin again.

From Adam to Moses, God had His laws written in the heart of man, and then on Mt. Sinai God gave His written Law, the Ten Commandments to Israel and the world. Since the Mt. Sinai laws, there now are three kinds of laws: There is the Moral Law, the Ceremonial Law, and the Political Law. Briefly the Moral Law refers to the Law that God gave to Moses on Mt. Sinai. The Law is written in the heart of man and found in the Bible and is binding for all time. The Ceremonial Law are the rules and regulations that God gave to Old Testament people. These Laws ceased when the Savior of the Nations came and became the Redeemer for everyone. The Political Law are the laws which God gave to His people to deal with the civil life of the Old Testament people, the Israelites. These laws were enforced only if Israel remained as a nation. The only Law that now remains is the Moral Law

The purpose of the Law is to show sinners their sin. Rom 3:20, "*for by the Law is the knowledge of sin.*" The Law is like a mirror, it shows man his sin. The Law serves as a guide in the sinner's life. The Law serves as a curb, or a power that tells the sinner what is right and what is wrong. A curb is a check or restraint on something. It is like an edge of a path or roadway that is higher than the path or road and restrains the bicycle or small motorcycle. Lutherans teach that the Law serves as a Mirror, Curb and Guide.

As previously mentioned, the Law is not a means of grace, it is God's way of waking up sleeping saints. True Lutherans believe, teach, and confess that every sermon preached should contain Law and Gospel. At a faithful seminary where the Word of God is respected and accepted as the inspired Word of God Lutheran pastors preach more Gospel than the Law. It is the Gospel that has the power to change a heart filled with anger, hate and sin. The Law of God shows sin, like a mirror shows a person his face, the Law cuts deep and strong and brings great guilt and shame. The sweet Gospel brings the love of Jesus, new hope, and peace

CONCLUSION

True Lutherans believe, teach and confess that the Word of God must be rightly divided, and that to mix the Law and the Gospel, comingling them, is a gross sin, because (1) The proper distinguishing of Law and the Gospel is necessary so that sound doctrines are taught, to help sinners repent and be blessed with forgiveness and hope (2) The sinner is saved through faith in Christ, not by obedience of the Law. (3) The Gospel should not be presented alone, without God's Law. (4) The Law does not move a sinner to do good works, rather the Gospel is what motivates and moves the sinner to do good works. (5) That Christians are not to base their faith on how they feel, but on the blessings of the Gospel. (6) It is faith in Christ, the Gospel, that receives all of God's promises not a Christian's faith by itself. (7) The Law and the Gospel must be told in truth, that God is kind and loving but also just and filled with anger for those who deny Him.

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

1. What is God's purpose for the Law? The Gospel? Discuss
2. Which is easier to use in our normal life's activity? The Law or the Gospel? Discuss
3. Discuss ways in which the Law and the Gospel can be mixed and comingled? Why is it important not to co-mingle Law and Gospel?

8. THE HOLY CHRISTIAN CHURCH

"But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God's special possession, that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light." I Peter 2:9

True Lutherans believe, teach, and confess that the Holy Christian Church is an invisible and holy Church. Only God knows who a member of the Holy Christian Church is, and this Church has no denominations or sin. It is the total number of people that have faith in Christ and are led by the Holy Spirit.

A True Lutheran believes teaches and confesses that the Holy Christian Church is made up of people around the world who agree on the Gospel and believe in Jesus Christ as the Son of God, guided by the Holy Spirit, who practice Holy Baptism and the Lord's Supper as given in the Holy Scripture, whether they all practice each tradition in the same way or not. (Ap to the Augsburg Conf, Tapper, Art VIII, page 170:10) The Church is not like the government, with outward connections and temporary plans, but it is an association of faith and of the Holy Spirit in men's hearts. So that it can be seen visibly the church has outward marks, these are the pure teaching of the Gospel and the administration of the sacraments, Baptism, and the Lord's Supper all in harmony with the Gospel of Christ. (Ap to the Augsburg Conf, Tapert, Art VII pp 169:5)

The word "church" comes from the Greek language meaning "house." The New Testament uses the Greek ecclesiae or assembly for the term "church." All members who belong to the Holy Christian Church have been called into this fellowship through the work of the Holy Spirit. I Peter 2:9 states, " *But God chose you to be his people. You are royal priests. You are a holy nation. You are God's special treasure. You are all these things so that you can give Him praise. God brought you out of darkness into his wonderful light.*" All members of this Holy Church are God's special people!

Church then is the total number of those who have faith in Christ and are being led by the Holy Spirit. All who have faith in Christ as their Savior and Lord, regardless of the denomination they have chosen to serve, are members of the Holy Christian Church. No one can be a member of the Holy Christian Church who does not have faith.

The moment an unbeliever comes to faith in Jesus, he at that moment becomes a member of the Holy Christian Church. We note also, the moment he should lose faith in Jesus, he ceases to be a member of the Holy Christian Church. Speaking of the Holy Christian Church, there is a militant church and there is a triumphant Church in heaven. The militant church is one that wages war with Satan, here on earth. The triumphant Church is the church in heaven and are those who have been faithful until Christ came to take them to heaven.

There are six attributes (qualities, characteristics, traits) that define and explain the Holy Christian Church. First, the Holy Christian Church is invisible, (1) This means it cannot be seen. Only God knows those who belong to Him. (II Tim 2:19) Secondly, this Holy Christian Church is also "one" (2). The Holy Christian Church is found around the World among those who hold in faith, Jesus, as their Savior. These are the Called, Christians who have one faith, one Baptism, one God and Father of all. (Eph 4:3-6) Thirdly, the Holy Christian Church is "holy" (3). Members of the invisible church are forgiven saints and righteous before God, for Christ's sake. Fourthly, the Holy Christian Church is universal (4), that is, this church is found in every nation and every corner of the world. The term "catholic church" is used to explain this attribute or characteristic of the Holy Christian Church. Luther changed the wording from "Catholic Church" to "Christian Church" to distinguish the True Christian faith from the corrupt Roman Catholic Church and its many false teachings. Fifthly, the Holy Christian Church is imperishable, (5) that is " *the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.*" (Mt 16:18) Regular church bodies change and die, but the Holy Christian Church will endure to the end of this world, when Jesus comes in glory to Judge the Living and the Dead. Sixthly, the Holy Christian Church is the only Church that can save souls

(6). Membership in this church saves, it is the only one that can save souls and lead them to eternal life, all other religions lead to Hell.

The work of the Holy Christian Church is outreach. Jesus gave the Church this commission: "Then Jesus came to them. He said, *"All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. 19 So you must go and make disciples of all nations. Baptize them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. 20 Teach them to obey everything I have commanded you. And you can be sure that I am always with you, to the very end."* (Matthew 28:18-20) The Gospel is the power that the Holy Spirit uses to accomplish the outreach task the Church has been given.

The Holy Christian Church is found where the Word and the Sacraments, (Holy Baptism and the Lord's Supper) are preached, taught, and administered. The Holy Christian Church cannot exist without the means of grace When the Gospel and the sacraments are present, we know that the Holy Christian Church must be present.

A True Lutheran believes, teaches, and confesses that the Holy Christian Church is invisible and is found in a Christian Church where the Gospel is taught, even though false doctrines confessed. The Gospel produces faith in the hearts of sinners and so saving faith will be found where the Good News about Jesus is proclaimed. Where the Gospel is denied there can be no members of the Holy Christian Church. Fellow members of the local visible church must use care and love in casting judgment regarding other Christians, as God alone knows who rightly belong to Him, and have saving faith.

The visible church is found where members of the Holy Invisible Christian Church publicly confess their faith in Christ the Son of God, as Savior and Lord. This visible church includes the good and bad, the pharisees and the pure hearted, the hypocrites and the faithful. The visible church is divided up into church bodies called denominations. There are Lutherans, Baptists, Presbyterian, Roman Catholic, Anglican and Methodists and many other church bodies. The members of each denomination agree to accept a special confession of faith regarding many Scriptural doctrines.

There are many differences found in the doctrines that these denominations confess and teach. There are differences regarding the inerrancy of the Holy Bible, a six-day creation, how conversion happens to take place, the presence of the body and blood of Christ in the Lord's Supper and the Baptizing of infants. It is obvious that many of these denominations do not accept teachings of the Bible. A teaching is either true or false, it cannot be both at the same time. To be true, a doctrine or teaching must agree with the Word of God. A true, faithful church denomination is one where all its teachings follow the Word of God, without question.

True Lutherans believe, teach and confess that all members of all visible Christian denominations who have been Baptized into the Holy Trinity, and have faith in Jesus as their Savior and Lord, acknowledging God's Word as true and inerrant, will receive eternal life. This teaching of the Christian faith brings great comfort to the faithful.

When True Lutherans say that other denominations have false doctrines and teachings, they do not mean to say that there are no faithful believers in that denomination or group of believers. Or to insinuate that no one will be saved who belong to that visible church body. When it is

stated that a denomination is following false teachings and judged with practicing false doctrine, that judgment is placed on the written, public confession of that body. As an example, we consider the doctrine of Holy Baptism. When the confessions of a church body, a denomination, makes Baptism the work of man and not of God, the Trinity, and in their written confession, clearly state that Baptism can only be by immersion, and the desire of the individual, who must be of reasonable age, then these confessions are to be judged on the basis of God's inerrant Word. Briefly, Scriptures state that Baptism can take place by washing, sprinkling, pouring or immersion. Jesus said, "Except you receive the kingdom of God as a little child, you will not enter." *Truly I tell you, anyone who will not receive the kingdom of God like a little child will never enter it.*" (Mark 10:15) Jesus commanded His followers to Baptize "all nations." Members of that denomination may have other beliefs, but the judgment is made on the public doctrines which disagree with Scriptures. God does not speak with a "forked tongue." In other words, believe what you want to believe about Baptism. God has clearly given Holy Baptism to everyone, and this includes infants. Through Holy Baptism children become acceptable to God!

A True Lutheran believes, teaches, and confesses that the visible Church should be one in confession of faith and doctrine, according to the will of God and the Word He has provided for His children. In I Cor 1:10, we hear God speaking "*Brothers and sisters, I make my appeal to you. I do this in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ. I ask that all of you agree with one another in what you say. I ask that you do not take sides. I ask that you are in complete agreement in all that you think.*"

True Lutherans regret the divisions that exist in the Body of Christ, His Bride, the Church. They try not to perpetuate (continue, spread) division in Christ's body, rather they prayerfully seek ways toward unity and oneness in the Church. True Lutherans look to the Augsburg Confession, Article VII, for guidance, "Our churches also teach that one holy church is to continue forever. The church is the assembly of saints in which the Gospel is taught purely, and the sacraments are administered rightly. For the true unity of the church is enough to agree concerning the teaching of the Gospel and the administration of the sacraments. It is not necessary that human traditions or rites and ceremonies, instituted by men, should be alike everywhere. It is as Paul says, "*One faith, one Baptism, one God and Father of all, etc.*" (Eph 4:5-6) Tappert, pp 32.

When True, or orthodox Lutherans insist on purity of doctrine this is in no way narrow minded or being stubborn, prejudice or bias. True Lutherans believe that one can only accomplish what God has commanded by faithfully continuing in His inerrant Word. Only the correct teachings will create the truth that God has intended for sinful mankind. Jesus, when leaving this earth, looked at His disciples in the eye and said, "Teach them everything that I have commanded you." As you go out into the world the Church must teach ALL that Christ has commanded.

CONCLUSION

True Lutherans believe, teach, and confess that the Holy Christian Church is invisible and only God knows who belong to this Holy Christian Church. (1) The kingdom of God and faith in Christ are not the same, as God does not believe for the sinner. (2) This Church is made up of people who accept Christ as their Savior and Lord. (3) Unbelievers and hypocrites do not belong to the Holy Christian Church. (4) The moment a person comes to faith, he/she is a member of the Holy Christian Church. (5) The Holy Christian Church is invisible, holy, one, universal (catholic), imperishable and the only saving Church.

