

Motivation

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MOTIVATION

Cain and Abel each brought an offering to the Lord, Cain, the tiller of the soil, brought of the fruit of the ground. Abel, the keeper of the sheep, brought of the firstlings of his flock. Adam and Eve, looking upon their two sons as they offered, may well have been pleased that both served God with the fruit of their labors. But what did God see? “The Lord had respect unto Abel and to his offering: but unto Cain and to his offering he had not respect” (Ge 4:4,5). Both were bringing sacrifices to God, the sacrifice of one was God pleasing, that of the other not. What is the reason? Hebrews 11:4 answers this question, “By faith Abel offered unto God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain.” Abel was a believer, Cain was not. Abel’s offering was motivated by love to God, Cain’s by self-righteousness.

Important is not only what we do, but why we do it. God looks not only upon the outward deed, but upon the motive that caused it to be done. Although the end does not justify the means or motive, neither is an outwardly correct means or action God-pleasing if it is inspired by false motives. We see the importance of proper motivation in our lives as Christians, likewise also in our work as a Church, as a Synod. Certainly it will ever be well for us in all that we do to search our hearts, to examine our motives, to ask the question: What is leading me to do this? What moves me to this action?

The answer to that question is not always easy to discover. Motivation is not simply a matter of the mind, but of the heart. Our conscious mind may give one reason for our action; our heart may, without our realizing it, be moved by many other forces, desires, motives. However, it will surely be well for us ever to be warned against false motivation, to be directed by Scripture to that which is according to the will of God and in a searching and instructive way apply that to our hearts and souls. It is well for us as a Synod ever to examine what we do in the light of proper Scriptural motivation. May God guide us as we do so now, first asking this question: What should motivate a Christian? Secondly: How does that apply to our practical church life? Thirdly: How can proper Christian motivation be attained?

I. What Should Motivate a Christian

Why do people do the things they do? Why did John join the church? Why did Mary run away from home? Why did Fred save a drowning boy? Why did Charles become a criminal? We recognize that there should be, that there is a reason for a person’s actions. How often isn’t the question asked: But why did you do it?

There are many motivating forces that influence people. Hate, love, fear, compassion, envy, love of money, gratitude, distrust, these are but some of the many and complex motives that influence men. What we want to know is what does, what should motivate a Christian. What should motivate us specifically in our church work? What is the proper motivation for mission work, for giving, for the various activities in which the Church is engaged, the work it does, the decisions it makes? What answer does Scripture give us to the question: What should motivate a Christian?

In Ephesians 5:1,2 we read: “Be ye therefore followers of God as dear children; and walk in love, as Christ also hath loved us, and hath given himself for us as an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet-smelling savour.” The Ephesians are called “dear children,” we might better say, “beloved children.” They are the objects of God’s love. As such they ought to be followers of God. The Ephesians know that Christ loved them with such a selfless, amazing love that he offered up himself as a sacrifice to God for their salvation. That is why they also should walk in love. As beloved children, as such whom Christ loves, they will love God, be followers of God, serve Christ.

To the Corinthians, in the 5th chapter of his second letter, Paul writes in verse 14: “For the love of Christ constraineth us.” Christ’s love to us as it is apparent in that he died for all constrains us; that motivates us in everything so that in verse 17 he then says: “Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature.” One commentator (Hoffmann) says in this connection, “*Die Liebe, mit der der Herr mich liebt, ist meine einzige Triebfeder in all meinem Tun. Sie beherrscht mich unbeschränkt, sie reguliert mein ganzes Benehmen gegen die Glieder seiner Gemeinde.*” (The love with which the Lord loves me is the only motive in everything I do. It rules me absolutely, regulates my entire conduct over against the members of his church.)

In chapter 5 of Paul’s letter to the Galatians he admonishes them to “stand fast in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free,” not to be entangled again in salvation by works, which means that they will lose Christ. Then in verse 5 and 6 we read, “For we through the Spirit wait for the hope of righteousness by faith. For in Jesus Christ neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision; but faith which worketh by love.” We are saved, not by works, but by faith which embraces Christ Jesus. That is free salvation. But that faith is a living thing in us, it worketh by love, it has embraced the love of God, it responds by loving God in turn. This will be the motivating force in all we as Christians do.

