

**THE RECESSED CONVENTION**  
**of the**  
**EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN SYNOD**

1960

43rd Regular Convention and the  
4th Annual Meeting of the  
Bethany Lutheran College and  
Seminary Corporation

**HELD AT**  
**Jerico Lutheran Church**  
**The Rev. M. E. Tweit, Pastor**  
**JERICO, IOWA**

# THE RECESSED CONVENTION

The 43rd Regular Convention of the Evangelical Lutheran Synod and the 4th Annual Meeting of the Bethany Lutheran College and Seminary Corporation reconvened by resolution of the June Convention (Synod Report 1960, pages 50 & 51) at Jerico Lutheran Church, Jerico, Iowa, on Tuesday, November 1, 1960. The Rev. M. E. Tweit was host pastor.

Morning devotions were conducted by Pastors S. Dorr, Princeton, Minn., L. Vangen, Eau Claire, Wisconsin, and S. E. Lee, Hawley, Minn., who based their remarks on 1 Corinthians 13.

A warm welcome was extended by the host pastor in the name of the Jerico Lutheran Church, Saude Lutheran Church and Redeemer Lutheran Church, New Hampton, Iowa. 37 Permanent Pastors, 11 Advisory Members, and 64 delegates were present at the Recessed Convention.

The Report of the Floor Committee on Doctrinal Matters was discussed throughout the three day convention. The decision was made by the Synod to continue its membership in the Lutheran Synodical Conference, in view of the recessed convention of the Conference in the spring of 1961. Further consideration of our membership status will be taken up at the Synod's 1961 convention in August.

By rising vote the convention resolved to thank the three congregations for their kind and good hospitality. Adjournment followed.

W. C. GULLIXSON, Secretary

## Roll Call

### A. PERMANENT MEMBERS

Pastors Serving Member Congregations: T. Aaberg, J. Anderson, P. Anderson, R. Branstad, H. Bremer, M. Dale, S. Dorr, G. Guldberg, G. Gullixson, W. Gullixson, H. Handberg, N. Harstad, S. Holt, S. Lee, J. Madson, N. Madson, Jr., P. Madson, A. Merseth, J. Moldstad, R. Moldstad, R. Newgard, N. Oesleby, G. Orvick, J. Petersen, P. Petersen, H. Preus, A. Schulz, G. Schweikert, T. Teigen, H. Theiste, V. Theiste, M. Tweit, E. Unseth, L. Vangen, F. Weyland, P. Ylvisaker.

### B. PERMANENT ADVISORY MEMBERS (Not eligible to vote.)

Pastors Serving Non-Member Congregations or Groups: A. Harstad, K. Olmanson, W. Petersen, R. Ude.

Pastor Emeritus: N. Madson, Sr.

Professors: N. Holte, I. Johnson, G. Lillegard, M. Otto, G. Reichwald, B. Teigen, Pres.

## Excused for Full-Time Absence From the Convention

Pastors: A. Strand, H. Larson, G. Weseloh.

Professors: R. Honsey, C. U. Faye.

## Guest of the Convention Invited to Speak

Prof. Herbert Bouman, Concordia Theological Seminary, St. Louis, Mo., representing the Praesidium and the Doctrinal Committee of the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod.

## 1960 Representatives Present Eligible to Vote

PASTOR	ADDRESS	CONGREGATION	DELEGATE
T. Aaberg	Scarville, Ia.	Scarville	1. Nels D. Faugstad
	Scarville, Ia.	Center	2. Clarence Dale, Alt. 3. Elmer Branstad 4. Maynard Maakestad
J. Anderson	Story City, Ia. Chicago, Ill.	Bethany St. Paul's	5. Paul Staff, Alt. 6. Einar Engebretson
P. Anderson Vacant	Rochester, N. Y. Lake Mills, Ia.	Indian Landing Lake Mills	7. Layton N. Northrup 8. Carl Willert, Alt. 9. L. J. Cunningham, Alt.
R. Branstad	Lake Mills, Ia. Minneapolis, Minn.	Lime Creek Fairview	10. S. Fermstad 11. Norman Theiste
H. Bremer M. Dale S. Dorr	Ellsworth, Minn. Holton, Michigan Princeton, Minn.	Bethlehem Holton Our Savior's	12. Alfred Abrahamson 13. Arthur Wold, Alt. Excused
G. Guldberg	Princeton, Minn. Bagley, Minn.	Bethany Concordia Our Savior's	14. Henry Hougan 15. Oscar Jacobson 16. Palmer Dehli 17. Claus Sorum 18. Carl Gilbertson 19. Norman A. Madson Sr. 20. Prof. Milton Otto
G. Gullixson W. Gullixson	Bagley, Minn. Cottage Grove, Wis. Waterville, Ia.	W. Koshkonong E. Paint Creek	
	Waukon, Ia.	W. Paint Creek	
H. Handberg	Mankato, Minn.	Mt. Olive	
N. Harstad	Belview, Minn. Belview, Minn. Delhi, Minn.	Our Savior's Rock Dell First	
N. Hilton	Sutton's Bay, Mich. Elk Rapids, Mich.	First Grace	
J. Jungemann H. Larson S. Lee	Volga, S. D. Oklee, Minn. Hawley, Minn.	Oslo Clearwater Our Savior's	
J. Madson	Audubon, Minn. Mayville, N. D.	Immanuel First American	21. Erling Vinje 22. Earl Aasen
N. Madson, Jr.	Sheyenne, N. D. Fosston, Minn. Trail, Minn.	Holy Cross Cross Lake Mt. Olive	
P. Madson	Forest City, Ia. Thompson, Iowa	Forest City Zion	23. Nick Lund
A. Merseth	Ulen, Minn.	First So. Wild Rice	24. Ben Pollack 25. Calvin Fevig 26. Helmer Hanson 27. Luther Younge 28. La Vern Hiller 29. Erik Furholmen 30. Russel Harmon 31. F. G. Torgerson 32. Odis Holstad, Alt. 33. Albin Levorson, Alt. 34. Nels E. Anderson, Alt. 35. Orlando E. Overn
J. Moldstad	Fertile, Minn. Thornton, Ia.	First Evangeler Richland	
R. Moldstad R. Newgard	Lombard, Ill. Northwood, Ia.	St. Timothy First Shell Rock	
	Northwood, Ia.	Somber	
N. Oeslehy	Madison, Wis.	Our Saviour's	
Vacancy G. Orvick	Eau Claire, Wis. Madison, Wis.	Ascension Holy Cross	36. Howard Hougan 37. Dwelton E. Peterson, Alt. 38. Owen Swenson 39. Erling Hoiland 40. Robert Erickson 41. Thomas Bieber
J. Petersen P. Petersen	St. Peter, Minn. Luverne, Minn.	Norseland Bethany	
	Jasper, Minn. Boston, Mass. Calmar, Ia. Tracy, Minn.	Trefoldighed Boston Trinity Zion	Excused 42. John F. Werner 43. Stanley Gordon 44. Roger Sorenson 45. Gunder Sorenson 46. Henry Ziebarth 47. William Overn
G. Schweikert	E. Grand Forks, Minn.	River Heights	
A. Strand T. Teigen H. Theiste V. Theiste M. Tweit	Chicago, Ill. Minneapolis, Minn. Tacoma, Wash. Sioux Falls, S.D. New Hampton, Ia.	St. Mark's Hiawatha Parkland Bethel Jerico	Excused 43. Jeff A. Knutson 49. Lloyd Roberson