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

1. Discuss the six attributes of the Holy Christian Church.
2. Why is it difficult to make judgments regarding the doctrine of other denominations? Discuss
3. What is the purpose of the Visible Church here on earth? Discuss

9. THE OFFICE OF THE HOLY MINISTRY

**“Keep watch over yourselves and all the flock of which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers. Be shepherds of the church of God, which he bought with his own blood.”
Acts 20:28**

The Office of the Holy Ministry has been established to publicly preach the Word of God and administer the Sacraments that Christ has given to the Church. (Baptism/The Lord’s Supper)

Orthodox Lutherans believe, teach, and confess that only those who are “rightly called” are to publicly preach and administer the Sacraments. The Office of the Ministry was given by God to the members of the Christian Church. All Baptized members are royal priests. I Peter states, *“9 But God chose you to be his people. You are royal priests. You are a holy nation. You are God’s special treasure. You are all these things so that you can give him praise. God brought you out of darkness into his wonderful light.”* (I Peter 2:9). Individual Christians are to use their privilege and their God given power as priests.

Who has the responsibility to lead those souls who have come to faith in Jesus? Who is going to take the responsibility to preach and teach others? Individual followers of Jesus have the duty to be a witness the faith; to reprove sin; rebuke error; admonish and comfort those who are hurting and in pain. An individual believer may forgive, admonish, and baptize. Each of these duties are done as royal priests, but as an individual, as a private person, and not as a public servant of God.

Based on the Bible and its teaching on the Holy Ministry, Orthodox Lutherans distinguish between a private member of a Christian group and someone who is called to be a public

official or servant of an organized group of Christians. The individual Christian and the called leader may do the same thing, but one acts as individual, the other acts because of the call he has received from his brothers and sisters in Christ. One acts in his own name, the other acts in God's name, on behalf of the group. The difference between an individual acting as a priest and one serving in the public ministry is that one person is called to serve, the other does not have that special Call.

God's calling that is issued to an individual to come and serve a group of Christians consequently limits the outreach of the members of a congregation. What happens is, the Called pastor is given the responsibility for the public preaching of the Good News and the administration of the Sacraments. Also, church discipline and excommunication of those who refuse to repent of sin belongs to the Called servant. Individual Christians, members of the congregation then may not claim these acts which God has placed in the hands of those who serve in the Holy Ministry. All members of the group, called a congregation, act through the Called servant, called a pastor.

Orthodox Lutherans do not commit the office of the Holy Ministry to a woman. This practice has been followed for centuries. Before the coming of Christ, the Old Testament worship did not commit this office to be held by a woman. The Son of God chose twelve men to be blessed and trained as Disciples. The Headship Principle began before the Fall into sin with Adam and Eve. The Headship Principle was perverted (corrupt, wicked) by the Fall into sin and has since that time been a point of tension between male and female.

In the introduction of this seminar, it was pointed out that there are many who place reason over the Word of God. These are the people who refuse to accept the Word of God as inerrant and infallible. Liberal thinking people raise their opinion and reason over the Word of God and refuse to accept God's Word and what it asks followers to believe and practice.

However, the oneness that male and female experience in Christ does not lessen the contrast and difference that is described in Genesis 1. Gender differences cannot be exchanged any more than our race difference can be exchanged. God assigned definite identities for man and for woman at the time of creation, and these identities are not rescinded by Christ's death and resurrection. These differences have been established for all time.

The Word of God lists four levels of relationships: God-Christ-Man-Woman. This is a Scriptural Principle that cannot be changed. A principle found in Scripture is a rule or guideline that does not change. First Corinthians in the New Testament of the Bible in Chapter 11 explain this important relationship to us. I Cor 11:3, *"3 But I want you to know that the head of every man is Christ. The head of the woman is the man. And the head of Christ is God."* To ignore or to set aside sound biblical exegesis (interpretation, explanation) and then build a church practice on such false reasoning ends up contrary to what God's Word commands. Liberal churches permit women who are lesbian, and married to another woman, to be a bishop of the church!

Orthodox Lutherans believe, teach, and confess that the evil in this world will continue to become worse and more god-less. II Timothy 4:3-4 states, *"3 The time will come when people won't put up with true teaching. Instead, they will try to satisfy their own desires. They will*

gather many teachers around them. The teachers will say what the people want to hear. 4 The people will turn their ears away from the truth. They will turn to stories that aren't true."

The Call into the Holy Ministry is a special call to do God's work. A person must be qualified to receive such a Call. This ministry is to be done as is directed by God and His Word. God does not raise this special work above the general ministry that He commands. There are not two levels of responsibility in the Holy Ministry which He has ordained. A pastor, who receives a special Call to serve a congregation is no better, important, closer to God, or higher, or more important than a Baptized member of his congregation. Members of the congregation honor God's call and respect His workers as they do God's work.

CONCLUSION

True Lutherans believe, teach, and confess that the Office of the Holy Ministry was created by Jesus Christ to preach the Word and Administer the Sacraments. (1) All members of a congregation are royal priests and have a special relationship to God and to fellow Christians. (2) The power of the Holy Ministry is given to him (the pastor) by the voting members of the congregation. (3) God has established a relationship principle order between Himself and mankind: God, Christ, Man, Woman. (4) The Office of the Holy Ministry is appointed by God to be held by males only.

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

1. Why did God establish the Office of the Holy Ministry? Discuss
2. What is the Headship Principle that God has ordained? Explain. Discuss
3. How will a new congregation of believers find a spiritual leader to lead them? Discuss

10. HOLY BAPTISM

"So, in Christ Jesus you are all children of God through faith, ²⁷ for all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ." Acts 20:28

True Lutherans believe, teach, and confess that Holy Baptism is commanded by Christ offers salvation to a sinner. Holy Baptism may be done by anyone, clergy, or laity, in the blessed name of the Holy Trinity, and using water by sprinkling, pouring, washing or immersion. Baptism offers the forgiveness of sins and guarantees eternal life to the person Baptized, infant or an adult.

Baptism imparts saving faith and offers the forgiveness of sin. Baptism is a means of grace, that is it brings forgiveness and eternal life. Reading from Acts 2:38, "*Repent and Baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins.*" Baptism delivers from death and from all evil, even the devil. Because of baptism, the Christian believes that death and the devil no longer have any power over us. Lutherans are strong on this point. In the hour of death, Baptism brings great comfort to the sinner.

Baptism is the means where the Holy Spirit comes into the heart of a person and makes them realize and know these sacred blessings. Lutherans believe, teach, and confess that the Holy Spirit comes into the heart at Baptism and gives saving faith. The Holy Spirit gives and imparts into the heart of a sinner, a faith that accepts all these blessings that are received through Holy Baptism. These blessings are given to all who believe or have faith in Jesus as their Savior from sin and death. Those Baptized must believe the promises that Baptism offers him.

Lutherans place an extremely high importance on Holy Baptism. Why is Baptism so important? What does the word baptism mean? Why are there so many different opinions regarding Holy Baptism? The Bible is noticeably clear regarding Holy Baptism so why are there so many different teachings regarding baptism? Jesus states in Mark 16:16, "*He that believes and is Baptized will be saved, but he that believeth not will be damned.*" Lutherans believe that Baptism is a work of God in the heart of man, and not a work of man to purify his heart.

Baptism means to apply water. Period. The water may be applied by pouring, washing immersing, or sprinkling. The Bible does not say which mode is to be used, it only commands baptism to be done. Here Lutherans permit any of the four modes to be used in the rite of Baptism.

There are several Christian groups that require immersion for the mode of Holy Baptism. Lutherans disagree with that teaching because the Bible says that any of the four modes are permitted. Lutherans disagree with those who teach there is only one method for Baptism. Lutherans accept all four methods but use pouring as the mode for Holy Baptism.

Lutherans believe that in Holy Baptism the Word of God washes away sin and makes the sinner clean and pure, forgiven, and holy. Some teach and confess that Baptism only forgives the original sin and sins committed up to the rite of Baptism. This false teaching denies Scripture which speaks in Romans 7: 18-24, "*18 For I know that good itself does not dwell in me, that is, in my sinful nature. For I have the desire to do what is good, but I cannot carry it out. 19 For I do not do the good I want to do, but the evil I do not want to do—this I keep on doing. 20 Now if I do what I do not want to do, it is no longer I who do it, but it is sin living in me that does it. 21 So I find this law at work: Although I want to do good, evil is right there with me. 22 For in my inner being I delight in God's law; 23 but I see another law at work in me, waging war against the law of my mind and making me a prisoner of the law of sin at work within me. 24 What a wretched man I am! Who will rescue me from this body that is subject to death?*" Lutherans believe and confess that the promises of Baptism cover the entire life of that person.

The Reformed confessions are opposed to the idea that Baptism, in and of itself, forgives sins. Apart from the work of the Holy Spirit, baptism only gets you wet. Baptism, Lutherans believe, is a sacrament. Lutherans believe that the sin that remains in the person Baptized is actual sin committed because no person can ever be perfect and without sin in this life.

Jesus Christ, the Son of God instituted Holy Baptism. He commanded His church to baptize all nations. In Matthew 28: 18-20, Jesus states, "*All power is given unto Me in heaven and in earth. Go, therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit; teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded*

you. And, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world." Baptism is given for all nations, that is all living people. This includes children and infants. Baptism is the Word of God in the water, commanded and instituted by Christ comes a sacrament, a sacred act that brings saving faith. Baptism is compared with Old Testament circumcision. (Col 2:11-13) Lutherans follow the Book of Acts when Baptizing adults. At that time, when adults were Baptized, they were instructed then they received Holy Baptism. When adults come to be Baptized, they come with saving faith in Jesus in their heart. The Holy Spirit has already given them saving faith. When an adult is Baptized, this Baptism confirms God's grace and strengthens their faith. However, with infants and small children they must be Baptized and are brought by the parents or someone who has authority over them and are Baptized without any instruction. Little children are Baptized and then taught to observe what Christ has commanded. Lutherans do not Baptize against the will of the parents should the parents refuse or decline to have their child Baptized.

When Baptizing, the words of Holy Baptism are simple, using these words, "The name of the person...I baptize you....In the name of the Father+ and the Son+ and the Holy Spirit+." The sinner is baptized into the holy name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, the Triune God. The sinner now enters an agreement, treaty or covenant relationship with God and is made a partaker or participant of all the blessings of God's rich grace. Any Baptism that takes place must be a Trinitarian Baptism, in the name of the Trinity. Holy Baptism is to be done one time, not to be repeated. If some Christian has doubts about whether he is Baptized, that person should be Baptized and given the papers that show he has a valid Baptism.

Lutherans believe that every Christian should be very sure of his Baptism, and so require witnesses or sponsors who witness the Baptism. The witnesses keep the Baptized person in prayer and encourage that person to Walk in step with the Holy Spirit.

Lutherans believe, teach, and confess that Baptism is not necessary for salvation, because saving faith can come to a sinner by another means, the Word of God. He that cannot for some reason be Baptized yet has faith and believes in Jesus Christ as His Savior from sin, will be saved. However, no one can be saved if he refuses Holy Baptism. Lutherans hold Baptism sacred and encourage members to daily remember the blessings that the Holy Trinity bring to sinners through this special Washing of regeneration and new life.

CONCLUSION

True or Orthodox Lutherans believe, teach and confess that Holy Baptism in the name of the Trinity and with water, is commanded by Jesus and brings saving faith, together with the forgiveness of sins and makes a person a Christian, offering eternal life. (1) Holy Baptism, which brings saving faith, is necessary for salvation (2) No one can deny Holy Baptism and be saved (3) Baptism by water is commanded, but the way the water is used may vary. (4) In Baptism the sinner puts on the robe of Christ and His righteousness. (5) Baptism gives faith, but this faith needs to grow, or it may die.

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

1. Lutherans believe, teach, and confess that Holy Baptism is a Means of Grace. Support this teaching with a Scripture passage.
2. Why is it important to Baptize a child soon after his birth? Discuss
3. What are the blessings of Holy Baptism? List them so that everyone can see the list.