What is stated in these passages (many more might be adduced) is exemplified in Luke, chapter 7. A Pharisee invited Christ to his house for meat. He did not wash Christ’s feet as he entered, gave him no kiss of welcome, did not anoint his head with oil. While Christ was sitting at meat, a woman in the

city, which was a sinner, came with an alabaster box of ointment, washed his feet with her tears, dried them with her hair, kissed and anointed them. What moved this woman to her action, and what had failed to move the Pharisee? Jesus says: "Her sins, which are many, are forgiven; for she loved much; but to whom little is forgiven, the same loveth little." The great love this sinful woman displayed in her actions toward Christ resulted from the fact that she had experienced great love from Christ. Her sins, which she recognized as many, were forgiven by him. The Pharisee, not confessing, not recognizing his sin, had little forgiven, did not recognize the unusual love of Christ, did not love him in turn. Note the contrast: In the case of the woman — Christ loved and forgave her, she responded with love which resulted in her service to him. In the case of the Pharisee — he did not recognize Christ's love, failed to love him in turn, also failed in serving Christ properly.

The basic motivation for a Christian in everything he does is God's love for him in Christ and the resulting love to God in the Christian heart.

Hand in hand with a Christian's love for God will be found love for God's Word. For the Word is the revelation of God; it reveals God to man in a way he cannot otherwise be known. Particularly is it only through the Word that the love of God in Christ can be known by us. "Search the scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life: and they are they which testify of me," says Christ.

Of a godly man we read in the 1st Psalm: "But his delight is in the law of the Lord; and in his law doth he meditate day and night." Read Psalm 119 and note the delight and joy which the inspired Psalmist found in God's Word. A Christian will cry out with him, "O how love I thy law! It is my meditation all the day.... How sweet are thy words unto my taste! Yea sweeter than honey to the mouth!... Thy testimonies have I taken as an heritage for ever: for they are the rejoicing of my heart.... I hate vain thoughts: but thy law do I love.... Therefore I love thy commandments more than gold; yea above fine gold. Therefore I esteem all thy precepts concerning all things to be right; and I hate every false way." Surely love for the inspired word of God must be an integral part of a Christian's love for God, for he delights in that word which has revealed the perfect, redeeming love of God in Christ to him. We cannot conceive of love of God coupled with indifference toward, disregard for, disobedience to God's Word. St. John writes: "But whoso keepeth his word, in him verily is the love of God perfected" (1Jn 2:5).

Another factor involved in love to God is that whoever is thus motivated will seek to glorify God by what he does. How well known is 1 Corinthians 10:31: "Whether therefore ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God." The Apostle Peter points out that our good works should bring glory to God when he writes (1Pe 2:12): "Whereas they speak against you as evildoers, they may by your good works, which they shall behold, glorify God in the day of visitation." How well our Savior stated it in the Sermon on the mount (Mt 5:16): "Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven." The entire life of Paul exemplified this. His conversation was not to his glory, but of it he wrote (Gal 1:23,24): "But they had heard only, that which persecuted us in times past now preacheth the faith which once he destroyed. And they glorified God in me." Indeed, living or dying, he sought God's glory, as he writes to the Philippians (1:20): "So now also Christ shall be magnified in my body, whether it be by life, or by death." So the love of God which motivates a Christian seeks God's glory, his honor, his praise.

However when considering love of God as a motivating force in our Christian lives, we cannot forget what St. John writes in his first letter (4:20,21): "If any man say, I love God, and hateth his brother, he is a liar: for he that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, how can he love God whom he hath not seen? And this commandment have we from him, That he who loveth God love his brother also." There can be no love for God without love also for man. To say that you love God, the creator, without loving man, God's foremost creature, is to lie.

This love for our fellow human beings is, however, not merely a sentimental love, flowing purely out of our emotions. It is not a blind love, but one based on knowledge. It is love that takes over not only the heart, but also the mind and will. Remember, it is love that is engendered, not only by the object, the person who is loved, man, flows out of love to God.

We love man, recognizing him as a creature, created in the image of God. Of man God said, "Whoso sheddeth man's blood, by man shall his blood be shed: for in the image of God made he man." Man's life is to be held sacred because man, unlike all other creatures, was originally made in God's own image. How shall I love God and yet fail to love man, created after His likeness?

But didn't man lose this image? Didn't he become a servant of Satan, whom we are to hate? Shall we love the servants of Satan? Indeed, what vile creatures we men have become through sin!

However, listen to what John writes about God's attitude toward this vile, sinful mankind (1 Jn 4:9, 10): "In this was manifested the love of God toward us, because that God sent his only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through him. Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins." And then, after pointing out how God loved man, vile, sinful man, so that He spared not His own son, but gave Him up for us all, John continues (4:11): "Beloved, if God so loved us, we ought also to love one another." Indeed, I now see in every one of my fellow human beings one whom God loved, for whom He sacrificed His Son in order to restore in man God's image. How can I hate whom God so loved?

That is why we can be told (Matt. 5:44): “Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despiteful use you, and persecute you.” We see, even in our enemies, such for whom Christ died, such in whom the image of God is to be restored.

