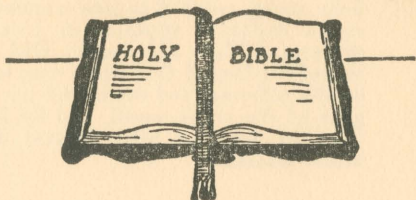
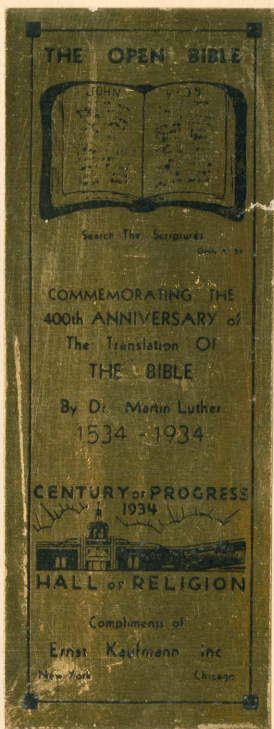


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What the Lutheran Church Stands For



WHAT THE LUTHERAN CHURCH STANDS FOR

By PROF. THEO. GRAEBNER

The Bible —We believe and teach that the Holy Scriptures of the Old and the New Testament are in every part the inspired Word of God, who is the author of the words as well as of the thoughts of Scripture.

We believe that the Bible is the clearest book ever written, and that no person of ordinary intelligence and unprejudiced mind can fail to understand its teachings, and to find in it the Way of Life.

We believe that the Bible, as the revelation of God, is unalterable and complete, requiring no human interpretation, and permitting no additions to its teachings from any source whatsoever.

God —We believe that God is one divine essence in three persons, Father, Son and Holy Ghost.

Man —We believe that man is not the product of evolutionary development, but was created in the beginning an intelligent and moral being consisting of body and soul.

We believe that man was created holy and innocent, but in his present fallen estate is entirely depraved, and enslaved in the service of sin.

Sin —We believe that sin is a transgression of the divine Law, and that man is subject to death and eternal damnation by reason of the guilt that attaches to sin.

Redemption —We believe that God, in His infinite mercy, resolved to save mankind, and that the divine Redeemer appeared in Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Mary and Son of God, who perfectly obeyed the Law of God which man has transgressed, by His sufferings and death paid the penalty for the guilt of the entire world, and by His resurrection from the dead has been declared the all-sufficient divine Redeemer.

Faith —We believe that all who penitently accept Christ as the one and only Savior in sincere faith are justified in the sight of God and made heirs of salvation.

The Church —We believe that all who thus accept in true faith the forgiveness of sins procured by Christ's atonement are members of the Church of Christ, which is an invisible Church, since men cannot determine which of those who profess this faith are true Christians at heart.

We believe that true Christians are found wherever the Gospel message of redemption through the atoning sacrifice of Christ is made known.

We believe that no church-body, denomination, or sect can rightfully claim to be the "only-saving church," outside of which there is no salvation. We therefore reject the error of the Roman Catholic Church, which teaches that it is the universal (catholic) Church and that the pope is the infallible teacher of the Church and the vicar of Christ on earth.

We believe that the true apostolic Church has endured to this day, and as a visible organization is found in the Evangelical Lutheran Church, so long as this Church, by the grace of God, adheres in every point to the doctrine of Christ and His apostles, and retains the administration of the Sacraments in their integrity.

Sacraments —We believe that the sacrament of Baptism, when administered according to the command of Christ to infants and adults, is a means of grace which efficaciously offers the grace of God and forgiveness of sins.

We believe that in the sacrament of the Lord's Supper the communicants receive in, with, and under the bread and wine the true body and blood of Jesus Christ, and that all believing communicants share in the forgiveness of sins procured by Christ's sacrifice.

The Second Coming of Christ —We believe that Christ will visibly return to the earth on the Last Day to judge the world.

The Resurrection —We believe that on the Last Day the dead will rise, their souls being clothed in the bodies which they possessed in this present life.

The Judgment —On the Last Day Christ will receive into glory His invisible Church, including all who died in the faith, and will pronounce the eternal doom upon all who refused to acknowledge Him as their Redeemer.

Lutheran Church and Modern Issues

1. CHURCH UNION

We deplore the divided state of the Church. The Christian Church is divided because men have forced their own interpretations upon the Bible instead of simply accepting its teachings. The way to union is plain enough. Let the churches reject all teaching not in harmony with the Bible and a union well-pleasing to God has been attained. The Church Union movements of our day proceed from a spirit of indifferentism — "it does not matter what you believe." This attitude not only denies the clearness of the Bible but rejects its authority.

2. EDUCATION

Public schools are an important element in the material well-being of a nation. They must receive our willing support, rendered through taxes and service. State schools however necessarily must be non-religious. We are as citizens opposed to the agitation for religious instruction in the schools maintained by the state. But Christian parents desire more than a purely secular education for their children. Daily instruction in the Word of God and the positive religious emphasis in every feature of school-life, are the most effectual means of training youth unto godliness. To achieve this purpose, our church advocates the establishment of religious day schools with a course of secular studies parallel to that of the public grammar school. So to provide for the training of their children is a constitutional right of American parents. From a system of Chris-

tian day schools, the state receives a citizenship reared unto the highest ideals of civil and social duties.

3. SEPARATION OF CHURCH AND STATE

The constitutional guaranty of separation of church and state is one of our most glorious national possessions. It is also a principle clearly announced in the Lutheran confessions of the sixteenth century. Enlightened citizens must view with concern the attempt of church bodies to override this fundamental law of the land. We are equally opposed to the program of political power traditional with the Roman Catholic Church and to the effort of Protestant bodies to influence legislation. We maintain that the field of the church and the field of the state must be kept separate. The alternative is internal strife and the loss of civil liberties.

4. SOCIAL REFORM

Movements rightly directed for the elimination of social injustice and of entrenched agencies of evil should receive the support of Christian citizens. Corrupt politics, organized or commercial vice in every form, should not be viewed with easy tolerance. Christians, as citizens, have the duty to fight these evils. However, the church as such, her pastors and her official press, have no commission to engage in political activity even if the purposes themselves are commendable. Resolutions of religious bodies dictating to the agencies of government, to the courts, and the police power, are a clear violation of the law of separation of church and state. In advocating social reform, the church must not divert its forces from that exclusively spiritual mission which Lutheranism recognizes and which it earnestly recommends to other evangelical churches.

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