11. THE LORD'S SUPPER

**"Is not the cup of thanksgiving for which we give thanks a participation in the blood of Christ? And is not the bread that we break a participation in the body of Christ?"
I Cor 10:16**

Lutherans believe, teach, and confess that Jesus Christ instituted the Last Supper. The words that Jesus used are clear, and they tell us what He meant when He celebrated this Supper with His Disciples. Lutherans stand alone among many Christian churches on the supernatural eating of the body and the blood of Christ.

The Lord's Supper has several names. In 1 Cor 10:21 we read, "21 You cannot drink the cup of the Lord and the cup of demons too; you cannot have a part in both the Lord's table and the table of demons." We look to 1 Cor 11:20, "20 So then, when you come together, it is not the Lord's Supper you eat," In Acts 2:42, "42 They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer." The book of Mark says in Mark 14:23, "23 Then he took a cup, and when he had given thanks, he gave it to them, and they all drank from it." (Eucharist- the giving of thanks). 1 Cor 10:16, "16 Is not the cup of thanksgiving for which we give thanks a participation in the blood of Christ? And is not the bread that we break a participation in the body of Christ?" (Holy Communion...the union and communion of the saints), 1 Cor 10:17, "17 Because there is one loaf, we, who are many, are one body, for we all share the one loaf." (Holy Communion)

The human mind cannot comprehend, understand, what the Holy Scriptures teaches us about this Holy Meal. However, we must remember that it is the Son of God who has given this Holy Meal to be celebrated until He comes again. Apostle Paul gives to us the very Words that Jesus spoke when He instituted the Lord's Supper, "23 For I received from the Lord what I also passed on to you: The Lord Jesus, on the night he was betrayed, took bread, 24 and when he had given thanks, he broke it and said, 'This is my body, which is for you; do this in remembrance of me.'" 25 In the same way, after supper he took the cup, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in my blood; do this, whenever (often) you drink it, in remembrance of me."

Lutherans believe and teach that the visible elements of the Lord's Supper are the bread and the wine. Jesus used wheat bread and Lutherans teach that wheat bread must be used for the bread that is consecrated for this Holy Meal. Lutherans also believe that grape wine must be used when consecrating the elements for this Holy Meal. To substitute either of these elements with such things as soda and crackers would certainly make the validity of the sacrament uncertain. The bread may be with or without yeast, leaven, or unleavened bread.

Because wine is expensive and often difficult to purchase, Lutherans teach that the Elders may add clean water to the wine so that more members are able to participate in the celebration of

the Lord's Supper. Wafer machines are available, and wafers can be produced by the local members. Some Christian churches celebrate the Lord's Supper by "Intinction". Intinction is dipping the consecrated bread into the consecrated wine and giving it to the communicant, others use a special spoon and offer the consecrated bread and consecrated wine to the person to be served holy communion.

Get ready to learn a few new words that deal with how some Christians receive the Lord Supper: transubstantiation, consubstantiation, and impanation. Roman Catholics believe that when the bread and wine are consecrated by the priest the bread and wine are no longer present, only the real body and blood of Jesus is present. This work is called transubstantiation. Roman Catholic's who commune receive only the bread, since they believe the blood is also in the bread. We note with thanksgiving, some Roman Catholic churches offer both the bread and the wine to communicants. Many Reformed Churches teach that when the bread and grape juice is blessed, the bread and juice remain bread and juice. They say it is impossible for the resurrected body of Jesus who is in heaven to be truly present in the communion. They take the words of institution figuratively. The bread and juice only signify or represent the true body and blood of Jesus. Lutherans believe, teach and confess that when the bread and the wine are consecrated, and the communicant comes forward to receive the sacrament, he actually receives the true body and blood of Christ, in, with and under the bread and wine.

Some incorrectly observe the Lutheran teaching of the Lord's Supper as consubstantiation. Consubstantiation is a teaching that the bread and the wine are mixed with the body and the blood of Christ into one substance. This is wrong. Lutherans boldly teach that the bread remains bread and the wine remains wine in the supernatural eating and drinking of the Lord's Supper. Still another teaching has arisen regarding the Lord's Supper, that of impanation. Some say Lutherans teach that the body and the blood of Christ are embedded in the bread and wine like bread wrapped around a piece of goat meat. The goat meat being the body and blood of Christ. Lutherans do not accept consubstantiation or impanation as a biblical teaching. These teachings come from those who are not Lutheran and see consubstantiation and impanation as Lutheran teachings.

To summarize the three basic beliefs of the Lord's Supper: (1) The Roman Catholic Church teaches that only two elements are present, the body and the blood of Christ. (2) The Reformed believe they receive only two elements at the Lord's Table, the bread, and the grape juice. (3) Lutherans believe and teach that they receive four elements, the true body and blood in with and under the bread and the wine.

Lutherans insist that Scripture alone determines the meaning and intent of the Real Presence of Christ in the Lord's Supper. 1 Cor 10:16 states, "*Is it not the cup of thanksgiving for which we give thanks a participation in the blood of Christ? And is not the bread that we break a participation in the body of Christ?*" St. Paul's passage to the Corinthians show that there are four elements present when the Lord's Supper is celebrated.

True Lutherans believe, teach, and confess that there are four things present in the Lord's Supper, bread, wine, the True Body, and the True Blood of Christ. There is a union that takes place when the bread and wine are consecrated and received by the communicant, this union is called a sacramental union. The elements must be received by a communicant and at that

moment he receives the true body and blood of Christ, in with and under the bread and the wine. The bread and the wine do not become the body and blood before we receive these elements. The sacramental union stops after the words of the Lord's Supper are spoken. The sacramental union does not continue after the eating and the drinking. The communicant does not chew, swallow, or digest the body and blood of Christ as he does with the bread and the wine.

These Communion elements, when distributed and received by a Christian, are the true body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ. No person, church or council has the right to add or subtract from the written Word of God. The Lutheran Confessions state, "If the institution of Christ is not observed as He appointed it, there is no Sacrament." (Tappert F/C pp 87: 86)

The Lutheran Church teaches that when a communicant receives the bread and wine, the communicant eats and drinks naturally, just as one eats yam and drinks water, however the communicant eats and drinks the consecrated body and the consecrated blood of Christ in supernatural, incomprehensible way. When Jesus spoke, "Take and eat! Take and drink this is My body," can mean only that this is nothing else that the body and blood of Christ. This is a truly blessed place to be standing and partaking of Christ, the real, loving, Second Person of the Holy Trinity's body.

Lutherans believe, teach and confess that on the basis of what Scriptures teaches us about the Lord's Supper, Christ Himself, deals with each person who communes on an individual, personal level and powerfully seals for him His promise of grace, forgiveness and eternal life. True Lutherans believe teach and confess that non-Lutherans should not be communed because of their lack of faithfulness to the Word of God that deals with the Lord's Supper. Scriptures state that anyone who eats and drinks unworthily, will eat and drink damnation for their soul. The Supper is denied those who cannot examine themselves, this includes those of a different faith and those who are unbaptized. Whoever eats and drinks must recognize the body of Christ. If they do not, judgment will come upon them. I Corinthians 11:29 states, "*Whoever eats, and drinks must recognize the body of Christ. If they do not, judgment will come upon them.*" The pastor administering and distributing the Lord's Supper is responsible for the proper order in serving Holy Communion.

CONCLUSION

True Lutherans believe, teach, and confess that the Lord's Supper is receiving the true body and blood of Christ, under the bread and the wine, for the forgiveness of sin and the promise of eternal life. (1) The sacrament offers the forgiveness of sin. (2) The Sacrament offers Eternal life (3) Bread and grape wine must be used to celebrate the Lord's Supper. (3) The Lord's Supper is a Means of Grace. (4) The sinner's needful condition should move him to receive the sacrament often. (5) Those who partake of the Lord's Supper should examine themselves and their need for this special Means of Grace. (6) Those who commune remember Christ and His benefits received at His Table.

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

1. In what way does the Lord's Supper serve as a Means of Grace? Discuss
2. Why do Lutherans say that Christ's body and blood are physically present when the faithful commune? Discuss
3. Discuss the three main teachings regarding the Lord's Supper. Which one is biblical? Discuss

12. SAINT AND SINNER

"So, I find this law at work: Although I want to do good, evil is right there with me."

Rom 7:21

True Lutherans believe teach and confess that a faithful Christian is a saint and a sinner at the same time.

Some churches teach that only a few special people can rise to sainthood! These churches honor those who achieve this high honor and encourage prayers to those who have been given that honor. Dr. Martin Luther painfully learned the truth that Scriptures yield wonderful blessings regarding the life of a faithful follower of Jesus. God used Dr. Luther to bring back into the Christian Church of the nations, the truth that a sinner is justified through faith in Christ alone, without the deeds of the law. This teaching of justification by grace through faith in Christ alone, is a teaching that marks Lutheranism as a pure Gospel preaching church. A church centered on Jesus Christ, the only Savior and Lord

According to Ephesians 2:1, "*As for you, you were dead in your transgressions and sin,*" A dead person cannot eat, drink, or speak. Every person born is born as an enemy of God. Romans, chapter 5:10 reads, "*10 For if, while we were God's enemies, we were reconciled to him through the death of his Son, how much more, having been reconciled, shall we be saved through his life!*" We are described as enemies of God. What does it mean to be an enemy of God? An enemy of God opposes God and His designed ways for us. Satan is the first and most dangerous enemy of God. We read from John 8:44, "*You belong to your father, the devil, and you want to carry out your father's desires. He was a murderer from the beginning, not holding to the truth, for there is no truth in him. When he lies, he speaks his native language, for he is a liar and the father of lies.*" Satan has the power to hold the sinner captive, in his prison of

hate, scorn and death. He is the father of lies, and untruth. Satan is powerful, and his presence is felt and seen in every nation and every people on earth. Anyone who disobeys God is His enemy. Sin comes into the heart of everyone and sets him as an enemy of God. Paul writes in Colossians 1:21, *"Once you were alienated from God and were enemies in your minds because of[a] your evil behavior."*

The saint/sinner teaching is found both in the Old Testament and in the New Testament. We discover patriarchs like Abraham, Jacob, David both sinner and saint. A new Christian who is unfamiliar with the Word of God can quickly transfer his thoughts to the daily activities that take place in his compound. The evening food distribution, the sharing of money earned at the market, troubled relationships with husband or wife, and disobedient children are just a few of the daily challenges that point to the truth that we are saint/sinner at the same time.

Speaking of enemies, throughout His life, Jesus was opposed by human and spiritual enemies as foretold in Genesis 3:15, *" And I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and hers; He will crush your head, and you will strike his heel."* Satan did see that Jesus, true God and true Man was put to death on the cross. But the cross, which painfully crushed the life out of Jesus, at the same time gave us the final victory over sin and death. Jesus, the Son of God, won the final battle over sin and death. Indeed, Jesus did strike Satan's head, and deliver the final blow that completely crushed Satan's head!

The enemies of Christ did succeed in putting Jesus to death on the cross. But Jesus' death did not in any way disrupt God's plan for the salvation of sinners. Jesus overcame the enemy of death, so that the believers, the faithful followers are set free by this wonderful victory. He rose from the dead and proclaims the victory. That is why Easter Sunday is so joyful for the sinner. This special work of Jesus makes the sinner a saint.

Lutherans teach that a saint is a sinner that knows his sins have been completely forgiven and heaven is now his home. His name is written in the Book of heaven! Saints are those who belong to the body of Christ, they are saved by grace through faith. We read from Ephesians 2:8-9, *" For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God— 9 not by works, so that no one can boast."* In other words, the term saint is just another word for a Christian, a true believer in the Lord Jesus Christ.

A sinner does not become a saint by doing good works. A sinner becomes a saint by having his sins washed away in the precious blood of Christ. The sinner is aware of the cost that it took to have his sins forgiven and because of this awareness, tries not to offend God in his thoughts, words, or deeds.