So we are motivated by love for man, not by a weak, sentimental love toward someone who has gained our affection, toward whom we are emotionally attracted, but by a love that recognizes man, indeed, the sinner, as the object of God’s selfless love in Christ; we see in every one of our fellow men someone for whose sins Christ paid the price of death.

What then should motivate a Christian? To summarize: A Christian is motivated by the great love God has shown to him, which results in love for His Word, and a desire to glorify God in everything. This love also manifests itself in love for man, whom God redeemed through His Son.

II. How Does This Apply to Our Practical Church Life?

The prime purpose for which the Church exists is to carry on mission work. “Preach the Gospel to every creature” is the great mandate of the Lord. We need not dwell at length on that here; that is a universally accepted fact in our circles.

What motivates us to do mission work and to do it well? Even in this work, which is the most important work we do, which is the reason for our existence as a Church and as Christians, we are often influenced by a complexity of motives, some of which are not what they should be. One danger that certainly confronts the Church at large and the individual mission or congregation is the desire to grow, to become big. Included may be the desire to make an imprint on the world; we want to be noticed by men. We want to make a name for ourselves, as did the people of Babel when they sought to build a tower into heaven. It may also be that we feel that the larger we become, the greater is our financial security. We can become very absorbed in statistics. But what a sad situation when we are more concerned about adding names to a growing list than in gaining souls for eternity.

When the desire for growth becomes a driving influence, the next step is that we want to win the world by making the Gospel, the Word of God, more palatable to the world. We become less positive in our preaching, less definite in our position where it does not please the world. To take a definite position may bring us bad publicity. When we preach sin to the world, we condemn merely certain sins, perhaps drunkenness, adultery, greed and theft, immorality, which also the world recognizes as evil, and fail to tell the world that man is by nature utterly corrupt, that also all of man’s righteousnesses are as filthy rags before God, a truth the world does not like to hear. For the sake of growth we may be ready to compromise our position over against the lodges. Doesn’t the devil tell us that if we didn’t take a position against Scouting, we would grow more easily and quickly? Never dare we change the Gospel, God’s Word, to make it fit the world of men; rather we are to change men through the power of the Gospel to make them fit for heaven.

That does not mean that we do not desire to grow. Scripture tells of the marvelous growth on Pentecost Day and in the early Church. But we desire to grow because we in love desire the salvation of all mankind. Scripture tells us to make disciples, believers, of all nations, not merely church members.

In our mission work we may at times be motivated by rivalry. Also in Scripture we read of that. Paul wrote to the Philippians (1:15,16): “Some indeed preach Christ even of envy and strife; and some also of good will: the one preach Christ of contention, not sincerely, supposing to add affliction to my bonds.” The fact that the Apostle then says, “What then? notwithstanding, every way, whether in pretence, or in truth, Christ is preached; and I therein do rejoice, yea, and will rejoice,” does not mean that he approved of the motivating force in those who preached Christ of contention.

What about this? Isn’t it true that there are times when it seems that we are more concerned about entering a field with all due haste in order to get there before some other church body does, than we are in getting there with haste lest any souls be lost before our arrival? Hasn’t it happened that we were very slow to enter a field until we heard that someone else was also planning to begin work there? What kind of mission zeal is it that hastens when it seems others may take over a good field, when it had delayed while souls purchased with the blood of Christ were dying in unbelief? There still is, something lacking in our mission zeal if we need competition to motivate us to save souls.

Why do we carry on mission work? “The love of Christ constraineth us,” In every person we see, meet, associate with we recognize someone for whose sins Christ in love gave his life. To be mission-minded is not merely in a general way to talk about and give for missions. We are truly mission-minded when every person we look upon is considered by us as another soul that Christ loved unto death. It means that we ask ourselves about that person: I wonder whether he knows Christ? What can I do to find out? What can I do to bring Christ to him? Thus we are moved by the love of God, by true love for our neighbor. Then we are filled with the spirit that moved Christ as he looked upon the multitudes and it is said of him (Matt. 9-36): “But when he saw the multitudes, he was moved with compassion on them, because they fainted, and were scattered abroad, as sheep having no shepherd.”

Another important part of our work and life is giving. Because this is something that involves dollars and cents, it can degenerate into a mere business arrangement with the church or Synod. We then hear the expression “church dues.” There was a time when some congregations simply assessed members a certain amount each year, and the principle of “*alle gleich*,” all alike, was applied. You had to pay your fixed dues to the church as a prerequisite for membership, even as you would if you belonged to the Lion’s Club, a lodge, or the like. In such a system the motivation for giving might be little more than a desire to meet your responsibility in order to retain your membership. Sometimes it

was little more than burial insurance. Such a system certainly often was a hindrance to proper Biblical motivation.