	Lawler, Ia.	Saude	50. Oscar Natvig
E. Unseth	Albert Lea, Minn.	Our Savior's	51. Fred Steensland
L. Vangen	Eau Claire, Wis.	Concordia	52. Alfred Pieper
G. Weseloh	Cottonwood, Minn.	English	53. Rudolph Quill
F. Weyland	Minneapolis, Minn.	Emmaus	54. Claude Bergum
P. Ylvisaker	Manchester, Minn.	Manchester	
	Hartland, Minn.	Hartland	55. George Floyd, Alt.
D. Lillegard, Vic.	New Hampton, Ia.	Redeemer	56. Edwin J. Lebeck
S. Holt	Tacoma, Wash.	Lakewood	57. Oscar Knudson
Vacant	Amherst Jct., Wis.	Our Savior's	58. Martin Hendrickson
			59. Arthur Newgard, Alt.
			60. Clevert Roberson
			61. John Weers
			62. William Heidbreder
			63. Jonas Roe
			64. Lenwick Hoyord, Alt.

### 1960 Recessed Convention Committees

3. *Credentials*: Pastors: H. A. Preus, R. A. Moldstad; Delegates: A. Pieper, N. A. Madson, Sr., Nels Anderson
4. *Program*: Pastors: H. Handberg, R. Ude; Delegates: Ed Lebeck.
6. *Doctrinal*: Pastors: G. A. R. Gullixson, A. Harstad, J. Moldstad, W. Petersen, Prof. I. Johnson. Delegates: S. Fermstad, Erling Vinje, Owen Swenson, Robert Erickson, Rudolph Quill, Wm. Heidbreder, Layton Northrup.
11. *Publications*: Pastors: E. Unseth, G. Schweikert; Delegates: Nick Lund, John F. Werner.
15. *Miscellaneous Matters*: Pastors: J. B. Madson, N. Oesleby; Delegates: Lenwick Hoyord, Jonas Roe.
18. *Synodical Membership Committee*: Pastors: M. O. Dale, P. Ylvisaker, T. N. Teigen, P. Petersen (J. Petersen); Delegates: Gunder Sorenson, Oscar Natvig, Claude Bergum, Thomas Bieber.
19. *Tellers*: Pastors: S. Holt, V. Theiste.
20. *Chaplain*: Pastor R. Branstad.
21. *Head Usher*: Pastor G. Guldberg.

## A REPORT OF THE SYNODICAL CONFERENCE CONVENTION, AUGUST 2-5, 1960

Delegates of the ELS to the Synodical Conference Convention met in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, August 2-5, 1960. A brief report of this convention appeared in the September 8th issue of the **Lutheran Sentinel**. Members of the ELS are referred to this article. In addition, the following report is herewith submitted by the delegates: Pastors J. Moldstad, P. Petersen, and S. E. Lee, and Messers. N. Holte, L. Northrup, and Wm. Overn:

### RE: ENLARGING SYNODICAL CONFERENCE

The Convention resolved to explore the possibilities of enlarging the Synodical Conference to include into its membership such bodies as agree with the constituent synods of the Synodical Conference in doctrine and practice. (This includes those represented at the Conclave.) Our Synod is asked to express itself on this proposal at the 1962 meeting of the SC.

### FOREIGN MISSIONS

The Missionary Board was encouraged to explore the possibilities of beginning work among the Mohammedans in the northern area of Nigeria.

A total of \$95,000 was appropriated for the establishment of a mission at Tema, West Africa and two missions at Accra, the capital of Ghana.

A \$55,000 appropriation was voted for a chapel at Obot Idim, Nigeria. All monies contributed by congregations of the SC over and above the actual and stated need for establishing this chapel is to be designated for the hospital and its program at Eket, Nigeria.

**STATEMENTS ON FELLOWSHIP**  
**EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN SYNOD**  
on  
**Church Fellowship**

Church fellowship is the outward expression of an inner unity of faith. Churches which have affiliated with each other are therefore called a communion. Their oneness of faith is publicly manifested by what is called pulpit-altar- and prayer fellowship.

“Church fellowship is predicated not only on the fellowship of **faith**, but also on the fellowship of **confession**. The personal faith of an individual cannot be established absolutely, and therefore fellowship is established where the confession is in agreement with Scripture and the practice conforms with clearly revealed principles.” (P. E. Kretzmann, “The Doctrine of the Church”)

“The purpose of Christian fellowship is the mutual strengthening in faith, the preservation and promotion of the unity of faith, and the joint extension of God’s kingdom throughout the world.” (Abiding Word, II, 531)

I. The Scriptural Principles Governing Church Fellowship

1. All Christians enjoy a spiritual unity with each other by virtue of their believing in the one Savior from sin. Gal. 3, 26-28; Eph. 2, 19; John 10, 16.
2. In obedience to the Scriptures, Christians will also seek to establish and maintain outward unity, or fellowship, with all those (Christians) who are one with them in the confession of the one true faith. Eph. 4,3; I Cor. 1,10; I Pet. 2,17; Phil. 2,29.
3. When individual groups of Christians, or synods, have through their public utterances (which includes not only their official pronouncements, but also what is taught in their pulpits and expounded in their publications) given evidence of an existing unity of spirit with each other, it remains merely to establish that fact and to make some public recognition of the same. Rom. 16, 1; 15, 7.
4. Truth-loving Christians will also seek to promote this unity of spirit, and upon its completion, establish church fellowship with those who have been in error but who desire to be taught the way of God more perfectly. Acts 18, 26; I Cor. 1, 10.
5. Conversely, Christians who wish to adhere to the truth will likewise avoid maintaining or establishing church fellowship with such as through their utterances have shown themselves to be in error and who give no indication of wanting to forsake it.
  - a. Obedience to God’s Word demands this. I Tim. 6, 3-5. (Cf passages under Antithesis, paragraph 2)
  - b. Not to act thus would make them guilty of unionism, Rom. 16, 17; and furthermore make them partakers of other men’s sins. I Tim. 5, 22.
  - c. Cf. Furthermore: **Luther**: St. L. XVII, 1180: “Whoever regards his doctrine, faith and confession as true, right, and certain cannot remain in the same stall with such as teach or adhere to false doctrine.”

**Abiding Word**, II, 509f on avoiding “error and fellowship with errorists”

Pieper, **Dogmatics** I, 569 on I Tim. 5, 22.

6. While Christians are at all times to be ready to testify to the hope that is in them, I Pet. 3, 15, they are not to do so in such a way as would conflict with God’s express command to mark and avoid persistent errorists. Rom. 16, 17f; Tit. 3, 10; I Tim. 6, 3-5.
7. The same Scripture which forbids establishing pulpit and altar fellowship with those who persist in teaching another doctrine also forbids any prayer fellowship with the same; since such fellowship would assume the existence of a unity which does not exist in fact. Acts 2, 42; Matt. 18, 19.

## ANTITHESIS

1. We reject **separatism**, that is, "a division in the church which God's Word does not enjoin, but which is begun by men for carnal reasons and therefore is sinful, e.g., a separation because of differences in church customs, church terms, order of worship, etc.," Pieper III, 427; I Cor. 1, 10; Eph. 4, 3.