Lutherans teach that when a sinner is Baptized it does not take away Original sin but that in Christ his sin is forgiven when he confesses his sin to God. When a sinner becomes a Christian, original sin remains for the rest of his life. Because of original sin, the sinner part of his life continues to poke its head in his thoughts, words, and deeds! Roman Catholic Church teaches that Baptism takes away the original sin giving the sinner the opportunity to turn back to God and His love. For the Roman Catholics there are no saints living here on earth, as sainthood requires the rite of canonization. This rite requires special acts of goodness on the part of the sinner to convince the church that he or she was truly special

CONCLUSION

True Lutherans believe, teach, and confess that a true Christian is a saint and a sinner, both at the same time. (1) When a sinner is Baptized into the blessed Trinity, this person becomes a saint and a sinner at the same time. (2) A sinner who repents of sin becomes a saint because of the work that Christ performed as True Man. (3) The truth that he, a sinner, is also a saint, is very comforting for sinners. (4) The Christian appreciates the grace of God when he is daily and richly forgiven all his sin, and believes that though he is a sinner, he is also called a saint by God. (5) Sinners are considered saints by God because of His great mercy (6) As a saint/sinner we know that our good works can never merit eternal life. (7) The saint/sinner gives thanks daily for the truth that he is justified by grace through his faith in Christ and declared righteous.

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

1. Discuss how the grace of God affects the saint/sinner relationship with Him?
2. Why isn't it possible to be "only "saint" here in this life?
3. What contribution did Dr. Martin Luther make in the saint-sinner doctrine of the Christian Church? Discuss.

13. THEOLOGY OF THE CROSS

"May I never boast except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, through which the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world." Gal 6:14

A True Lutheran believes, teaches, and confesses that the doctrine of the theology of the cross is an important doctrinal point, and is at the top of the list of teaching doctrines.

Why is this term so important to true Lutherans and neglected by so many other Christian churches? Martin Luther, God's faithful leader, gave the Church this term, "theology of the Cross." The term, theology of the cross, refers to Jesus the only source of knowledge concerning who God is and how God saves sinners. The theology of the cross is to be contrasted with showing the explicit and important difference with a Theology of Glory. A theology of Glory places the emphasis on human abilities and human reason rather than the work of Jesus Christ. Christians in moments of weakness also often choose a theology of glory rather than the theology of the cross. The theology of Glory gives glory to sinful man, rather than a majestic and loving God. The pride, selfishness, vanity, and egotism that live in sinful hearts, are common sins committed by sinful mankind. There is a huge difference between the theology of the cross and theology of glory.

A Church that accepts the Bible as inerrant will intentionally and faithfully attempt to follow in every respect, theological and doctrinal matters. God's inerrant Word is to be used to critically note any falsehood or corruption that takes place. If Christ's Bride, the Church, should wander from the Bible's truths, correction and rebuking will take place to avoid any false teachings.

This caution is needed to help distinguish between genuine, biblical doctrine on the one hand, and the corrupted or counterfeit versions of the faith on the other. The Nicene Creed is helpful in providing an answer as to the faithfulness of God's church. It is tempting to forsake orthodoxy and avoid those who attack God's Word.

Luther and the Reformers of his time dealt with the question being discussed about Jesus and the cross He painfully carried to Golgotha. Satan's attacks on the doctrine of the theology of the cross have not stopped but continue to confront the Church which proclaims the infallibility of Scriptures. Liberal churches of our modern-day say that the Bible is filled with error and contradictions. True Lutherans accept God's Word as God-breathed and is to be trusted, followed, and believed. Even as the Word is so often attacked and rejected, the faithful remain strong in their confessions and belief that God's Word is inerrant. God has truly blessed His Bride, the Church, with the means of grace!

For the Christian, the cross of Christ is a consequence of faithful discipleship. It is a necessary consequence. No cross, no Christian! It is the cross that marks the Christian as a Christian. The cross, like a magnet, draws the sinner to the gift of salvation in Jesus the Savior of all. The cross is a special symbol that offers hope and life to sinners. Those who are ashamed of the cross in this life will see the Son of God ashamed of them at the last judgment. Could there be a more horrible prospect than to have Christ be ashamed of us? Could there be a more powerful judgment against our sinful flesh? Our sinful flesh wants to hear nothing of a cross and certainly does not want to carry one. But Jesus is insistent and makes the whole matter still more emphatic by putting it all into the singular. This means YOU!

Let no one who follows Jesus ever think that he will be able to hide from his duty in carrying the cross should he joins with the local crowd who refuse to be cross-bearers and believe that they can escape its weight and its pain. Not one Christian should imagine that he could meet Jesus on the Last Day without the sign of the cross. Another characteristic of the cross is that the cross is heavy and painful. God has miraculously placed the cross into the hands of His people. Because Satan hates the cross there comes a constant attack after attack on the person and work of Christ, attacks on the purpose and nature of the church, attacks on the source and authority of the Bible: these are renewed in every age, and especially vicious attacks on the theology of the cross.

Consider Sunday worship, and how this Sunday morning divine service is addressed to sinners, to cross-bearers like you and me. Why do Christians come to church? Do they come to worship as they please and do their own thing? To illustrate, why do people go to the market? They go to do their own thing, or for a purpose? Usually people visit the market to purchase food or some item that is needed in the home. Whether it is worship or the market, we go to both places for a special reason. Our opinion or preference is of no consequence. We note that in our attendance of the divine worship service, the exaltation of the Gloria in Excelsis that follows the words of absolution would be no more than routine ritual, if there was no purpose in attending Sunday Divine Worship. The theology of the cross provides this purpose! Luther makes a powerful point in his comments on the Sixth and Seventh petitions of the Lord's Prayer in his Large Catechism. Every hour, he says, the Christian is subject to torment and temptation, as Satan never stops his deliberate attempt to win souls for hell. There is a huge blessing to know

our sins are forgiven and forgotten by God. All torment and guilt have passed, a breath of fresh air fills the heart and soul of the sinner.

Luther spoke often of "The Cross alone is our theology!" Luther's conversion to saving faith was a difficult and painful experience for him. He had been and was even now as a Roman Catholic priest, being taught by the Roman Catholic Church, that good works were necessary for his salvation. When Luther changed his vocation choice from law to theology, he constantly wrestled with the problem of how many good works are necessary to please God. As Luther matured through the study of the Word of God, he found in his study of the Book of Psalms, a comforting truth, "The Cross of Christ alone is our theology." Psalm 51. A sinner was unable to earn God's love and forgiveness through his good works. Luther reminded the people of his day, that the Bible teaches that, "Salvation is about Jesus earning salvation for sinners through His suffering and death on the cross, it was a Gift of love." Acts 4:12.

The Lord called upon Dr. Luther to actively participate in many important meetings. As a trained Roman Catholic Priest, a monk, Luther composed many discussion papers for defending the Word of God. In one of his papers he wrote about the Word of God, a person deserves to be called a theologian if he comprehends the visible and many other things of God seen through suffering and the cross. He wrote more concerning a theology of glory, this theology calls evil good and good evil, but a theology of the cross calls the thing what it is. (The Heidelberg Meeting in 1518). Luther was incredibly good in defending the Word of God because his faith in God was strong.

Someone without faith cannot understand the cross of Christ concept which is not compatible with human wisdom and philosophy, but view the cross with deep folly and offense. The cross of Christ is not inspiring but scandalous. The true theologian is not one who argues from visible and evident things, but rather is one who learns from the cross that the ways of God are hidden, even in the revelation of Jesus Christ. We learn about these things in First Corinthians, "*Jews demand signs and Greeks look for wisdom, ²³ but we preach Christ crucified: a stumbling block to Jews and foolishness to Gentiles, ²⁴ but to those whom God has called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God. ²⁵ For the foolishness of God is wiser than human wisdom, and the weakness of God is stronger than human strength.*" I Cor. 1:22-25.

This seminar focuses on the main theological points of true Lutheranism, and an important point about true Lutheranism is that through the Word of God we become acquainted with God and begin understanding who He really is. Sometimes we think that we really do know Him. We can feel so good as we walk by a stream of clean water with beautiful trees and grass. We think I feel so close to God in all this beauty. We assume all this is happening because we have earned God's good pleasure with us as we rejoice in these physical things! No way! By human nature sinful man has no desire to be close to God. Because of our sinful nature we are his enemy. The Psalmist writes chapter 14:3, "*All have turned aside, they have together become corrupt; there is no one who does good, not even one.*" Paul quotes the Psalmist, "*There is no one righteous, not even one; there is not one who understands, no one who seeks God. All have turned away, they have together become worthless; there is no one who does good, not even one.*" (Romans 3:10-12). The Word reminds us that NO ONE is nothing but a damned sinner! NO ONE!

We do not like to hear words like these! We do not enjoy confronting the bad things in this life because we know personally that we are evil, and that there is evil in us! The world is a bad place to be! Look at the COVID 19 virus? Cancer? Political problems around us? The fighting in our compounds? What do these bad things tell us about God? Do they lead us to trust Him more or question Him more? How can we trust a God who lets these things happen? We do not know why God lets bad things happen. By faith we trust that these things happen on "God's Watch", that he permitted bad things to happen, even if the purpose is hidden from our eyes. In Romans 8:28, the Lord speaks, "*And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who^{1a} have been called according to his purpose.*" To go beyond this is to be a person who belongs to the theology of glory. God told Moses, you cannot, you will not see My face! God does not always tell us why bad things happen in our lives.

True Lutherans look at these bad things that happen through the suffering and the cross. They look at the cross of Jesus and this will help them to understand God and who He really is! God is the one who was angry about sin and death in this world, He permitted His only Son to die on that tree, He was the one with blood and tears on that cross, the tree of death. God was angry because of COVID 19, cancer and political disasters that cause hunger and pain. He is angry about your death too! He hates death. Jesus came to suffer with those who suffer, who suffer from COVID 19, cancer, domestic compound quarrels! God, in the flesh of Jesus know what it means to be executed using false claims! God is with each sinner in his or her suffering, all the way. Read carefully, Jesus suffered with us and He suffered for us. Jesus is the God who died for each one of us.

When Christ's children understand the meaning of the theology of the cross, as the coming of cancer, the pandemics of disease that kill, the heart wrenching sadness of domestic quarrels that divide, the Spirit of God brings to light a forgiving heart with a generous spirit. Only the Holy Spirit has the perfect vaccine for sin that rips apart family relationships, painful illnesses, or world terrors. That vaccine is "the theology of the cross."

When we look to the cross of Jesus what do we see? Do we see a God of glory and majesty? Do we see a God of true love? When we recognize God in His humility and His shame on that bloodied cross, we become aware of true love! Real love! It is when a Christian looks at the cross of Christ, with its pain and shame, that there we begin to understand who God is and then to meaningfully as well as eagerly share the love of this great God with other sinners. When sinners see a God, who became a Man of sorrows so that we would have heaven as our home, then the joy of an eternal life becomes a reality!

True Lutheranism sees the blackness and ugliness of life that never ends with all its sadness, through the eyes of faith. True faith accepts the truth that God became a man of sorrows to bring life and immortality to those who know Jesus personally. It is the cross of Jesus Christ alone that becomes our theology.

CONCLUSION

True Lutherans believe, teach, and confess that the Theology of the Cross is one of our chief teachings concerning the work of Jesus Christ, as Savior and Lord. (1) In practicing the doctrine of the Theology of the cross we see the great love of God, who sends His only Son to die for the sins of the world. (past, present, future!) (2) The theology of the cross is opposite of the theology of glory. (self-seeking glory) (3) No cross- no Christian! (Christians pick up their cross and follow Jesus' example.)

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

1. Discuss the differences between a theology of the cross and a theology of glory?
2. In what ways does a theology of the cross help a Christian live out his/her daily life?
Discuss
3. What does the theology of the cross teach us about the work of Christ? Discuss

14. WORSHIP AND MUSIC

“not giving up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but encouraging one another—and all the more as you see the Day approaching.” Hebrews 10:25

Dr. Luther enjoyed singing and used music to proclaim the Word of God. Luther also appreciated the history of the liturgy and actively involved the members of the worshipping congregation. He also successfully corrected the worship style that the Roman Catholic Church had corrupted. The Lutherans are known for heavily emphasizing the correct preaching of the Law and Gospel.