Christ also warns against false motivation in the giving of alms when he says (Matt. 6:1,2): "Take heed that ye do not your alms before men, to be seen of them: otherwise ye have no reward of your Father which is in heaven. Therefore when thou doest thine alms, do not sound a trumpet before thee, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets, that they may have glory of men. Verily I say unto you, They have their reward." The hypocritical Pharisees were motivated by a desire to be seen and honored by men. How wrong it is to make a show of our giving, to display it so that men are certain to notice and acclaim what has been done. That a danger of that kind of motive exists when the names of contributors with the total given are published cannot readily be denied. Sometimes such a report becomes known as the "scandal sheet." Certainly care must be exercised in the use of such reports.

On the other hand, we do recognize that Christ himself pointed out the gift of the widow who with her two mites had given her whole living to the Lord. He does want us as Christians to be good examples to one another. But that should be a result, not the motivating cause in our giving.

In the Pharisee who went up into the Temple to pray we see another false motivation for giving. As he stood and prayed with himself he thanked God for his own goodness, saying among other things (Lk 18:12): "I give tithes of all that I possess." What motivated him was self-glorification. Even if he did not openly display his tithing (we do not know whether he did or not), he yet was pleased with himself for what he did. He was motivated by a desire to pat himself on the back. Giving generously made him think very well of himself. When we are thus motivated, our giving is an act of self-righteousness. Indeed, though we may keep our gifts anonymous, yet if we say within ourselves, How good I have been, our gift will hardly have been a sweet-smelling savour unto the Lord.

The raising of the necessary monies for the church, both local and synodical, poses many problems. Turning our thoughts to our synodical giving, we all are aware that even now, at a time of prosperity and large paychecks, the Synod is having financial difficulty. Certainly this calls for a searching examination of our hearts and methods to find an answer. We must ask ourselves two questions. 1. Are we getting through to our people with the proper motivation? 2. Does our present quota system permit the proper motivation to bring effective results?

Are we getting through to the hearts of our people with the proper motivation? Since the final portion of our paper is devoted to the question of how proper motivation is obtained, we shall not enter in upon this question here. We merely mention it, however, so that we recognize this as one of the questions that we must ask ourselves in examining our present situation.

Our second question is this: Does our present quota system permit the proper motivation to bring effective results? Has the \$10 per communicant been stressed too much, or in a wrong way? Are we stifling giving by arriving at a quota for congregations by a simple across the board average? There can be little doubt that not all congregations are in like financial circumstances. For some such a quota is much too small. And yet the congregations that exceed their quotas, with some notable exceptions, are comparatively few. Indeed, we have heard of congregations that stopped sending monies to Synod when they had reached their quota, even though more was collected and perhaps much more could have been raised. Does not then the quota stifle the fruits of proper motivation? On the other hand, if a congregation is in circumstances that make it impossible to raise the quota, will it not be discouraged and even embittered by a demand for fruits that are beyond it?

We hear the expression "fair share" used of the quotas we set. But is that term not also misleading? Has a congregation that could raise \$2,000 with ease done its "fair share" when it has met its \$1,000 quota? Or has a congregation failed to do its "fair share" if it, in the fear of God, putting forth consecrated effort, raised \$500 of its \$1,000 quota? Can we arrive at a "fair share" by means of a straight per communicant system? Can not such a "fair share" put a damper on the love that should motivate us in our giving, since it does not take into account the Biblical principle to giving according to ability in dealing with congregations as we do when dealing with individuals?

Another question about our present quota system: Does it give too much the impression of an assessment by Synod? We all know that we arrive at our average per communicant by democratic methods, our budget is determined by the votes of our representatives. But in practice, does not a congregation often gain the impression that it had little or nothing to say in setting its quota? "What does Synod ask of us?" is the question. An imposed quota too often looks like an assessment.

In Scripture we read (2 Co 9:7): "Every man according as he purposeth in his heart, so let him give." We follow that in dealing with individuals. But should not the same be true of a congregation that as it purposeth collectively in its heart, so let it give? Will not then the proper motivation, which is a matter of the heart, be better able to do its work?

It hardly lies within the scope of this paper to attempt to present other systems or methods which would more readily lend themselves to use with Christian motivation. Finally, regarding methods, a word of warning is in place. Not the method as such will solve our problem. Other methods will not necessarily assure us that our people will be motivated more deeply. It is what we do with the method or system, how we use it, that counts. While we have the present quota system, let us try to avoid the abuses to which it is subject. Let us not permit it to stifle giving where love would move our people to give more generously. Let it not lead to a wrong conception of our "fair share." If, on the other hand, better methods can be found, methods that are more adapted to Christian motivation, surely they deserve

consideration and study. But in all of it, let this thought never be forgotten that in giving to the church, to Synod, it ever is the “love of Christ that constraineth us.”