2. We reject **unionism**, that is religious fellowship with those who are not brethren in faith. Unionism is practiced not only when an orthodox church enters into a union with a heterodox one, but also when such bodies or their representatives meet in joint worship (pulpit-altar-prayer fellowship) and/or engage in joint religious work, as well as when a church body tolerates false doctrine in its midst. Unionism violates two distinct commands of God:

- a. To keep His Word pure and unadulterated, Jer. 23, 28; Gal. 1, 6-9; Eph. 4, 14; I Tim. 1, 3; 2 Tim. 4, 1-5; Tit. 1, 9-13; I John 4, 1; John 8, 31f; II Thess. 2, 15; II Tim. 3, 14-16; Jude 3.
- b. To reject and oppose false doctrine, Matt. 7, 15; 16, 6; Rom. 16, 17; I Tim. 6, 3-5; Tit. 3, 10; II John 10, 11.

The essence of unionism is indifferentism and leads to doctrinal uncertainty and a denial of the truth. The one who practices unionism is not only guilty of compromising his faith, which in itself is reprehensible, he not only violates God's command to uphold the pure doctrine and to reject the false, but he also "commits intellectual and moral harikari." (Cf. Engelder's Notes on Unionism)

3. We reject the concept that Joint Prayer can be separated from Church Fellowship. We can "join in prayer and worship only with those who are united with us by a common faith and profession." (Conc. Cycl. p. 600; Matt. 18, 19; Acts 2, 42.)

## WISCONSIN SYNOD

on

### Church Fellowship

(This is the presentation of our Wisconsin Synod Union Committee, discussed by the Joint Union Committees of the Synodical Conference.)

Church fellowship is every joint expression, manifestation, and demonstration of the common faith in which Christians on the basis of their confession find themselves to be united with one another.

A. How Scripture leads us to this concept of church fellowship.

1. Through faith in Christ the Holy Spirit unites us with our God and Savior. Gal. 3:26; 4:6; I John 3:1.
2. This Spirit-wrought faith at the same time unites us in an intimate bond with all other believers. I John 1:3; Eph. 4:4-6; John 17:20, 21. Compare also the many striking metaphors emphasizing the unity of the Church, e.g., the body of Christ, the temple of God.
3. Faith as spiritual life invariably expresses itself in activity which is spiritual in nature, yet outwardly manifest, e.g., in the use of the means of grace, in prayer, in praise and worship, in appreciative use of the "gifts" of the Lord to the Church, in Christian testimony, in furthering the cause of the Gospel, in deeds of Christian love. John 8:47; Gal. 4:6; Eph. 4:11-14; Acts 4:20; II Cor. 4:13; I Pet. 2:9; Gal. 2:9; 5:6.
4. It is God the Holy Ghost who leads us to express and manifest in activity the faith which He works and sustains in our hearts through the Gospel. Gal. 4:6; John 15:26, 27; John 7:38, 39; Acts 1:8; Eph. 2:10.
5. Through the bond of faith in which He unites us with all Christians the Holy Spirit also leads us to express and manifest our faith jointly with fellow Christians according to opportunity: as smaller and larger groups, Acts 1:14, 15; 2:41-47; Gal. 2:9; as congregations with other congregations, Acts 15; I Thess. 4:9, 10; II Cor. 8:1, 2; 18, 19; II Cor. 9:2, (Before God every activity

of our faith is at the same time fellowship activity in the communion of saints. I Cor. 12; Eph. 4:1-16; Rom. 12: 1-8; II Tim. 2:19.)

6. We may classify these joint expressions of faith in various ways according to the particular realm of activity in which they occur, e.g., pulpit fellowship, altar fellowship, prayer fellowship, fellowship in worship, fellowship in church work, in missions, in Christian education, in Christian charity. Yet insofar as they are joint expressions of faith they are all essentially one and the same thing, and are all properly covered by a common designation, namely, church fellowship. Church fellowship should therefore be treated as a unit concept, covering every joint expression, manifestation, and demonstration of a common faith. Hence Scripture can give the general admonition "avoid them" when church fellowship is to cease, Rom. 16:17. Hence Scripture sees an expression of church fellowship also in giving the right hand of fellowship, Gal. 2:9, and in greeting one another with the fraternal kiss, Rom. 16:16; on the other hand, it points out that a withholding of church fellowship may also be indicated by not extending a fraternal welcome to errorists and by not bidding them Godspeed, II John 10, 11. Cf. III John 5-8.

B. What principles Scripture teaches for the exercise of such church fellowship.

1. In selecting specific individuals or groups for a joint expression of faith, we can do this only on the basis of their confession. It would be presumptuous on our part to attempt to recognize Christians on the basis of the personal faith in their hearts. II Tim. 2:19; Rom. 10:10; I John 4:1-3; I Sam. 16:7.
2. A Christian confession of faith is in principle always a confession to the entire Word of God. The denial, adulteration, or suppression of any word of God does not stem from faith but from unbelief. John 8:31; Matt. 5:19; I Pet. 4:11; Jer. 23:28, 31; Deut. 4:2; Rev. 22:18, 19. We recognize and acknowledge as Christian brethren those who profess faith in Christ as their Savior and with this profession embrace and accept His entire Word. Compare Walther's "Theses on Open Questions," Thesis 7: "No man has the privilege, and to no man may the privilege be granted, to believe and to teach otherwise than God has revealed in His Word, no matter whether it pertains to primary or secondary fundamental articles of faith, to fundamental or nonfundamental doctrines, to matters of faith or of practice, to historical items or other matters subject to the light of reason, to important or seemingly unimportant matters."
3. Actually, however, the faith of Christians and its manifestations are marked by many imperfections, either in the grasp and understanding of Scriptural truths, or in the matter of turning these truths to full account in their lives. We are all weak in one way or another. Phil. 3:12; Eph. 4:14; Eph. 3:16-18; I Thess. 5:14; Heb. 5:12; I Pet. 2:2. Compare Walther's Thesis 5: "The Church militant must indeed aim at and strive for absolute unity of faith and doctrine, but it never will attain a higher degree of unity than a fundamental one." Cf. Thesis 10.
4. Weakness of faith is in itself not a reason for terminating church fellowship, but rather an inducement for practicing it vigorously to help one another in overcoming our individual weaknesses. In precept and example Scripture abounds with exhortations to pay our full debt of love toward the weak.
  - a. General exhortations. Gal. 6:1-3; Eph. 4:1-16; Matt. 18: 15-17.
  - b. Weakness in laying hold of God's promises in a firm trust. Matt. 6:25-34.
  - c. Weakness with reference to adiaphora in enjoying fully the liberty wherewith Christ has made us free. Rom. 14; I Cor.

8 and 9. The public confession of any church must establish, however, which things are adiaphora so that it may be evident who are the weak and who are the strong. Rom. 14: 17-23; I Cor. 6:12; 10: 23, 24.