Dr. Luther, a very gifted person, also was a very gifted individual, especially in the area of Church music. Consequently, he was able to bring many helpful suggestions regarding the worship and music used in worship. He actively helped the Christian Church get back to a more joyful and meaningful Divine Service. Luther was joined by other Lutherans to invite the parishioners to become more personally involved in the public Divine Worship service. The Sunday liturgy and the singing of hymns were two important areas of improvement. Truly little music was available at the time so Luther and many other leaders began to compose hymns and songs arranged for singing (psalmody) for the local congregations.

The Augsburg Confession, Article XXIV on the Mass, states in paragraph 3, “The Chief purpose of all ceremonies is to teach the people what they need to know about Christ.” The liturgy, music and hymns all contribute to helping the worshipper to know Jesus better. Music takes on different sounds as one travels from people groups to people groups. The Acholi music will differ from the music used in Hong Kong or London.

The local parishioners enjoyed the new input of singing harmoniously. This change in music and singing of the divine worship service was very acceptable and the members of the congregations appreciated very much this new approach of adding music they could participate in very much. A chorale is a hymn or psalm sung to a traditional or composed melody. The

music of Luther's day included harmonization of the music which was readily accepted. This new addition of the chorale music became quite popular, so popular that the Lutherans became known for their chorale music.

Congregational singing gradually became accepted and other Christian groups noted this addition to the worship hour that contributed to a spirited worship hour. Centuries prior to the Middle Ages, the church developed a worship system that included only the clergy and a church choir. The music that Luther added to the worship was simple and not too complicated. Luther especially wanted the congregation to sing during the distribution of the Lord's Supper. One of the divine worship services that Luther wrote was all music, sung by the worshippers or chanted by the worship leader.

Lutherans publicly emphasized two important parts to the Sunday Worship. These two theological points were: (1) The Sacramental (2) The Sacrificial. In the sacramental portion of the worship we find the Absolution, the Scripture lessons of the day, the Sermon, the Lord's Supper, and the Benediction. It is from the sacramental portion that the term "divine" is used. In the sacrificial portion of the worship we find the Invocation, Hymns sung, Kyrie, Gloria Patri, Gloria in Excelsis, Nunc Dimittis, the Creed.

The addition of music for everyone, to the weekly divine worship service, was not appreciated by the Roman Catholic leaders of Luther's day. Luther's addition of placing the Word into the hand of the laity to read and study, and the laity singing was unwelcomed and irritating to the leaders of that church.

As Lutheranism grew and spread to many countries, Lutherans took their beloved music with them and the divine worship service was remarkably similar wherever the Word of God was preached, and a Word and Sacrament Ministry began. The organ and or the piano were used to help lead congregational music and singing. Seminarians were instructed in presenting the divine worship service each Sunday. There was one basic thought that ran through the divine worship service, that of sacramental/sacrifice, throughout the service.

Chorale music quickly became a mark of the Lutherans! Even to this day as the Gospel is carried out to people around the world, Lutherans bring the music of the divine worship service with them. It is translated into the local language of the people and becomes a meaningful part of each Lutheran soul. The tone, the speed, the type of music varies, but the intent and meaning remain loud and strong, Jesus Christ is King of kings and Lord of lords!

New Christians, filled with the Holy Spirit, are moved to create music that is acceptable among new converts, music usable and meaningful for local congregations, music that includes the Holy Gospel. Many congregations do have the money to purchase organs or pianos, but many cultures have their own way to make music through homemade flutes, drums, and rattles. Some Christians are led by the Holy Spirit to change their place of worship. When this change takes place, these people who change will often find a different use of music.

CONCLUSION

True Lutherans believe, teach, and confess that the chief purpose of music is for the purpose of teaching people what they need to know about Christ. (1) Dr. Luther helped to contribute to the Divine Service where the common people came to worship. (2) Singing Christian hymns is an especially important part of meaningful worship. (3) The Sacramental and the Sacrificial are particularly important in public worship. The Sacramental point of worship is the part of worship where God comes to the sinner; the Sacrificial point of worship is where the sinner comes to God. (4) The music used in public worship is to be based on Scriptures and to give glory to God. (5) Contemporary music that offends or distracts from meaningful worship has no place in the public worship service.

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

1. Discuss why music is important in a divine worship service.
2. Discuss the sacramental and sacrificial points of the worship service.
3. Do all members of a Christian congregation enjoy singing? How can we make music more meaningful? Discuss

15. PRAYER

“Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God.” Philippians 4:6

True Lutherans believe, teach, and confess that prayer is not a means of grace but that God has given His children prayer as a form of worship by which they can come to Him to praise, give thanks and seek His help for themselves and their neighbor.

True Lutherans believe that prayer is an integral part of the Christian faith. When the Gospel calls a sinner into saving faith, prayer is inseparable from the spiritual walk of a believer. When a sinner is converted, that is when he comes to saving faith, he has a strong desire to communicate with God. Psalm 19:14, reads, “*Lord, may these words of my mouth please you. And may these thoughts of my heart please you also. You are my Rock and my Redeemer.*” In prayer we come to God, through His means of grace, God comes to us, the sinner. Prayer is not a means of grace.

Prayer includes every response, in every way that a sinner communicates with his Lord and Savior. This includes thoughts and words. The form of prayer takes place with folded hands and bowed head, words spoken when hoeing the Cassava, thoughts when concerned over an extremely sick family member, a hymn that is sung on the way to worship on Sunday. Any communication that a sinner desires to have with God is called prayer.

Prayer is directed to God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Prayer is never directed to Mary, the mother of Jesus, saints, or other forms of idols. Christians pray often and for many reasons, and this is God pleasing. Scriptures reminds us in James 4:2, "*You want something, but you don't have it. So, you kill. You want what others have, but you cannot get what you want. So, you argue and fight. You don't have what you want because you don't ask God.*"

True Lutherans believe, teach, and confess that God tells us to pray, and God promises to answer our prayers made in the name of Jesus. Jesus, in Matthew, chapter 7 speaks to us, "*Ask, Seek and Knock,*" and He will give us what we pray for. All prayers are to be made in the name of Jesus. In the Gospel of John, chapter 16, verse 23, we read, "*When that day comes, you will no longer ask me for anything. What I am about to tell you is true. My Father will give you anything you ask for in my name.*"

The greatest and most excellent of all prayers, is the prayer that Jesus has given to His Church, "The Lord's Prayer." All Christian bodies use the Lord's Prayer as a special prayer. Some churches have added the doxology to this prayer. The doxology is, "***For Yours is the Kingdom, the Power and the Glory, forever and ever.***" Jesus prayer is found in several books of the New Testament. The book of Matthew 6:9-13; the book of Luke 11: 2-4 give the words that Jesus spoke to His disciples and to the world.

People with a weak faith will pray to God only when there is a need. When they eat their food, there is no prayer, when they rise in the morning there is no prayer, when they retire for the day at evening time there is no time for prayer. Some people pray one time, God does not answer their prayer immediately, so they spurn and reject prayer as worthless. This is not pleasing to God, for God answers every prayer, but in His time and in His way. We must wait in faith, knowing and believing that God hears and answers every proper prayer.

True Lutherans believe, teach, and confess that God invites us to come to Him for every need, but not for things that will harm us or our neighbor. We should not pray for things that are contrary to His Word or His will. When we pray for earthly, or temporal things we must add, "If it be Your will, Lord!" We are to pray for our enemies, as we read in Matthew 5:44, "*But here is what I tell you. Love your enemies. Pray for those who hurt you.*" It is only when a person is filled with faith in Jesus that grudges, hatred and anger leave, and a real peace comes into the heart and life of the sinner.

True Lutherans believe, teach, and confess that God does not hear our prayers that go on and on, and repeat the content of the prayer, over and over. Jesus speaks clearly in Matthew 6:7, "*When you pray, do not keep talking on and on. That is what ungodly people do. They think they will be heard because they talk a lot.*" Our prayers are not heard because they are long or

how often they are said, prayer is heard that is sincere, and one that is spoken in the name of Jesus. Our hearts are to be sincere and true, and so we pray with a clean heart. If, as an example, a person is planning to commit some form of sin, his prayer will not be heard, or hearts filled with anger, grudges or hate will not be heard, as they are fake and filled with

CONCLUSION

True Lutherans believe teach and confess that Jesus commanded us to pray, and we should pray for our needs and the needs of our neighbor. (1) Prayer is not a means of grace. (2) Prayer is desired by God's children because prayer pleases God, we have special needs, we know that God will answer our prayers. (3) Prayer is offered formally and informally, with hands folded or holding a shovel or a pencil, with head bowed and eyes closed, or in the middle of the night when we are troubled or filled with fear. (4) All prayers should be offered in the name of Jesus. (5) Prayers for temporal things, like a new wheelbarrow or a husband or wife, we are to pray, "if it be Your will, Lord." (6) We are to pray for our own needs, needs of others and even for our enemies. (7) We are not to pray for the dead or for the souls of the dead (8) We are always to pray, morning, noon and at night.

hypocrisy.

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

1. Discuss reasons that prayer is not a means of grace.
2. Why would it be wrong to offer prayers to Saints and the Mother of Jesus? Discuss
3. Discuss what contents should be included in a proper prayer.

16. THE AUGSBURG CONFESSION

" I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith."

II Tim 4:7

True Lutherans believe, teach, and confess that the unaltered Augsburg Confession is the most important confessional statement of the Lutheran Church. Based on God's Word. This document deals with the many false doctrines that had crept into the Christian Church.

True Lutherans believe, teach, and confess that Scriptures are the only norm to judge Christian teachings or doctrines. Martin Luther lived in a day when there was one exceptionally large church body, the Roman Catholic Church. Everyone had to follow the teachings of the Pope and High Councils that made up the church laws. Within a few years after Luther tacked his 95 theses to the Castle Church door in the little town of Wittenberg, Germany a new church had begun to form from all those who agreed with Luther. There were no books to follow, only the Bible and in Luther's day there were very few Bibles available for reading and for study.

The reformers were strong in their belief and confession that the Bible was inspired, infallible and inerrant. These faithful church workers of God joined their hearts and lives to defend the

Word of God. The practices of the Roman Catholic Church were of the sort that needed desperate reform. The Pope and the Councils were believed to be God in every respect. They made laws for the people that were not found in the Bible. Some of the laws made were: There is a place called purgatory where sinners go after death. It is possible to pay money to purchase this soul and bring him to Jesus. The Good Works of the sinner were payment for sins and merited eternal life. Marriage of the priests was forbidden. Only the Latin language was acceptable for the divine worship hour. Only the Priests could lay their hands on the Bible, it was forbidden for the laity to read the Word of God. The sinners could purchase forgiveness of sins from the priest by giving money to him for this blessing.

The reformers in Germany were supported by the local leaders and the laity in many communities. The Roman Catholic Church felt the tension as they were trying to build St. Peter's Cathedral in Rome and needed lots of money. The leaders of the Roman Catholic Church were angry with the Reformers for a number of reasons, chiefly of which was the money was not coming from Germany. The sales of receipts for purchasing the forgiveness of sins was not coming to Rome and as a result the work on the St. Peter's Cathedral was slowing down. The leaders of the Roman Catholic Church felt that a meeting with the leaders of this movement as well as those leading the government was necessary to end these tensions.

The leading Ruler called an important meeting was called to resolve the division and separation in the holy faith and the Christian religion. The leaders of the church and government wanted to stop the hostility, they prayerful intended to clarify the problems of the past and to display diligence in hearing, understanding, and considering with love, the kindness the opinions and views of everybody. These Reformers wanted to put aside whatever has not been properly explained or done by either party and finally to return to one single and true religion. Hopefully, this would lead to the practice of one communion, one church, one faith and unity, even as everyone would do battle under one Christ.