In our Lutheran Church we consider the training and education of our children a very important part of our church work. Wherever possible, we will maintain Christian day schools. Where that as yet is not possible, we will surely do our best to train the lambs of Christ’s flock to the best of our ability. But our goal surely must continue to be “full-time Christian training in our own schools.”

But here, too, let us not forget that we are moved to that by God’s love for us, by our love to him and our fellow man. Love for those little ones whom Christ in love also purchased with his holy blood should be the force that drives us to work hard for many and good Christian day schools.

There were times when German still was the predominant language in our church, and when there were ardent attempts to perpetuate it as such, when “congregation schools” (*Gemeindeschulen*) were maintained in order to teach German to the children. These schools sometimes became known as “German schools.” Sometimes if the teaching of German actually had been the prime motive for such a school’s maintenance, then the church and school suffered because of it. It often remained in the minds of the people simply a “German school,” and anyone not interested in teaching his children German wasn’t too much interested in the school. Fortunately, our schools no longer are thus known. How much better is the name “Christian day school.” But this experience does make us realize that to motivate people with a motive that does not stem out of love to God to maintain a “congregation school” may have detrimental repercussions.

Today the motivation that may lead us in a wrong direction is the desire to be able to boast about our school system, about its superiority over the public schools. Too often we think of our schools as being in competition with the public schools, as though we are both trying to do the same thing, only we want to be able to say that we can do it better. When we follow such thinking, the desire for boasting, for outdoing, can become a false motive for doing good work in our schools. Should we be driven to good work simply by the competition that we think a public school is giving us?

We are doing something different in our schools than the public schools are doing; we are doing something they cannot do. We are teaching Christ to immortal souls and making Christianity for those children a way of life, of thinking, of believing. Let us then be motivated by the desire to do something no one else can or does do, and to do that well, exceedingly well, for the “love of Christ constraineth us.” If the result is that our children also receive a better all-round education, if they are farther advanced when they enter high school than are others, that is a good byproduct; we are thankful for it; we are happy when we see the consecrated work of a teacher “pay off “ also in this way, as it really should. But to use that as a motive on the part of the church for maintaining such schools can only be harmful, can only detract from what is the real purpose of our Christian day school system. We are here to save souls, and love will be the motive.

Another duty which the Lord has imposed upon the Church is the exercising of Christian church discipline. Christ told his disciples to remit or retain sins. In Matthew chapter 18 he told us how to deal with those who are guilty of offense. It must not be forgotten that love is to be the motive for church discipline. We should be moved by love to the erring brother, who, if he persists in his sin, is in danger of losing his salvation. That is clear from the fact that Christ in Matthew 18 speaks of “gaining thy brother.” It is not to get rid of him, but to gain him that an erring brother is disciplined. If we bear that in mind, we cannot in a callous manner strike names from a congregation’s membership without having paid our debt of loving admonition to him who is delinquent. We discipline out of love to win the brother back to Christ.

Then also, we should be moved by love for the entire brotherhood, the entire congregation. In the Corinthian congregation was a man who was guilty of base fornication. Paul writes (1 Co 5:1): “And such fornication as is not so much as named among the Gentiles, that one should have his father’s wife.” This appears to have been an open scandal. No action had been taken by the congregation; the man was still considered a brother. Paul warns them: “Know ye not that a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump? Purge out therefore the old lump.” If sin is not dealt with in the congregation, it will act as an evil leaven, harming the whole congregation. So he tells them: “Put away from among yourselves that wicked person.” Love for the brotherhood should move us to deal with sin and offense.

Unfortunately, too often it is looked upon as an act of love when nothing is done at all. Procrastination is interpreted as charity. No, if we in our church discipline are truly motivated by love, then we will not fail to meet our obligations to the sinner and to the congregation as a whole in exercising proper discipline.

One other thought in regard to our motivation in church discipline. We should certainly not be “strict” in exercising discipline so that we can boast “our congregation is clean.” Or to have the satisfaction of being able to say to ourselves: “We don’t have any lodge members.” “We don’t have any Scouts.” Too often, if that is our prime motive in dealing with someone, we shall have failed to show love. We shall have proceeded in a legalistic manner. We can then become more concerned about getting rid of an erring member than in winning him. We must never forget that the Lord has called us to save souls, purchased with his precious blood. “The love of Christ constraineth us.”

Although there are many phases of our church work to which we might apply our study of Christian motivation, we shall let it suffice to consider yet its application to our intersynodical relations, to our thoughts, actions, resolutions in our relations to other synods and church bodies.

What should motivate us in these relations? Certainly, here too the same applies as in everything else we do as Christians: “The love of Christ constraineth us.” We call to mind again all that term implies God’s love for us in Christ, our love in turn to God and Christ, which includes a deep love for God’s Word and a desire to seek his glory. This love expresses itself also in love toward all men, especially also the brotherhood.