- d. Weakness in understanding God's truth, and involvement in error. Acts 1:6; Galatians (Judaizing error); Colossians (Jewish Gnostic error); I Cor. 15; I Thess. 4:10-12, 14; II Thess. 3:6, 14, 15; Acts 15: 5, 6, 22, 25. Note how in all these cases Paul patiently built up the weak faith of these Christians with the Gospel to give them strength to overcome the error that had affected them.  
Compare Walther's Theses 2, 3, 4, and 8.
5. Persistent adherence to false doctrine and practice calls for termination of church fellowship.
  - a. We cannot continue to recognize and treat anyone as a Christian brother who in spite of all brotherly admonition impenitently clings to a sin. His and our own spiritual welfare calls for termination of church fellowship. Matt. 18:17; I Cor. 5: 1-6 (Excommunication.)
  - b. We can no longer recognize and treat as Christian brethren those who in spite of patient admonition persistently adhere to an error in doctrine or practice, demand recognition for their error, and make propaganda for it. Gal. 1:8, 9; 5:9; Matt. 7: 15-19; 16:6; II Tim. 2: 17-19; II John 9-11; Rom. 16: 17, 18. If the error does not overthrow the foundation of saving faith, the termination of fellowship is not to be construed as an excommunication. Moreover an excommunication can only apply to an individual, not to a congregation or larger church group. The "avoid them" of Rom. 16: 17, 18 excludes any contact that would be an acknowledgment and manifestation of church fellowship; it calls for a cessation of every further joint expression of faith. Cf. I Cor. 5:9-11. Compare Walther's Theses 9 and 10.
  - c. Those who practice church fellowship with persistent errorists are partakers of their evil deeds. II John 11.

From all this we see that in the matter of the outward expression of Christian fellowship, the exercise of church fellowship, particularly two Christian principles need to direct us, the great debt of love which the Lord would have us pay to the weak brother, and His clear injunction (also flowing out of love) to avoid those who adhere to false doctrine and practice and all who make themselves partakers of their evil deeds. Conscientious recognition of both principles will lead to an evangelical practice also in facing many difficult situations that confront us, situations which properly lie in the field of casuistry.

On the basis of the foregoing, we find it to be an untenable position

- A. To distinguish between joint prayer which is acknowledged to be an expression of church fellowship and an occasional joint prayer which purports to be something short of church fellowship;
- B. To designate certain nonfundamental doctrines as not being divisive of church fellowship in their very nature,
- C. To envision fellowship relations (in a congregation, in a church body, in a church federation, in a church agency, in a cooperative church activity) like so many steps of a ladder, each requiring a gradually increasing or decreasing measure of unity in doctrine and practice.

## **SYNOD OF EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCHES (SLOVAK SYNOD)**

### **on Church Fellowship**

Church fellowship may be defined as an outward and visible expression of the inner conviction that a oneness exists between those



comprising and exercising this fellowship. It is a public demonstration and confession that we are bound together by common interests which flow from a common faith in the Triune God, and in Jesus Christ as the only Savior of mankind.

Though it presupposes and demands a unity of faith in doctrine and practice and a submission to the judgment of Scripture in all matters, it does not mean nor demand a conformity in externals, no matter how desirable this would be. Mere outward conformity to externals is no assurance of fellowship, and neither is a lack of such conformity to be construed as a denial of fellowship. However, there can be no fellowship with such as teach or tolerate error, since truth and error cannot coexist. One destroys the other.

It is evident from Scripture that true fellowship can exist and be practiced only between such as possess a unity of faith rooted in Scripture and who continue in the practical application of that faith in all phases of Christian living. The acceptance of a common faith must then be evidenced by a demonstration of obedience to the Word of God in life and practice. A toleration of error would be disruptive of this fellowship and eventually destroys it.

John 8: 31-32; I Cor. 1:10b; I Cor. 12: 4-11; Ps. 133:1; I Cor. 12: 14-31; Ephesians 4:3, 15; II Cor. 13:8; Acts 4:32; Acts 11: 22-24; Acts 15; Phil. 1:27b; Gal. 2:9; I John 1: 6,7.

## **THE LUTHERAN CHURCH-MISSOURI SYNOD**

### **on The Theology of Church Fellowship**

#### **PREAMBLE**

Fellowship, both between the believer and his God, and between the believer and his fellow believer, looms large in the Holy Scripture in both Testaments. This aspect of the teaching of Scripture, always of cardinal importance for the church and for the individual Christian, has assumed particular urgency and relevance in the 20th century through the ecumenical movement. The fellowship question is of special importance for the Lutheran Church because of its avowedly confessional character and its sadly divided state.

Because many Christians also in The Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod are experiencing difficulties in the interpretation and application of the Biblical teaching concerning fellowship, Synod has asked that the faculties of the two seminaries restudy this question and report to the Praesidium by the summer of 1958 in order that members of the Synod might be able to study the report well in advance of the synodical convention of 1959. The committee appointed by the presidents of the two seminaries consists of Martin Franzmann, Fred Kramer, Erwin Lueker, and Lorman Petersen.

The committee decided to approach its task by a prayerful restudy of the Scriptures in order to gain as complete a picture as possible of the Biblical teaching concerning fellowship, and of the practice of fellowship particularly in the apostolic church. This study led to the selection and classification of more than 300 passages which have a bearing on the fellowship question, with a closer scrutiny of those passages which appeared particularly relevant.

Fellowship as set forth in Scripture has a depth which is not recognized in ordinary dictionary definitions of "fellowship," such as "mutual association of persons on equal and friendly terms." The Biblical concept of fellowship centers in the Triune God and emphasizes the fact that spiritual fellowship consists fundamentally in communion with God. From this communion with God there is derived that unique Christian fellowship among men which expresses itself in all areas of their life and activity.

Pulpit and altar fellowship is a very important aspect or facet of this fellowship but cannot be simply equated with it. Pulpit and altar fellowship, and the related problems of prayer fellowship

and unionism, can be properly understood and evaluated only within the larger framework of Christian fellowship generally.

We believe, therefore, that we can best fulfill the intent of the St. Paul resolution requesting a restudy of the question of "fellowship, prayer, fellowship, and unionism" (1956 Proceedings, p. 550) by presenting to our church a Biblically based Theology of Fellowship.

NOTE: This study addresses itself to the strictly religious fellowship described in the first sentence. Other forms of fellowship (e.g., brotherhood of man) are introduced only insofar as they have a bearing on this theme.

## I. GOD CREATED THE FELLOWSHIP

### A. GOD CREATED MAN FOR FELLOWSHIP

#### 1. With God

God created man for fellowship with Himself (Gen. 1:26a). He made man in His own image (Gen. 1:27), and Himself breathed the breath of life into his nostrils (Gen. 2:7). He blessed man with the power of procreation (Gen. 1:28a) and entrusted to him a share in the government of the creature world (Gen. 1:28b). Thus He made man, as it were, a partaker both in creation and government, yet under God and responsible to Him (Gen. 2: 16-17). This was a personal fellowship and involved communication with the Creator. (Gen. 1:29)

#### 2. With Man

God, Who created man for fellowship with Himself, also created man for fellowship with his fellow man (Gen. 2:18, 20b). When God created Eve, Adam at once recognized her as a creature designed for fellowship with himself (Gen. 2:23). By this creative act God not only ordained the fellowship of husband and wife (Gen. 2:24) but also laid the basis for the larger fellowship of the whole human family (Mal. 2:10a; Acts 17:26a).

### B. MAN DESTROYS THE FELLOWSHIP

#### 1. The Fall into Sin

##### a. With God

The fellowship for which God had created our first parents, and into which He had placed them, and in which He sought to preserve them by hedging them around about with a commandment (Gen. 2:16-17), Adam and Eve themselves broke when they yielded to the temptation of Satan and transgressed God's command (Gen. 3:1,6). That man had destroyed his fellowship with God through sin became evident from the fact that he fled from God and attempted to hide from Him (Gen. 3:8) and that God drove him from the garden (Gen. 3:22-24).