These words from Charles V sounded very well and the Reformers accepted the challenge to present a summary of teachings to the meeting at Augsburg. However, some supporters of the Pope began to disseminate lies about this new group of Christians in Germany. The Lutherans were charged with errors of others who did not baptize infants, these faithful followers were slandered in the lying papal writings. The Augsburg Confession was drawn up by Phillip Melancthon, a co-worker of Luther, but Martin Luther read the confession and was pleased with it. Because of the many false accusations, extended articles were added to defend the teachings of the Lutherans.

The Augsburg Confession was based on articles of faith drawn up by Lutheran theologians, especially by Dr. Luther. The doctrine of the Augsburg Confession contains what Luther taught and wrote. The Confession contains 28 articles of various length. Articles 1 to 21 deal with Lutheran Doctrine. Articles 22-28 treat medieval abuses which the Reformers had corrected. It was written with a friendly tone and was meant to be conciliatory. (unifying)

The Augsburg Confession stresses true Christian doctrine but especially treats the doctrine of salvation by grace through faith in Christ as the center of the Christian faith. The Augsburg Confession is the first special Lutheran Confession written and adopted as a testimony against the abuses that had developed in the practice of the Roman Catholic Church. Leaders of the

government, princes, bishops, even foreign ambassadors listened to the discussion of this important meeting.

The following is a summary of each article of the Augsburg Confession:

Article I: Of God

Our Churches, with common consent, do teach that the decree of the Council of Nicaea concerning the Unity of the Divine Essence and concerning the Three Persons, is true and to believe without any doubting; that is to say, there one Divine Essence which is called and which is God: eternal, without body, without parts, of infinite power, wisdom, and goodness, the Maker and Preserver of all things, visible and invisible; and yet there are three Persons, of the same essence and power, who also are coeternal, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. And their "person" they use as the Fathers have used it, to signify, not a part or quality in another, but that which subsists of itself.

Article II: Of Original Sin

Lutherans believe that the nature of man is sinful, described as being without fear of God, without trust of God and with a desire to have sex. Sin is redeemed through Baptism and the Holy Spirit.

Article III: The Son of God

Lutherans believe in the incarnation, that is, the union of the fully human with the fully divine in the person of Jesus. Jesus Christ alone brings about the reconciliation of humanity with God.

Article IV: Justification by Faith

Man cannot be justified before God through our own abilities; we are wholly reliant on Jesus Christ for reconciliation with God. (This is often described as the one article by which the "Lutheran church stands or falls".)

Article V: The Office of Preaching

Lutherans believe that to ensure that the Gospel of Jesus Christ is proclaimed throughout the world, Christ has established His office of the holy ministry.

Article VI: Of the New Obedience

Lutherans believe that good deeds of Christians are the fruits of faith and salvation, not a price paid for them.

Article VII: Of the Church

Lutherans believe that there is one holy Christian church, and it is found where the Gospel is preached in its truth and purity and the sacraments are administered according to the gospel.

Article VIII: What the Church Is

Despite what hypocrisy may exist in the church (and among men), the Word and the Sacraments are always valid because they are instituted by Christ, no matter what the sins may be of the one who administers them.

Article IX: Of Baptism

Lutherans believe that Baptism is necessary for salvation, and that the grace of God is offered through Baptism, and that Children are to be baptized, for being offered to God through Baptism they are received into His grace.

Article X: Of the Lord's Supper

Lutherans believe that Christ's body and blood are truly present in, with, and under the bread and wine of the sacrament and reject those that teach otherwise.

Article XI: Of Confession

Lutherans believe that private absolution should remain in the church, though a believer does not need to enumerate all his sins as it is impossible for a man to enumerate all the sins for which he should be forgiven.

Article XII: Of Repentance

Repentance comes in two parts: in contrition for sins committed according to the Law and through faith offered through the Gospel. A believer can never be free from sin, nor live outside of the grace of God.

Article XIII: Of the Use of the Sacraments

The Sacraments (Baptism and the Eucharist) are physical manifestations of God's Word and His commitment to us. The Sacraments are never just physical elements but have God's Word and promises to bound to them.

Article XIV: Of Ecclesiastical Order

Lutherans allow only those who are "rightly called" to publicly preach or administer the Sacraments.

Article XV: Of Ecclesiastical Usages

Lutherans believe that church holidays, calendars and festivals are useful for religious observance, but that observance and ritual is not necessary for salvation. Human traditions (such as observances, fasts, distinctions in eating meats) that are taught to "merit" grace work in opposition to the Gospel.

Article XVI: Of Civil Affairs

Secular governments and vocations are part of God's natural orders; Christians are free to serve in government and the military and to engage in the business and vocations of the world. Laws are to be followed unless they are commandments to sin.

Article XVII: Of Christ's Return to Judgement

Lutherans believe that Christ will return to raise the dead and judge the world; the godly will be given everlasting joy, and the ungodly will be “tormented without end”. This article rejects notions of a millennial kingdom before the resurrection of the dead.

Article XVIII: Of Free Will

Lutherans believe that we have free will in the realm of “civil righteousness” (or things subject to reason”, but that we do not have free will in “spiritual righteousness”. In other words, we are free to choose and act in every regard except for the choice of salvation. Faith is not the work of men, but of the Holy Spirit. Sinful man cannot come to faith by his own will.

Article XIX: Of the Cause of Sin

Lutherans believe that sin is caused not by God but by “the will of the wicked”, turning away from God.

Article XX: Of Good Works

The Lutheran notion of justification by faith does not somehow condemn good works; faith causes them to do good works as a sign of our justification (or salvation), not a requirement for salvation.

Article XXI: Of the Worship of the Saints

Lutherans keep the saints, not as saviors or intercessors to God, but rather as examples and inspirations to our own faith and life.

Article XXII: Of Both Kinds in the Sacrament (Eucharist)

It is proper to offer communicants the consecrated bread and wine, not just the bread.

Article XXIII: Of the Marriage of Priests

Lutherans permit their clergy to enter the institution of marriage, for the reasons that the early Church bishops were married, that God blesses marriage as an order of creation, and because marriage and procreation is the natural outlet for human sexual desire.

Article XXIV: Of the Mass

Lutherans retain the practice of the Mass, but only as a public gathering for the purposes of community worship and the receiving of the Eucharist. Lutherans reject the practice of using the Mass as a “work for both salvation and worldly (monetary) gain.

Article XXV: Of Confession

Lutherans uphold the need for confession and absolution but reject the notion that Confession should induce guilt or anxiety to the Christian. Absolution is offered for all sin, not just sins that can be recounted in a confession, as it is impossible for a man to know all his transgressions

Article XXVI: Of the Distinction of Meats

Human traditions that hold fasting and special observances with dietary restrictions as a means of gaining the favor of God are contrary to the Gospel. While fasting and other practices are useful spiritual practices, they do not justify man nor offer salvation.

Article XXVII: Of Monastic Vows

Man cannot achieve purity in community or isolation from the rest of the world, and perfection cannot be attained by any vow taken or actions of man alone.

Article XXVIII: Of Ecclesiastical Power

The only power given to priests or bishops is the power offered through Scripture to preach, teach, and administer the sacraments. The powers given the clergy in issues of government or the military are granted and respected only through civil means; they are not civil rules of governments and the military by divine right.

The Augsburg Confession became the key document for that described the confession of the Lutherans. Roman Catholic leaders rejected the Augsburg Confession as it was presented at the Augsburg meeting. Their response was weak and lacked any unity or substance and was never published. The Emperor Charles the V gave the Lutherans an opportunity to respond to this weak response. Philip Melanchthon and a few other Lutheran leaders responded with the Apology to the Augsburg Confession. This document was long and detailed and at times watered down the simple, truthful confession of the Augsburg Confession. To this day many churches ask to be called "U.A.C." Lutheran. Or Unaltered Augsburg Confession.

CONCLUSION

True Lutherans believe, teach, and confess that the Unaltered Augsburg Confession is the chief confession of the Lutheran Church. (1) This confession is a testimony against the abuses of the Roman Catholic Church of Luther's day. (2) The Unaltered Augsburg Confession is a model for Christians of all time to deal with each controversy that appears. (3) The Unaltered Augsburg Confession found God's answers in His Holy Word and used His Word to find the God pleasing solution. (4) The Augsburg Confession lets the world know what a True Lutheran believes,

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

1. Why is the Augsburg Confession such an important document for the Christian Church? Discuss
2. Why would Christians place U.A.C. on their official church records? Discuss
3. In what manner did the Augsburg Confession become the Birthday of the Lutheran Church? Discuss

17. THE TWO KINGDOMS

"Then Jesus came to them and said, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to Me." Matthew 28:18

Orthodox Lutherans believe, teach, and confess that there are two powers that rule over civilized people. There is the power of the Church and the power of the State. Both powers are ordained by God, but both have different blessings for those who live under their rule.

The power of the Church has authority only over those who join its fellowship. The power of the State has power over all who live within its borders. The power of the State establishes rules and laws that its citizens must obey. The power of the Church is ruled by the Word of God. The power of the State is organized to maintain peace and prosperity for its citizens. The power of the Church has the work of bringing peace of mind to troubled souls. The State is interested in the temporal affairs of its citizens. The Church is interested in the spiritual and eternal blessings of its members. The power of the State is interested in worldly concerns. The Two Kingdoms are: the secular kingdom and kingdom of God's grace.

Christ's Church is duty bound and interested in helping souls find their way to heaven. Jesus spoke in Matthew 22:21, "*Then he said to them, 'So give back to Caesar what is Caesar's, and to God what is God's.'*" The two powers: secular power and power of God's grace are different and have different purposes.

There is a separation of church and state that must be maintained. The Office of the Keys was not given to the State, but to the Church. The state has no business in doing the work of the Church. The State was not created to rule religion, nor is the Church created to rule and govern nations. The State was created to protect the Church but not become involved in the Churches work!

True Lutherans believe, teach, and confess that there is a distinction between the two kingdoms, the secular and spiritual. We read in the Book of Concord, "Christ's kingdom is spiritual; it is the knowledge of God in the heart, the fear of God and faith, the beginning of eternal righteousness and eternal life. At the same time, it lets us make outward use of the legitimate political ordinances of the nation in which we live, just as it lets us make use of medicine or architecture, food or drink or air." (Apology of the Augsburg Confession, Article XVI, pp. 222:2.)

The power of the State is used to govern and rule a people in external matters. The form of the government may take many shapes and there is a great variety of styles, from democracy to monarchy to dictatorship and absolute governing powers. Those who lead and rule in State matters change, but the power and authority of the State remain the same. God establishes the government and gives it power and authority. Romans 13:1-2, "*Let everyone be subject to the governing authorities, for there is no authority except that which God has established. The authorities that exist have been established by God. 2 Consequently, whoever rebels against the authority is rebelling against what God has instituted, and those who do so will bring judgment on themselves.*" The power of the government is placed into the hands of its citizens and not in the hand of one person or a small group of people.

True Lutherans believe that even if the government is taken by force, fraud, or usurpation by godless and wicked men, this does not invalidate the power and authority of the government itself. Christians are to accept any type of government that is established, that reasonably

maintains a true peace and harmony in that place. True Lutherans accept any type of government that makes it possible for its citizens to live together in peace and harmony.

The Church is not to seek help from the government for its existence, this help is to come from within its organization and membership of that Church group. The power of the Word was not given to the State, nor was the power of the sword given to the Church. The church has no power to govern nations and its peoples. Jesus said that His kingdom was not of this world!

It is good and right for Christians to be active in the matters of the State. When this takes place, honest, hard-working people help to make a nation strong and sure. To accomplish its goals some democratic governments are made up of three powers: an executive, legislative, and judicial power. The **executive power** is the power of those leaders who are elected by the people. These leaders assume leadership responsibility for guiding the nation to its established mission or goal. The **legislative power** makes laws that help citizens of that nation to have a better life, the executive power is given to enforce the laws that have been passed to help the people of a nation. The **Judicial power** has the power to enforce the laws that have been created to help keep peace. A True Lutheran thankfully looks for ways to help the leadership of a nation to meet its assigned tasks.