In our fellowship relations it is especially love for the Word, for the truth revealed by God that stands out as a motivating force, as a guiding principle. This is apparent when Christ says: “If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed” (Jn 8:31). Does not the same thought underlie Paul’s admonition to the Corinthians (1 Co 1:10): “Now I beseech you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you; but that ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment”? If the Corinthians are truly united in doctrine, in their love to Christ and his word, then divisions will not arise among them, such as had arisen. And surely Romans 16:17,18 makes it abundantly clear that in our fellowship relations we must be guided by a love for the doctrine which we have learned from Scripture; thus we serve the Lord Jesus Christ.

Where the problem arises is that there sometimes seems to be a conflict between love of the Word and love of our fellow men. When we recognize false doctrine, love for the truth of God’s Word tells us that we must denounce it and cannot make common cause with its adherents. But such denunciation of and separation from the persistent adherents of false doctrine appears so loveless. We may feel that it gives the impression of an I-am-better-than-thou spirit. We read in 1 Corinthians 13. “Charity suffereth long and is kind; charity envieth not; charity vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up ... beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things,” and we feel that if we denounce false doctrine, particularly if we finally separate from its adherents, we are failing to show true charity, true love. And yet this same Apostle, when he was confronted with a Peter who erred by not eating with the Gentiles in Antioch, fearing those of the circumcision, “withstood him to the face, because he was to be blamed.” He saw that Peter did not walk uprightly according to the truth of the Gospel and did not consider it uncharitable to denounce that, and to do so publicly, even as Peter had erred publicly. Peter was big enough and humble enough to accept the reproof of Paul. But can we for one moment believe that Paul would have made common cause with Peter, had he still persisted in his error, had he justified his action over against Paul? In 1 Corinthians 13 Paul also includes this statement regarding charity, or love, saying that it “rejoiceth in the truth.” Tolerance of indifference toward false doctrine cannot hide under the cloak of charity.

There is no real conflict here. To love the truth of God’s Word and to denounce any error wherever we may recognize it, that also is true love to our fellow human beings. In any way to strengthen someone in error is not love, neither for him nor the truth.

When we look into church history, when we examine our own hearts, we realize that various motivating forces may influence us in our intersynodical relations, whether they are conscious or subconscious. One of the things that confronted Luther was that his opponents defended the teachings of the Roman Church, whether Scripture taught them or not. They were motivated by a desire to prove that the Church was right. Loyalty to the Church and to the Pope superseded loyalty to Scripture.

There is certainly the danger that we can be motivated, at least subconsciously, by a false loyalty. We may be moved by the thought: The Wisconsin Synod cannot err, or others may say: The Missouri Synod cannot err. There is the danger that we defend our position because it is the position of our Synod. There is the danger that we proceed in this manner: First we ask what the position of our Synod is, and then we look for Scripture proof for the correctness of that position. No, our first question must always be this: “What does Scripture say?” and then we can say: “That is the position of our Synod.” We want no loyalty for Synod to motivate us that will lead us to follow it blindly. But we do desire loyalty for Synod as long as its position is Scriptural. Pray God that it may ever be worthy of such loyalty.

In our intersynodical relations there is also the danger of being motivated by “fear of the consequences” of certain actions. This will hardly be a conscious motive, it will not be stated, but who can deny that it often lurks as a specter on the horizon of our thinking? When we see how Peter was motivated by fear when he thrice denied his Savior, when we see this same Peter in Antioch for fear of those of the circumcision withdrawing from the Gentiles, we surely will not place ourselves beyond the possibility of being motivated by fear, fear of the consequences. What will happen to our Synod if we sever relations with the Missouri Synod? What will that do to my congregation? Will that make my position in the congregation shaky and difficult? Will I lose members? Will it hamper my attempt to gain new members? Will we be hurt financially? There are many fears, many questions that can plague us, that raise doubts within us. But love to God will move us to ask only one: What does God’s Word say? The fear we must have is to fear the consequences of not obeying God’s Word. All other consequences, when we obey his Word, are in God’s hands.

We also realize that to follow Scripture in our fellowship relations is not something popular with the world. There arises the temptation to be motivated by a desire to gain the favor or acclaim of the world; we prefer to hear its commendation rather than its condemnation. We may even think that it will harm our mission work if we do not cultivate the acclaim of the world, if we take a position against unionistic practices. Paul made it clear that the truth of the Gospel must be upheld regardless. And he

spoke plainly (Gal 1:9,10): “As I said before, so say I now again, If any man preach any other gospel unto you than that ye have received, let him be accursed. For do I now persuade men, or God? or do I seek to please men? for if I yet pleased men, I should not be the servant of Christ.” Woe unto us if we ever let a desire to please men, to please the world, or at least to avoid its scorn, motivate us to compromise the truth.