##### b. With Man

The fall into sin also destroyed the fellowship of man with his fellow man (Gen. 3:12; 4:5, 8, 9).

#### 2. Fallen Man Continually Negates the Fellowship

Man has continued to negate this fellowship with God and man for which he was created (Gal. 5:19-21). God continues to reveal Himself to fallen man through His works, but man's response to this revelation is a continually renewed revolt and a continual breaking of the divinely willed fellowship between God and man (Rom. 1:18-32).

Similarly, God's revealed Law, which clearly demonstrates God's will that man should live in communion with Him and with his fellow men (Matt. 22: 37-40) provokes enmity and rebellion (Rom. 8:7), which in turn leads to separation instead of fellowship (Is. 59: 2; 64: 6-7).

### C. GOD HAS RESTORED THE FELLOWSHIP IN CHRIST

#### 1. As Promised Under the Old Covenant

As God established fellowship in the beginning, so He also took

the initiative in restoring it after the Fall. When man hid himself from the presence of God, it was the Lord God Himself who sought man (Gen. 3: 8,9) and called man to account (Gen. 3: 16-19), and gave man the first promise of redemption (Gen. 3:15).

The Old Testament is the record of the continuing fellowship-initiative of God. God, in choosing Abraham and the nation descended from him for a life in covenant relationship with Himself, wrote large in history His will to have communion with men (Gen. 12: 2-3; 17:7).

This covenant is the order established by God in which man is privileged to live under the promise of God and is at the same time called upon to live under His Law. The Law calls man to that communion which God willed as the normal structure of creation and judges him for his failure to live in that structure according to the divine will. The promise points man beyond divine judgment to the redemptive act of God which is to restore Israel and all men to the unbroken communion with God and with one another according to His gracious will (Jer. 31: 31-34; Ezek. 34: 22-25; 34: 30-31; 37: 26; 2 Sam. 7: 12-17; Is. 9:2; 11: 1, 4, 6, 12; 54: 10. Cp. Is., chapters 42 and 49).

## **2. As Fulfilled in the New Covenant**

The new covenant of fellowship between God and man which God promised in the Old Testament (Jer. 31:31), He established in the sending of His Son Jesus Christ into the world. The purpose of God in the Incarnation was not only to redeem man but also to bring man into fellowship with Himself (Gal. 4: 4-5; 1 Cor. 1:9). The Word, the Eternal Son of God, was made flesh, and thus God Himself tented among us (John 1:14).

In the words of institution of the Lord's Supper, Christ interprets His whole mission as the establishment of the promised covenant (Matt. 26:28; 1 Cor. 11:25). By His sacrificial atoning death and victorious resurrection Christ consummated and fulfilled the old covenant, making good that which the perpetual failure of man had destroyed (Jer. 31:32). Our Lord has thus designated His life, death, and resurrection as that great reconciling act of God which Paul describes in his Epistle to the Corinthians (2 Cor. 5:19).

## **II. GOD IN CREATING FAITH BESTOWS THE BLESSING OF FELLOWSHIP**

### **A. FELLOWSHIP WITH GOD IN CHRIST**

When Christ had completed His work upon the cross and had reconciled all mankind to God, He committed to His church the Word of reconciliation (2 Cor. 5:19), with the command that they should preach it to all the world (Acts 1:8; Luke 24: 46-48; cp. Acts 2: 4-12). Through this Word men are summoned to faith, and faith is created in them (1 Peter 1: 23-25; Rom. 10:17; Rom. 1: 16-17; James 1:18).

The call to faith is simultaneously the call into fellowship (1 Cor. 1:9). In the Gospel God effectively calls man into fellowship; in Baptism God initiates man into fellowship (Gal. 3: 26-29); in the Lord's Supper God strengthens and confirms man in the fellowship into which He Himself has called and placed him (1 Cor. 10: 16-17). This fellowship, created and sustained by the Holy Spirit, makes the Christian a partaker in Christ, a child of God, and therefore also an heir of God in time and in eternity (Rom. 8: 16-17; Gal. 3: 26-29; Rom. 10: 9-13).

### **B. FELLOWSHIP WITH ALL BELIEVERS IN CHRIST**

Those who have fellowship with God through faith in Christ are also in fellowship with one another (1 John 1:3). As faith makes all men children of God, so it also makes them all brethren in Christ (Gal. 3: 26-27). This fellowship transcends every barrier created by God or set up by man and brings about the highest unity possible

among men, the unity in Christ Jesus (Gal. 3:28). This transcending of all barriers is beautifully described in Eph. 2: 11-22.

### **III. IN BESTOWING THIS FELLOWSHIP GOD CLAIMS FOR IT THE WHOLE LIFE OF MAN**

#### **A. IN THE EXERCISING OF THIS FELLOWSHIP**

The life of the Apostolic Church is a striking exemplification of the fact that God is claiming the whole life of man for fellowship when He bestows the gift of fellowship with Himself in His Son Jesus Christ. Hardly had the day of Pentecost fully passed and the church been founded, when a very active exercise of fellowship developed within the congregation. Of the church, in the period immediately after Pentecost, we read, "And they continued stedfastly in the . . . fellowship." As Acts further indicates, this exercise of fellowship, like the fellowship itself, is always mediated by Christ as He is present and active in the apostolic Word and in the sacraments (Acts 2:42; 6:2, 4; 8:14; 9: 10-19; 15: 36; 20: 7-12).

Thus the exercise of fellowship consists in an activity dominated by the Word, an activity involving the total personality. For example, the men of the first church act with and for one another in worship (Acts 2:42); in prayer and intercession (Acts 4:24-31; 12:5; 1:12-14); in rebuke and correction (Acts 15:5-6, 22-29; Gal. 2: 11-14; 1 Cor. 5:1-5; 2 Cor. 2:5-11); in instruction (Acts 2:42; 5:41-42; 18: 24-26); in social intercourse (Acts 2:46); in removing unfounded suspicions (Acts 9:26-27); and in an economic aid which comprehends with a ready and active sympathy the needy brethren both at home and abroad (Acts 4:32, 34-37; 6:1-6; 11:27-30). This activity is faith acting through love (Gal. 5:6).

#### **B. IN EXTENDING THIS FELLOWSHIP**

Believers exercising their fellowship with God and with one another, and growing strong therein, labor to extend the fellowship. This they do in accord with Christ's great missionary command (Matt. 28:19; Acts 1:8) and from a powerful inner urge to share the blessings of Christian fellowship with the world, that world for which fellowship has been purchased and intended by God (Acts 4:20; 1 Cor. 9:19-23; 2 Cor. 4:13-15; 2 Cor. 5:14-21; 1 John 1:1-7).

#### **C. IN GUARDING THIS FELLOWSHIP**

A Christian's fellowship with God in Christ as well as his fellowship with other Christians is an exceedingly great and precious possession. (1 John 3:13-14; Eph. 4:1-6). For this reason Satan constantly strives to disrupt this fellowship by every means at his disposal. Therefore it is necessary for the church to safeguard this fellowship in every way.