In a nation with democratic rule, the leaders of the state receive their power and authority from the members of a nation who exercise the right to vote. The church has no right to set up the leadership of presidents, prime ministers, and kings. Church leaders receive their power from God, not from the citizens of a nation. These two powers, the spiritual and the secular, must always remain separate from each other.

CONCLUSION

True Lutherans believe, teach, and confess that God has given two kingdoms to govern His people, The Kingdom of Power, and the Kingdom of the Spirit. (1) God has established the Kingdom of Power to help people here on earth to live peacefully. (2) God has established the Kingdom of the Church to lead souls to eternal life. (3) The Kingdom of Power and the Kingdom of the Church are two separate kingdoms, each kingdom with its own significant power. (4) Christians have the right and duty to exercise their faith publicly in community politics.

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

1. What is God's purpose for creating two kingdoms? Discuss
2. How can governments that are not reasonable and just be changed?
Discuss
3. In what ways can a Christian make a nation better? Discuss

18. VOCATIONAL CHOICE

"All these (talents) are the work of one and the same Spirit, and he distributes them to each one, just as he determines." I Corinthians 12:11

True Lutherans believe, teach, and confess that God gave a special vocation to each person that is born here on earth. This vocation is a special work, or calling, given to someone to be or do something special to please God and help his neighbor.

True Lutherans find Dr. Luther immensely helpful as they seek guidance and understanding when considering the topic, a Christian vocation. This was a new thought 600 years ago. In those days, and even today, Children are often asked, "What do you want to do (or be) when you grow up?" That is a question that deals with vocation. Luther taught that every person has some station or position in life.

The question of vocation is a common question and one that is often asked. What does the average person think about the term?" In other words, what kind of work do I like to do? What kind of work am I good at? Do I enjoy music? Farming? Teaching? Business and market work? Mechanic work? When times are difficult having sufficient money to pay for one meal for each member of the family is a good thing. The question becomes especially important when a person matures and is ready for marriage and making a new family. How will this vocation give glory to God?

In some countries there are few schools and it is difficult to find a school to attend. Some vocations require some education. Some vocations require much education. Vocations like teaching, preaching, computer science, medicine require many years of schooling. In well developed nations there are more choices for education than in developing nations because of the opportunities that are available.

True Lutherans believe that God works in and through the vocation He gives to each person, as He calls each person to use the talents that He has given to them. Some people are good painters, while others dislike painting. As Luther said, "Here consider your station according to the Ten Commandments, whether you are father, mother, son, daughter, master, mistress, servant." For Luther, one's vocation was the special gift that God has given to each person. Luther believed that each person is to share their vocation, and that was to serve God and love one's neighbor. In Luther's day this was a new way of dealing with using the talents which God gives to every person.

True Lutherans believe, teach, and confess that Scriptures show us that the Christian faith is to bear fruit in love. Paul writes to Timothy, a young pastor, "*The goal of this command is love, which comes from a pure heart and a good conscience and a sincere faith.*" (I Tim 1:5) True Lutherans believe and teach that whatever the vocation, it has been given by God to love Him and to serve our neighbor.

Sinners, having been justified by faith, are aware of this blessing, and accept the calling the Holy Spirit places in their heart. Knowing this biblical life-changing truth, the sinner eagerly accepts the challenge to use his talents and gifts to help his neighbor.

True Lutherans believe, teach, and confess that one's vocation produces good works that are a result of God's gift of the ability to perform and excel in a special way. The vocation serves God but it is especially directed to the neighbor who is in need of this good work. Matthew 22:37-38, Jesus spoke: "*Love the Lord your God with you all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind. This is the first and most important commandment. 39 And the second is*

like it. 'Love your neighbor as you love yourself.'⁴⁰ Everything that is written in the Law and the Prophets is based on these two commandments." Orthodox Lutherans use the faith God gives them only, "because He first love us." (I John 4:19)

True Lutherans believe that there are countless kinds of vocations but that each vocation is a singular vocation and that it has a specific gift to share. God not only calls church workers, but every man or woman to use the talents given to help the neighbor. In marriage we find the husband and wife with different vocations, but both are challenged to serve his or her neighbor, the husband, the wife. In the business world, medical world and in every category of vocation, the object is to love the neighbor as one's self.

True Lutherans take a different approach to the God-pleasing use of the vocation that He alone gives. A vocation will give God glory as talents are used, but the vocation that is being used is at the same time primarily reaching out to help their neighbor. God, the Giver of the talent motivates His child to share with His neighbor the love of Christ. Luther understood the calling that a believer received with his Baptism as embracing the sharing of God's Word with others regardless of his vocation.

The people of this world place more importance on some vocations than on others because of the monetary or status of a vocation. The man who chops fire wood to selling for cooking food is placed on a lower level than that of a person who is a teacher or a medical doctor. The Scriptures reminds us that with God there are no higher vocation that are more important than another. All vocations are held at the same level with God. The work of a pastor is not more important than a brick maker or baker.

Many people do not think of their vocation as coming from God, calling them to use their gifts for the benefit of their neighbor. True Lutherans believe that God gives a special calling to each person to help his neighbor and in doing so, he gives glory to God.

Is every vocation, or type of work, God pleasing? No. Some vocations are not God pleasing. When a work that is done hurts our neighbor or his family it is not God pleasing. Some vocation that endanger life are not God-pleasing. Work that is not done in the name of Christ is not God-pleasing. The Bible teaches clearly that only people who believe in God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, can hold, and produce a God-pleasing work because of that vocation. Romans 14 reads, "*Everything that is not based on faith is sin.*" (Rom 14;23) Those who do not have faith in Jesus, may not do work that is God pleasing, but often we find that their work is helpful in maintaining a world of peace, so that the Gospel can be shared with those who do not have faith.

Finally, in some cultures, parents make the decisions for their children in the choice of a vocation. This is true also as to whom their children are to marry. True Lutherans believe that the Word of God reveals that each person is given a special talent and it is God pleasing to develop these God-given talents. Prayerfully, the parents of children will observe these special talents and use these observations to encourage their children to excel in the special God given gift to that child. God gives special talents to be used for His glory and the good of the neighbor. We will recall that the Calling into the Holy Ministry of the church to serve as a pastor differs from the vocational call that God gives to everyone. Regarding the vocational blessing

that God gives, we are to use this vocational call to honor God and be of service to our neighbor.

CONCLUSION

True Lutherans believe, teach, and confess that God has given to each person a vocation to use to serve Him and his neighbor. (1) When people use their vocation to please God and his neighbor the world is a better place to live. (2) When a person uses his vocation to serve God, and his neighbor, both give glory to God. (3) When choosing a vocation, we ask God, "How can I best serve you with the gifts You have given to me?"

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

1. What is the meaning of the term, "vocation?" Discuss
2. How is it possible to determine what special talents God has given? Discuss
3. The Bible says, "to redeem the time," what does this passage mean? Discuss

19. A LITURGICAL CHURCH

"But everything should be done in a fitting and orderly way". I Corinthians 14:40

True Lutherans believe, teach, and confess that the Divine Liturgy used in the public worship service is an especially important part of an orthodox Lutheran. Many Christian churches use a liturgy or order of service to assist worshippers in the public worship that help the members to grow in faith, appreciate public worship and find a common order of worship that everyone is familiar with.

A non-member person who visits a Lutheran Church public worship service will soon be lost in the all the standing, sitting, kneeling, singing, chanting that comes and goes. There is a great variety of worship liturgies found among divine Lutheran worship services. The music will vary from church to church. Some public worship services will use a hymnal, some will substitute with small sheets of paper. Some will have a music leader; others will find the pastor leading the liturgy and the music.

The term: liturgy is connected to terms such as ritual, worship, service, ceremony, rite, observance, celebration. A public worship service that follows an order would be considered the liturgy for that worship. Over the centuries, the Christian Church has developed a common liturgy that includes specific components.

The worship liturgy that is currently used is composed of important musical documents that go back to the first century. From time to time, the Christian Church has added special words, chants, music to the liturgy to make the public worship more meaningful.

Among true Lutherans there are leaders who prefer a rigid and very straightforward liturgy. Often the type of worship offered is left up to the Called pastor. If the pastor is rigid, or "high church", there will be chanting, kneeling and more formalism than if a pastor who is "low

church" and he is not so rigid and formal. True Lutherans accept both formats of the liturgy but prefer a more traditional public worship hour.

At such services, the pastor will be robed in a type of white clergy robe, with a stole around his neck. A stole is a wide colored cloth of one color and about 240 cm long, the stole usually has a religious symbol in gold to beautify the stole. The stole signifies the power given to the pastor by the congregation to lead and direct the public worship.

When the pastor faces the altar, a table like structure in the center of the sanctuary, he will speak for the congregation. When he speaks facing the members he will speak for God. So, when prayers or confession of sin is being prayed, he will face the altar. When forgiveness and God's love are presented, he will face the members of the congregation. The pastor's position is important as it reveals who is speaking and this makes the worship service more meaningful.

An orthodox Lutheran seeks and appreciates a Divine Service like the following order of worship that includes: (Note: Hymns, songs, music by special groups men, women, youth, and children are to be added to the Divine Service. Members who enjoy solo or duet singing are invited to add joyful music to the worship.)

THE ORDER OF WORSHIP

The Invocation

In the name of the Holy Trinity, Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

Confession of sins

The members of the congregation speak a common confession of sins, in this way everyone is involved personally in this part of the liturgy. It starts out with...." I, a poor miserable sinner..."

Absolution

The pastor, facing the members, looks at them, and speaks, "I, in the name of Christ, forgive your sins!"

Introit (Entrance)

After the Absolution is given, the Introit is read. This is a Latin word meaning "entrance". The pastor goes to the altar in the sanctuary. (where the altar is located). The pastor reads a Psalm (A collection on Hebrew hymns in the Old Testament)

Gloria Patri (Glory be to the Father)

Following the reading of the Psalm the members sing, "Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit..."

The Kyrie (Lord, Have Mercy)

The members sing and ask for God's mercy, as the words from the Greek mean, "Lord, have mercy.)

The Salutation (Greeting)

The Pastor looks at the members now and meaningfully says, "The Lord be with YOU!"

Cong: And also, with you, as the members give their response.

The Collect, the Prayer of the Day

This is a short prayer that includes a short thought about the main point of that Sunday's worship.

The Old Testament Lesson

The Old Testament lesson is a brief reading that connects with the two other lessons chosen for that Sunday.

The Epistle Lesson

The Epistle lesson is taken from one of the letters of the New Testament. A brief lesson that connects with the Old Testament and Gospel lesson. Epistle means letter in the Greek language.

The Gradual

The gradual prepares the members worshipping for the hearing of the Holy Gospel. The Latin for the gradual is English for "step", which indicates that the worship is now moving to the highlight of the three lessons, the Holy Gospel.

The Holy Gospel

The gospel lesson is taken from one of the four books of the New Testament that are called "Gospels." (Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John) In honor of the reading of the Gospel lesson, members stand when the reading of the Gospel is announced. The Gospel lesson is chosen because this special lesson will speak of the Theme for that worship service.

The Gospel lessons

Begins with the congregation saying or singing, "Glory be to You O Lord." When the Gospel lesson is read, and before the members are seated again the members say or sing, "Praise be to You, O Christ!"

The Creed

There are three creeds: The Apostles' Creed; The Nicene Creed; and the Athanasian Creed. The creed is spoken and is a statement of the faith of each member who publicly speaks the creed chosen for that worship service. Often the Apostles' Creed is used when there is no Lord's Supper being distributed. On Holy Communion Sundays the Nicene Creed is normally used. The Athanasian Creed, a lengthy statement of belief, is normally used on Holy Trinity Sunday because this creed speaks very clearly concerning the Holy Trinity. The creed is not a prayer, but a statement of faith, of what a person believes, and is bold sharing with other members of the worship community. The Apostles' Creed and the Nicene Creed are memorized but the Athanasian is usually read together as a worshipping group. All three creeds are incredibly old and go back to second and third century.