In our relations with other churches the one question that love to our Savior will lead us to ask is this: What does the Lord say? And when we recognize that a given word of our God applies to a certain situation, then our course of action is clear, we must obey, for what Samuel said to Saul about obedience to God’s commands still stands for us today (1 Sa 15:22): “Hath the Lord as great delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices, as in obeying the voice of the Lord? Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams,” The Lord says through the mouth of Isaiah (66:2): “To this man will I look, even to him that is poor and of a contrite spirit, and trembleth at my word.” Indeed, love to God, loving obedience to His holy Word, which must be the motivating force in all our fellowship relations. And that will also be the greatest love we can show to our fellow men.

III. How Can Proper Christian Motivation Be Attained?

What will fill our hearts with such motivating love of God and man? This love is not something we can create within ourselves. It cannot be produced through human effort, through human will power. Nor is it something that is brought about or increased merely by making our worship services outwardly more beautiful, by emphasizing correct form in our worship. In our day we are experiencing a great emphasis on liturgies, and at times the impression is given as though that will bring about a deeper Christianity, a more fervent love that will influence us more completely. Greater emphasis upon liturgies will not in itself accomplish this. Such emphasis often, in fact, leads to this that greater importance is placed upon following the liturgical colors correctly, upon the pastor’s turning to the altar or to the people at the proper time, upon wearing the proper vestments, than is placed upon the doctrine that is preached from the pulpit. Someone may be more disturbed by seeing what he may consider a breach of good liturgical form than he is in hearing what is not sound doctrine. While we want our worship to be decent and orderly, while we shall strive for dignity and beauty in our service, that in itself will not stir the hearts of men to the love of God, a love that will be a living force in their Christian lives. It matters not whether we worship at Jerusalem or on the mountain in Samaria, what does matter is that we worship the Father, as Jesus told the Samaritan woman, “in spirit and in truth” (Jn 4:23).

To worship God thus is accomplished alone through the working of the Holy Spirit by the means of grace. We must bring the means of grace to bear more fully upon our hearts. “We love him because he first loved us,” writes St. John. It is through the means of grace that we learn to know the love of God, that we are moved by faith to apply that love to our own person. If love is to motivate us in our church life more effectively, then our souls must be stirred more deeply by the Holy Ghost through the means of grace. There is nothing new, nothing different by which proper motivation can be attained. It is through the same means that God has ever used, the means of grace.

There is first of all the Word of God. To what extent do our people really hear and study God’s Word? We think we do well if half the souls in a congregation are present on a Sunday morning. What percentage of our people are regular in church attendance? Will those who come only on Christmas and Easter be deeply moved by love to do God’s work? What a discouraging picture the Bible class often presents. If a large congregation has 30, 40, or 50 present, it is considered good. But is it? What of the other 500, or 1000, or more? To what extent is the Bible read among our people? If we could get an accurate answer to this it might be revealing. We must ever ask: Have we brought the Word of God most effectively to our people? Or has a lack of effective presentation, a lack of interest, a spirit of indifference hindered the effectiveness of the Word of God among us? Is the 100 and more years that our Synod has enjoyed the glorious Gospel showing itself in a feeling of satiation, a cooling of love, a failure to appreciate what we have? We all must work toward an ever increasing use of the Word of God on the part of more and more of our people, toward an ever more consecrated and devoted use of the precious means God has given us for strengthening our faith, for increasing our love.

In the use of the Word of God, we must be intent upon rightly dividing it, the Law and the Gospel. We must not expect the Law to accomplish what only the Gospel can do, nor vice versa. The Law in all its severity must be brought to bear upon the hearts of our people, but not as the means to motivate them to live as Christians, to do mission work, to give generously, etc. Its prime function must be to lead us again and again to a knowledge of our wretched condition by nature, which has brought upon us the wrath and condemnation of God. The Gospel, above all, must be preached, preached unconditionally, bringing to bear upon the hearts of the hearers the full glory of God’s grace, mercy, forgiveness, magnifying the blessed Lord Jesus in the hearts of all. He who has felt the sting of the Law, and has then experienced the healing balm of the Gospel, how shall he not be filled with a love that moves him to serve his Lord and Master joyfully, unselfishly, zealously. Whether we are in pew or pulpit, how ardently we must pray God that he would give us faithful pastors who shall preach his Word with power and that all who hear may rightly understand and truly believe it. For that Word is the means by which love, love of God and man, will fill our hearts.