This the church does—

1. By remaining steadfastly under the power of the Gospel in Word and Sacrament (Acts 2:42; Rom. 6:3-5; Gal. 3:26-28; 1 Cor. 12:13; 1 Cor. 10:16-17; 1 Cor. 11:26), since Christian fellowship can be nourished and sustained only by the Gospel, which created it (John 8:31-32; Matt. 28:19-20; Acts 20:20; Acts 20:27-28; Luke 11: 27-28; John 15: 7-9; 1 John 2:24-25; Col. 3: 14-16).

2. By applying the corrective measures of the Law and the healing powers of the Gospel to errors in teaching and preaching (Titus 1:9; 1:13-14; 1 Tim. 1:3-4; 1 Cor. 1:10-11; 3:3-4; Eph. 4:1-6; Col. 3: 14-16; 2 Thess. 3:14-15), to corruption of morals (Matt. 18:15; Luke 17:3-4; Gal. 6:1-2; 2 Tim. 4:1-3), and to schismatic and separatistic tendencies (Titus 3:10; 1 Cor. 1:10-11; 1 Cor. 3:3-4); which impede Christian fellowship. (Cp. Acts 15: 1-29; also the manner in which St. Paul deals with erring Christians in his epistles. For the importance of correcting error see James 5:19-20.)

3. By resolutely confronting, exposing, and excluding all that threatens to vitiate and destroy the fellowship (Matt. 7:15-16; 16: 11-12; Gal. 5:9; 1:6-9; Acts 19:8-10; 2 John 9-11; Rom. 16:16-20; 1 Tim. 1:19-20; 1 Cor. 5:3-6; Matt. 18:15-18), whether it be a satanic

intrusion from outside the church or a satanic perversion from within (John 8:44; 2 Cor. 2:8-11; 2 Cor. 11:2-4; 1 Tim. 4:1-2; Matt. 24:24). (Cp. 2 Peter 2:1-10; 2 Tim. 3:1-9; 1 John 2:18-19; Eph. 5:6-11; Matt. 12:25, 30-32; Jude 17-23; 2 Pet. 3:1-3; 17-18; 1 Cor. 15:32-34; 1 Tim. 6:3-5.)

“NOW THE GOD OF PATIENCE AND CONSOLATION GRANT YOU TO BE LIKE-MINDED ONE TOWARD ANOTHER, ACCORDING TO CHRIST JESUS, THAT YE MAY WITH ONE MIND AND ONE MOUTH GLORIFY GOD, EVEN THE FATHER OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST.” (Rom. 15:5-6)

Part II — Revised, on Fellowship. This was presented for the first time at the E.L.S. recessed convention Nov. 1, 1960.

## PART II

### PRINCIPLES GOVERNING THE EXERCISE OF FELLOWSHIP

In **The Theology of Fellowship** the basic biblical teaching concerning the Christian's fellowship with God and with his fellow Christians was set forth. It was shown that the Christian by faith in Christ has been restored to the fellowship with God which he had forfeited by sin. It was further shown that, by being restored to fellowship with God, he is also brought into fellowship with all those who like him have by faith become children of God. It was further shown that, in bestowing this fellowship, God claims for it the whole life of man, and that consequently Christians exercise this fellowship with one another, not only in joint worship, but in every other way prompted by Christian love; that they seek to extend this fellowship through the preaching and teaching of the Gospel to those who do not yet know it; and that they seek to guard this fellowship by 1) remaining steadfastly under the power of the Gospel in Word and Sacrament; 2) applying the corrective measures of the Law and the healing powers of the Gospel to errors in preaching and teaching; and 3) resolutely confronting, exposing, and excluding all that threatens to vitiate and destroy the fellowship.

In making decisions concerning the exercise of fellowship the confessional church is constantly confronted by serious problems. The following section addresses itself to one of the most vexing of these problems, to the question, namely: When must the church in obedience to her Lord refuse to practice fellowship?

The passages quoted in Part I. to show the need for refusing to practice fellowship with certain people under certain circumstances are particularly the following: Matt. 7: 15-16; Gal. 1: 6-9; Acts 19: 8-10; II John 9-11; Rom. 16: 17-18; I Tim. 1: 19-20; I Cor. 5: 3-6; Matt. 18, 15-18; Titus 3: 10.

These passages were written, as was all Scripture, “for our learning,” Rom. 15:4, and they can give us sure guidance in the area of exercising fellowship, particularly with respect to refusing, under circumstances, to practice fellowship with certain individuals or groups. However, great care must be exercised in using these passages, lest we use them in a manner not intended by God, and harm the church instead of building it.

A. First, we should note that some of these passages were written against known individuals and for well-defined cases, while others are more general in scope.

#### 1. Passages Against Known Individuals or for Well-defined Cases

Gal. 1: 6-9 was written against Judaizers, who perverted the faith of Christians by teaching “another Gospel,” different in kind from the pure Christian Gospel. Acts 19: 8-10 shows how Paul in Ephesus separated the disciples from stubborn unbelievers who spoke evil of the Way before the congregation. II John 9-11 forbids fellowship with such as do not abide “in the doctrine of Christ,” and do not, when as teachers they come to the houses of Christians, “bring

this doctrine." In the light of the context (v. 7) it would be going beyond the intent of the passage either to reduce "this doctrine" to something less than the full Gospel, or to equate it with a fully elaborated systematic exposition of theology. 1 Tim. 1: 19-20 shows that Paul excluded from the fellowship Hymenaeus and Alexander, who had blasphemed, and by rejecting conscience, had made shipwreck of their faith. In I Cor. 5: 3-6 the same Apostle commands the Christians in Corinth to exclude from the practice of fellowship a man who had married his father's wife.

## 2. Passages of a More General Nature.

Of a more general nature are the following passages, which likewise forbid Christians to practice fellowship with certain people. In Matt. 7: 15-16 Jesus admonishes His followers to beware of false prophets. False prophets, according to the biblical picture both in the Old and in the New Testament, are men who falsely claim to be prophets, that is, inspired spokesmen for God. Scripture brands them as deceivers, as "wolves in sheep's clothing," who claim to prophesy, to cast out demons, and to do many wonderful works in Christ's name, Matt. 7: 22; Matt. 24: 24. This passage must not be applied mechanically to erring Christians but should be reserved for those who fit the description and therefore merit condemnation.

With respect to Rom. 16: 17-18 it is not possible to say with certainty whether or not the Apostle had trouble-makers in mind of whom he knew that they were already present in the church in Rome. The warning appears to be general, to mark and avoid those who "make (RSV create) divisions and offenses contrary to the doctrine which ye have been taught." It should be noted that Paul commands the church to mark and avoid the makers of divisions and offenses, not their **victims**. The following should be noted also: Doctrine, as Paul uses the word, is, to be sure, a comprehensive term, and indicates the whole saving Gospel, as it shapes the faith and life, creed, and confession of the believer. It involves the Law, and ultimately includes the whole counsel of God, but it cannot be simply equated with any formal system of Christian doctrine, or with any individual unit in such a system.