The Sermon

The sermon is the highlight of the Divine worship because it includes Law and Gospel and provides the key scriptural support for members to live in and with a Christian hope that grows stronger each day. The Called servant delivers the message to the sheep and the lambs, the young and the old. It is God speaking through the pastor, to His children. The sermon feeds the members spiritually. Dr. Luther, God's servant, emphasized the importance of presenting the Law and Gospel in the form of a sermon in each Divine worship. At the time of Dr. Luther, the sermon was not viewed as an important part of the worship service.

The Apology of the Augsburg Confession states this about the Roman Catholic Church worship, "All their books and sermons were silent about the exercise of faith in its struggle with despair and about the free forgiveness of sins for Christ's sake. By the blessing of God, the priests in our churches pay attention to the ministry of the Word, they teach the Gospel of the blessings of Christ, and they show that the forgiveness of sins comes freely for Christ's sake. This teaching really consoles consciences." (Apology of the Augsburg Confession, Art XXIV, Pp 258 47-48) "The Book of Concord continues several paragraphs later, "And as for outward appearances, our church attendance is greater than theirs. Practical and clear sermons hold an audience, but neither the people nor the clergy have ever understood our opponents' teaching." (Art XXIV, pp 259 – 50)

The Offertory

The offertory is a response to the spoken Word of God, the Sermon. Usually a Psalm is sung or spoken at this time. Psalm 51, "Create in me a clean heart O God is usually sung for the offertory." Following the singing of a Psalm, the offering is received. Members may come forward individually or the offering is received as special appointed members pass an offering plate to all who worship.

The General Prayer

The General prayer is a prayer that includes everything that is to be prayed over; the sick, those celebrating, the government, the church at home, the church at large, mission work, and missionaries.

The Preface

The word preface, which is used in the liturgy, means "to say beforehand." The Preface is an introduction to the consecration of the bread and wine in the celebration of the Lord's Supper. The preface was used in the ancient Christian Church as a liturgical expression. The Preface is a response between the pastor and the members who gather for worship. The words: We note three important phrases: (1) Pastor: The Lord be with you Cong: And, also with you. (2) Pastor: Let us lift our hearts unto the Lord Cong: We lift them unto the Lord. (3) Pastor: Let us give thanks to the Lord our God. Cong: It is right to give Him thanks and praise.

The Sanctus (God is the truly Holy One)

The Sanctus follows the response between the pastor and members and now concludes with the Sanctus. The Sanctus reminds the worshippers that they will now receive the true body and blood of Christ, in, with and under the bread and the wine. The Sanctus was being used before the end of the First Century, so it is a very old song based on Isaiah 6:3. "Holy, holy,

holy Lord God of power and might....ending with Hosanna in the highest” Hosanna means “save us now.”

The Lord’s Prayer

Jesus gave this special Prayer to His Disciples as the most excellent example of how Christians are to pray. Christians of every denomination and of every kind, pray the Lord’s Prayer. Following the Sanctus and before the consecration of the bread and wine, this special prayer is prayed. The thoughts of this prayer echo the blessings the celebrant is about to receive. The blessings of the Lord’s Prayer are all promised by the Lord Jesus, as members kneel/stand and partake of this special Holy Meal. After the Amen, the pastor consecrates the elements, the bread, and the wine

The Words of Institution

The Words of Institution speak the exact words that Jesus used when He broke bread at the Passover Meal when He gave His disciples and the Church this blessed sacrament. These words are necessary to assure those participating in this Holy Meal that this Meal is incredibly special and assure them of the Real Presence of Christ in the bread and wine. Orthodox Lutherans believe, teach, and confess that bread and grape wine must be used for celebration of this Meal. Following the consecration of the bread and wine, the Pax Domini and Agnus Dei the members of the congregation are invited to come to the sanctuary and there receive the true body and blood of Jesus, in with and under the bread and wine for the forgiveness of their sins.

The Pax Domini (Sharing the Peace)

The Pax Domini in English is when the pastor speaks: “The Peace of the Lord be with you always. C: Amen. This is the second time the Pax Domini is spoken. Sins forgiven, members joyfully receive God’s peace in Christ, His only Son.

The Agnus Dei (The Lamb of God)

The members having God’s wonderful promise of Peace, now join their hearts as they sing the Agnus Dei. Lamb of God You take away the sin of the world. “Now, having confessed their sin, and received the absolution from Christ, through the pastor, members, whose hearts are now filled with the sermon message of hope and peace, receive the body and blood of Jesus. The last phrase of the Agnus Dei remains in the minds of those who commune, “grant us peace!”

The Distribution of the Bread and Wine, Body and Blood of Christ

The pastor and perhaps an elder of the congregation serve the members together. The Elder places the host, the bread, into the hand or the tongue of the communicant saying, “Take eat: This is the true body of Christ.” The pastor takes the cup with the grape wine, and gives each member a sip of wine, saying, “Take drink; this is the true blood of Christ.” After the table is communed, the pastor speaks a departing blessing to the communicants. This is repeated until all members have communed. The pastor may commune the elder, and following this, the elder may commune the pastor. Some orthodox Lutherans prefer to have the elder commune the pastor, rather than for the pastor to commune himself. Members, youth, and guests who

are unable to commune or not ready for Holy Communion, are warmly invited to the altar for a blessing by the pastor or one of the elders.

The Nunc Dimittis, or now let us depart, taken from Luke 2: **The Nunc Dimittis (Now let us depart in peace!)**

29-32, the words of Simeon as he held in his arms the Savior of the nations, even Jesus Christ is joyfully sung or chanted.

The Closing Prayer

Following the Nunc Dimittis, the pastor prays a short prayer of thanksgiving.

The Benediction (The final blessing by the pastor)

True Lutherans prefer that the pastor use the words from Numbers 6:24-26 for the closing benediction. "*The Lord bless you and keep you; the Lord make His face shine upon you and be gracious to you; the Lord look upon you with favor and + give you peace. Amen.*"

CONCLUSION

True Lutherans believe, teach, and confess that the Divine Service is an important part of their weekly public worship. (1) There the sinner confesses his sin and receives absolution. (2) There they hear the Law and the Gospel read publicly. (3) There they hear a message that helps him grow in the faith each Sunday. (4) There they meet Jesus Christ personally as they receive the Body and the Blood of Christ, in with and under the bread and the wine. (5) There they form close relationships that send the Gospel around the world, so that other Christians may be blessed with the Divine Service. (6) There they participate with heart, and his mouth, and his mind as they joyfully sing hymns and songs that give praise, honor, and glory to God.

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

1. Discuss the term "Divine Service." Why the term Divine?
2. Who determines the form of worship in a congregation? Should members help plan worship.
3. Why is the sermon the high point of a Divine Service? Should it be the high point? Discuss

20. ADIAPHORA (something that is debatable. From the Greek language)

**"Accept the one whose faith is weak, without quarreling over disputable matters."
Rom 14:1**

True Lutherans believe, teach, and confess that actions which the Word of God neither forbids, or commands us to do, are not sin in themselves. It is not sin whether a person does one or the other, the action becomes sin when the decision offends God or our neighbor.

True Lutherans believe, teach, and confess that whenever someone departs from the Word of God, that is sin, known or unknown. The question of what sin is, is not determined by the opinion of the sinner! Lutherans teach that God's Word is the only factor in whether a sinner's action is God pleasing or not. Man's attitude towards a given a sinful act does not change God's charge that it is sin to break His Law. According to Romans 6:1, a person cannot commit sin to the glory of God!

Below there is a long list of just a few examples of adiaphora that a Christian may or may not do without offending God:

- Making the sign of the cross when eating food
- The mode of Holy Baptism
- The type of liturgy used in a worship service; traditional or contemporary
- The individual or common cup when administering the Lord's Supper
- To wear a white robe when serving in Church
- The circumcision of male children
- To give wedding rings when speaking wedding vows
- The use of bread with or without yeast
- To fold your hands or not fold your hands when praying to God

Is it a sin to disobey a man-made rule by the government? True Lutherans teach that God commands His children to respect and obey the government. He has placed the government over the people as a service to them. To disobey the Government is a sin. Should the government demand an action that is forbidden by God, it is not a sin to disobey the government and to obey God. Romans 13:1 says, "*Let everyone be subject to the governing authorities, for there is no authority except that which God has established. The authorities that exist have been established by God.*"

In this matter, God has given the government the duty to make laws, and when a person disobeys these government laws, he sins against God. The same teaching from the Bible is made for children to obey parents or when we act against our conscience. In the case of the action of the government, should this agency ask a person to commit a sin against God, a Christian must disobey the government. The Word speaks in Acts 5:29, "*We ought to obey God rather than men.*"

Things that God neither forbids, or commands are not sin in themselves, and it is not sin whether a person does one or the other. It only becomes sin when the decision offends God or our neighbor. Sin is a transgression of God's Law, even if a person says, "I didn't mean to do or say something!"

The heart of man is the cause of sin, with the devil prompting and teasing the sinner along life's way! God is not the cause of sin. The Bible says, "*The devil sins from the very beginning!*" (I John 3:8)

We mention several activities that are neither commanded nor forbidden, these things are called adiaphora, matters of indifference. The term, adiaphora, became important in Luther's day, because the Reformation needed to defend against the Roman Catholic Churches' idea that

works add to salvation. Also, some thoughts from the ranks of the Reformation that said and taught that they could change practices to look like the Gospel without it affecting the doctrine. Luther advocated that the Lutherans change only that which was offensive to God and His Word. Some Christians threw out the church altar, removed the cross, and beautiful colored glass windows with symbols, refused to wear robes and believed that everything the Roman Catholic Church did was sinful and wrong. Luther believed that not everything the Roman Catholic Church did was sinful and wrong, and he kept and supported those things that gave glory to God.

A True Lutheran believes teaches and confesses, along with the Formula of Concord, Article X that ceremonies or church usages which are neither commanded nor forbidden in the Word of God, but which have been introduced solely for the sake of good order and the general welfare, are in and for themselves not divine worship or even a part of it. "*In vain do they worship me, teaching as doctrines the precepts of men.*" (Matthew 15:9) (Formula of Concord, Art X, Tappert, pp 492-493)

A True Lutheran will look to I Corinthians 10:31, "*So eat and drink and do everything else for the glory of God.*" God has asked His followers not to put a stumbling block in the spiritual way of other people. The key in observing adiaphora and things of indifference is that Christians should not abuse their freedom but lovingly serve others in Christ-like love. The Christian behavior is one that God permits and at the same time does not offend others.

CONCLUSION

True Lutherans believe, teach and confess that many things happen in a person's daily life that God neither commanded to do or commanded not to do, but are left up to a person's conscience to make the right decision. (1) A True Lutheran will use his faith to guide and direct those who have a weak faith to walk with God. (2) It is better to refrain from enjoying a personal activity for the sake of helping a neighbor to grow in the faith, than to offend the neighbor. (3) A Christian will try to faithfully serve God but avoid offending his neighbor. (4) A True Lutheran will use "all the adiaphora" that happen in his life to give God the glory.

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

1. Discuss some of the adiaphora that are presently a part of your life right now?
2. Discuss some adiaphora that could easily offend others spiritually?
3. Discuss the use of alcohol as an adiaphoron? Gambling? Sex? Money?

A SUMMARY THOUGHT

A true Lutheran believes, teaches, and confesses only what the Scripture clearly teaches, and believes it is wrong to go beyond it and not being satisfied with less. Although a teaching from Scripture may not seem logical or reasonable, a true Lutheran accepts it as truth because it is God breathed truth, and all doctrines in the Bible support the main one: justification by grace through faith in Christ. Therefore, orthodox Lutherans use the term "alone" with the words grace, faith, and Scriptures, as this helps describe Lutheranism: Scripture Alone, Grace Alone, Faith Alone. The Word! The Word! The Word!

The Mission of this Seminar:

When this seminar material is completed those who participate will clearly know "What a true (orthodox) Lutheran?" There will be no confusion regarding what a true Lutheran believes, teaches, and confess. It will show the One Sure Way to heaven through Jesus Christ.

DID THE SEMINAR ACCOMPLISH THIS FOR YOU? YES NO (Why not?)

SOLI DEO GLORIA!