The Sacraments are means of grace. There is Baptism, unfortunately so easily neglected by us as we grow older. Neglected, no, not in this sense that we do not baptize our children and stress their early baptism. But too often neglected in not continuing to apply its salutary purpose and significance to

ourselves throughout our lifetime. Isn't there the danger that we think of Baptism as a one-time thing, something that was once performed and is then relegated to the past as something rarely called to mind? But how we rob ourselves of spiritual blessing if we thus forget about our Baptism. What a power it should be to instill in us a continued love to God and a growing desire to serve him. We read in Galatians (2:26,27): "Ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus. For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ." So the beneficial effects of Baptism continue with us, we put on Christ and continue to have him on; we continue to be the children of God, we who have put on Christ in Baptism. If I am at any time led to doubt my sonship, I can turn back to my Baptism and say to my fearful heart: but you are a baptized child of God and there put on Christ. That holds good today and every day in the sight of God.

Consider also what Luther writes about the significance of Baptism. Luther quotes from the 6th chapter of Romans, "We are buried with Christ by baptism into death; that like as he was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life." On the basis of these words he says of the significance of Baptism: "It signifies that the old Adam in us is to be drowned by daily contrition and repentance, and is to die with all sins and evil lusts; and that again a new man should daily come forth and arise who shall live before God in righteousness and purity forever." Note the word "daily," daily contrition and repentance, daily come forth and arise. Yes, daily we should go back to Baptism for help in overcoming the old Adam, in serving God in holiness of life. Luther concludes his discussion on Baptism in the Large Catechism in part as follows: "Thus it appears what a great, excellent thing Baptism is, which delivers us from the jaws of the devil and makes us God's own, suppresses and takes away sin, and then daily strengthens the new man ... "

"For this reason let every one esteem his Baptism as a daily dress in which he is to walk constantly, that he may ever be found in the faith and its fruits, that he suppress the old man and grow up in the new. For if we should be Christians, we must practice the work whereby we are Christians.... If, therefore, we have once in Baptism obtained forgiveness of sin, it will remain every day, as long as we live." So we must not neglect our Baptism, but continue to go to it for the continued blessings God there bestows upon us.

The Lord's Supper is the other Sacrament. Why does a Christian gladly and frequently partake of the Lord's Supper? The answer the revised Gausewitz Catechism teaches our children to give is this: "Because he penitently recognizes that without Christ he is a lost and condemned creature. Because he knows from the Gospel that Christ died for him and shed his blood for him for the remission of sins. Because he desires ever and again to receive assurance through the sacrament that he has forgiveness and is in the state of grace with God; and to be strengthened in his weak faith." And what will be the fruit of such partaking of the Lord's Supper? Our Catechism answers: "That we love God and our neighbor." Indeed, frequent partaking of the Lord's Supper increases in us that love of God and our neighbor that will be a powerful influence in all we do.

In 1954 the average number of times each communicant in our Synod came to the Lord's table was 2.8 times, a slight increase over the 2.5 times of 1946 and the 2.3 of 1948. But does that indicate that we are using this means of grace gladly and frequently? Don't we find that in our congregations those who are regular and frequent in partaking of the Lord's Supper are also usually regular and generous in giving, in helping to serve wherever that is necessary in the church?

We must then encourage more frequent, more regular use of this means of grace. For should we not be filled with the fruit of love when our Savior in the sacrament says to us: "Here, take my body and my blood which I sacrificed on the cross for you; take, eat and drink, for the remission of your sins." "Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends" (Jn 15:13). At the Lord's Table this greatest love of Christ is impressed upon us directly and personally as we receive His holy body and precious blood. How shall we not be moved to love Him who thus loved us?

Yes, we must encourage without ceasing, regular, frequent, consecrated use of the means of grace. Thus and thus alone will we attain proper Christian motivation. Recognizing that for us everything in our church work centers around, flows out of the Word of our God, we close with the prayer which was written in verse form by Nikolaus Selnecker and appeared in the "*Nürnbergger Gesangbuch*" in the year 1611, the same year in which the Holy Bible was given in English to the world, having been translated under the authorization of King James of England.

1. Lord Jesus Christ, with us abide, For round us falls the eventide;
Nor let Thy Word, that heav'nly light,
For us be ever veiled in night.
2. In these last days of sore distress Grant us, dear Lord, true
steadfastness That pure we keep, till life is spent, Thy holy Word
and Sacrament.
3. Lord Jesus, help, Thy Church uphold, For we are sluggish,
thoughtless, cold. Oh, prosper well Thy Word of grace And spread
its truth in ev'ry place!
4. Oh, keep us in Thy Word we pray;
The guile and rage of Satan stay!
Oh, may Thy mercy never cease!
Give concord, patience, courage, peace.

5. Oh, grant that in Thy holy Word We here may live and die, dear
Lord;
And when our journey endeth here,
Receive us Into glory there. Amen.