The words of our Lord, Matt. 18: 15-18, are a constant reminder that the intent of the church is always to seek, win, and restore the erring. Only when her efforts to win and restore have clearly failed does the church face, and dare not evade, the holy necessity of excluding and avoiding the stubborn errorist. It is to such a situation that Paul speaks in Titus 3: 10. He bids Titus reject, that is, to have nothing to do with, a man "that is an heretic," a man who creates factions (cf. RSV: "a man who is factious"). Such a man is not merely in error; he is persisting in error, is **making propaganda** for error, and is thus **creating a faction** in the church. He will not receive admonition, but persists in his perversion. He stands condemned by his own actions, and the church must therefore condemn him. He is of the same kind as the makers of divisions and offenses of Rom. 16: 17-18, and must like these be avoided. It should be obvious that Titus 3:10 cannot be applied flatly and without qualification to all members of Christian denominations who live by the Gospel, but cannot readily rid themselves of erroneous views to which long tradition has habituated them.

While the church today must seek to live, as it must seek to live in every age, in obedience to the Apostolic Word, it cannot simply revive or reproduce the conditions of Apostolic times. The Apostolic indicatives and imperatives concerning the church cannot be automatically transferred to present-day confessional-organizational groupings. Rather, their intent must be faithfully understood and brought to bear on the altered and complex contemporary situation.

The situation today is the result of centuries of historical development. Even in the days of the Apostles the church was firmly planted on three continents. The churches within a certain geo-

graphical region were drawn closely together, while widely separated churches maintained contact by means of personal messages and letters, Rom. 16: 1-21.

As the church spread farther and farther the regional churches developed their own individuality and organization. The time came when the church was divided by distance and differences in language. These divisions were not in themselves harmful. Harmful divisions came when Satan sowed the seed of doctrinal discord. Sometimes the breaches could be healed; sometimes they grew wider, and schisms and divisions occurred. In time major divisions developed in the church, the Eastern, the far Eastern, and the Western, together with a number of minor groups. At the time of the Reformation the Lutheran Church and the Reformed Church came into being. Both the Lutheran and the Reformed Church in time suffered schisms along national and doctrinal lines, though formally all Lutheran churches are pledged to the same Scripture and the same confession.

In part these divisions are due to historical developments, complicated by human pride and error; in part they have also been due to the activity of propagandists for error and makers of divisions. By God's grace, however, the Gospel is preached in these divided groups, and the Holy Spirit draws men into fellowship with God through faith in the Gospel. The children of God in all these bodies are brethren in Christ in spite of the denominational and synodical lines which divide them. Now while all believers in whatever churches are truly brethren and in fellowship with one another, the presence and toleration of error endanger the fellowship itself and impede its exercise.

The church must therefore ask itself how the passages which command Christians to separate themselves from and avoid false teachers and makers of divisions are to be applied to the contemporary situation. When the church today is confronted by men who are like these described in the passages under discussion, then the passages with their imperatives to mark and to avoid, and their condemnation of wolves in sheep's clothing, and men who "serve, not the Lord Jesus Christ, but their own belly," must be applied in their full force. They must not, however, be applied mechanically to **fellow Christians** in a confessional-organizational fellowship other than one's own. It would be incongruous if a Christian who has the misfortune of being in a body afflicted with some doctrinal error would now have to be branded a wolf in sheep's clothing or a belly servant, when in fact he is a beloved child of God.

Recognizing the fact, therefore, that the passages which command separation were written for situations which cannot simply be identified with those which we face today, we must beware of applying them mechanically and indiscriminately, and seek rather to abstract from them the timeless principles underlying them, and then operate in the area of the exercise of Christian fellowship according to the basic principles.

It is necessary, in this connection, to arrive at a viewpoint from which a correct and realistic view of confessional-organizational forms of fellowship is possible. On the one hand, these forms grow out of legitimate needs of the church. Therefore they should not be depreciated as man-made, artificial, and arbitrary, but should be appreciated as in themselves good and God-pleasing. On the other hand they should not be treated as absolute, that is, as defining with divinely ordained and final authority the limits within which Christian fellowship may be exercised, and beyond which it dare not go.

B. Two dangers beset the church in the area of the practice of fellowship today. The one is **separatism**, that is, the tendency to set up barriers to the exercise of fellowship where the Word of God sets none. The other is **unionism**, the tendency to ignore and over-

leap real barriers to the exercise of fellowship, barriers set up by the Word of God.

### 1. Separatism

The Lord of the Church died in order that He might bring into being a pure church (Eph. 5: 25-27). This imposes upon the church the obligation to be pure (I Cor. 5: 7). The church fulfills this obligation when she proclaims the Gospel purely and lives a life of continued repentance in obedience to the Gospel. Separatists seek to achieve a pure church by another way.

They treat their own confessional-organizational form as absolute. By setting up false standards for fellowship (either doctrinal or moral or both) and by rigorously excluding all who do not conform to these standards, they conscientiously seek to create a **pure** church. The danger and the temptation is that they create a caricature of the pure church. Their church tends to become so "pure" that it can no longer forgive until seventy times seven. This "pure" church has no room and no help for the weak in its own midst, nor can it exercise an effective ministry to the weak and erring outside its own organizational limits, because it shrinks from those contacts which would give an opportunity for such ministry. The end and aim of its discipline becomes exclusion rather than that gaining of the brother which our Lord intended, Matt. 18: 15. Moreover, such a "pure" church is in danger of impoverishing itself by refusing to benefit by the spiritual gifts which the Lord of the whole church has bestowed on men in other confessional-organizational groups.

### 2. Unionism

While separatists usually seek to create a **pure** church, unionists usually seek to create a **strong** church. Since they mistakenly see the divisions in the church as a cause rather than as a result of the church's weakness, they ignore or at least minimize the genuine differences in confession which gave rise to the various confessional-organizational forms. By ignoring the necessity of facing confessional differences in the practice of fellowship, unionists either overtly deny some truths of God's Word, or treat them as unimportant. This is the essential harm of unionism.

The "strong" church thus called into being tends to become incapable of an effective ministry of edification, because the impulse and power for edification has been impeded at its source, in the Word itself. It has weakened its capacity for a clear and effective witness to the world, because it has compromised that witness at the outset. It is incapable of testifying consistently against error, because it has compromised with error. Therefore it can no longer issue a serious call to repentance nor exercise a salutary discipline.

### 3. Separatism, Unionism: The Church's Criterion

Christians are beset by the twin dangers of unionism and separatism. They must, therefore, in wise sobriety remain aware of the limitations of every confessional-organizational form of fellowship. They must never forget the basic fact that the church of God is more than, and greater than, any and every organizational manifestation of it. Above all, they must have and use a basis for judgment which will enable them, in given concrete cases, to determine the point at which continuation of confessional fellowship becomes sinful unionism, and separation becomes a sacred obligation. The words of St. Paul in Gal. 2: 14 provide such a criterion: "They walked not uprightly according to the truth of the Gospel." This criterion is profoundly critical, and is helpful and useful in practice:

- a) It cannot be applied mechanically (and therefore legalistically), as the sequel in the Epistle to the Galatians shows. The sequel is not separation forthwith, but vigorous, unsparing rebuke in the interest of the preservation of fellowship. Gal, 2; 11-21,



So Paul dealt with the Galatians who had been misled by false teachers, Gal. 3: 1-5; 4: 12-20; 6: 11-18.

- b) While this criterion is as comprehensive as it is incisive, it does not set up a quantitative basis for the exercise of fellowship; it avoids the danger of substituting mere knowledge of doctrine for a living faith which manifests itself in a manner of life worthy of the Gospel of Christ, Phil. 1: 27.
- c) This criterion does not admit of a false, unbiblical cleavage between doctrine and practice. **Doctrine**, in the light of this word of St. Paul's (Gal. 2:14) is seen as the New Testament Gospel in its transforming effect upon the whole life of man, and **practice** is seen as the life of man transformed and brought into harmony with the Gospel.
- d) This criterion counteracts the fleshly tendency both of separatism and of unionism to construct a church according to the desires of men's hearts, "pure" or "strong", as the case may be, by keeping before men the New Testament view of the functioning, repenting church, which is able to bear with and help the weak and at the same time has the inner strength to confront and exclude the persistent errorist.

The distinction between the weak, erring brother, who must be forgiven until seventy times seven, and the persistent errorist, who must for the sake of the church and for his own sake be excluded, will not be easy; there will always be cases where conscientious brethren may differ. But if this criterion is conscientiously and prayerfully employed, the differences will be such that they can be borne.

### III.

#### APPLICATION OF THE PRINCIPLES FOR THE EXERCISE OF FELLOWSHIP

The area upon which we are now entering is one in which mature Christian judgment, enlightened by the Holy Spirit through the Word, plays a large role. It is not the only such area. All Christians make countless good and God-pleasing decisions in such matters as church organization and administration, fraternal admonition and advice, ceremony, liturgy, and worship, methods of evangelization, and missionary strategy, without benefit of a Scripture passage which prescribes precisely and in detail for each case. But the area under discussion is a particularly sensitive one, an area in which consciences react in various ways.

##### 1. Application to Joint Prayer Between Christians Not United in Confessional-Organizational Fellowship.

Confessional-organizational forms of fellowship are means rather than an end in themselves. Christian fellowship is in its very nature not static but dynamic, out-reaching, self-extending, in principle as universal as the Lordship of Christ. Therefore the matter of joint prayer between Christians not in the same confessional-organizational fellowship cannot be determined by a flat universal rule. It would be a dangerous oversimplification to say that any one of the manifestations of fellowship, such as joint prayer, always necessarily presupposes and involves every other manifestation, such as pulpit and altar fellowship. The New Testament itself is more complex. Paul in writing to the Thessalonians clearly distinguishes between various manifestations of fellowship. He expressly forbids one very important manifestation of fellowship, that of social concourse, and just as expressly commands the continuation of fraternal fellowship and its exercise in fraternal admonition, II Thess. 3: 6-15.

A decision as to the propriety or impropriety of joint prayer in a given situation cannot be reached by the application of a flat universal rule. The criterion of walking uprightly according to the truth of the Gospel must be applied in each case; hence each case

must be evaluated as it arises. This evaluation must consider the **situation** in which such prayer is offered, the **character** of the prayer itself, its **purpose**, and its **probable effect** on those who unite in the prayer.

The **situation** in which joint prayer is to be offered must be carefully evaluated. There are two questions which should be asked in regard to each situation:

- 1) Is this a situation in which Christian prayer is appropriate?
- 2) Are the people involved such as can offer prayer in the Christian sense, that is, can they pray in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ?

If the answer to both questions is "yes", then there is no objection to joint prayer on this score.

The **character** of the prayer offered is of great importance. Every genuinely Christian prayer offered in consciousness of its living context incorporates a confession and a witness to Christ; it need therefore be no more unionistic in itself than any other form of witness.

The **purpose** of joint prayer also needs to be considered. A prayer which seeks to conceal or to smooth over real differences does not edify the body of Christ, and is indefensible. A prayer which flows from the desire to build up the body of Christ and is an expression of that desire is a part of the hazard of love for which we need not tremble before the judgment seat of Christ.

The **probable effect** of such joint prayer must also be considered. Every conscientious Christian must be aware of the fact that his whole life, not only his explicit spoken confession, is a witness for or against his Lord. He will therefore deal carefully and in holy awe with the precious privilege of prayer and will not misuse, cheapen, or degrade prayer by using it for ends which are not his Lord's.

In evaluating the effect of joint prayer the following questions should be asked:

- 1) Must we assume that Christians outside our own confessional-organizational fellowship will interpret joint prayer as evidence either that full confessional agreement is being assumed where it does not exist, or that existing doctrinal differences are a matter of indifference?
- 2) On the other hand, may we pre-suppose that other Christians will understand every refusal of joint prayer as merely witnessing to the fact that doctrinal agreement and full confessional fellowship do not exist? Must we not face the fact that such a refusal may in fact be understood as a harsh rebuff, where no rebuff is called for, as a calling into question of the faith of one who (whatever his weaknesses) does call Jesus Lord and believes that God has raised Him from the dead? Must we not weigh the possibility that the refusal of joint prayer may prove an insuperable barrier to what we as a confessional-organizational group are seeking to attain, namely, the full confession in word and deed to the whole Lord Jesus Christ? May we not, by too facile and too simple a rule concerning joint prayer, make the names "confessional" and "orthodox" names which connote lovelessness?
- 3) Does joint prayer by those not in complete confessional agreement necessarily lead to "praying against each other?" Where Christians meet in meekness, with their Lord's Word concerning the mote and the beam living in their hearts, joint prayer can be a genuine reaching through Christ toward one another. In such a joint prayer both petitioners together penitently invoke the grace of Almighty God upon their efforts to remove all impediments to the full exercise of fellowship. In doctrinal discussions such joint prayer would seem to have its natural place. Such discussions ought not to be intellectual debates.

They are the dialogue of faith under the authority of the Word of God and in the power of the Spirit working in that Word. We should be wary of excluding prayer in principle from such and similar meetings of Christians, whether formal or informal, individual or corporate. It is one thing to refuse joint prayer to heretics and persistent errorists; it is quite another thing to refuse joint prayer to those who are seeking with us to restore the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.

## 2. Application to Prayer on Civic Occasions

Public prayer at civic functions is justifiable as the public witness of the church's intercession for all sorts and conditions of men and of the Christians' readiness to participate in every work that promotes the weal of mankind. Such prayer, must, of course, be an uncompromised witness of the hope that is in us.

Our national habit of utilizing prayer as a sort of ecclesiastical garnish to all manner of secular dishes ought to make the church circumspect in this form of witness. This kind of prayer dare not degenerate into a false witness to God by suppressing the cardinal fact that access to God is by Jesus Christ and by Him alone. To portray God, in prayer, as a good-natured old father accessible to all on any terms is to belie the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ who gave His Son into death in order that we might come to Him as dear children to a dear Father. In general, the admonitions to weigh the purpose and effect of one's public prayers have special relevance in this area.

The way in which consciences react to these situations will have to be respected. It is therefore of critical importance that brethren who enjoy the blessing of confessional-organizational fellowship in an orthodox body should remain in constant and candid communication with one another, should admonish and strengthen one another, and should perpetually intercede for one another. Thus there will be maintained a sympathetic understanding of one another's problems in this area. Then the differences in judgment which may be expected to arise will occasion, not a friction which irritates and drives asunder, but a fruitful tension which will serve to draw brethren closer together.

The Committee:

Martin Franzmann

Erwin Lueker

Lorman Petersen, Sec.

Fred Kramer, Chairman

October 28, 1960.

## A COMMUNICATION TO THE SYNODICAL CONFERENCE FROM THE COMMISSION ON DOCTRINAL MATTERS OF

### THE WISCONSIN EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN SYNOD

Since January, 1958, we, the Wisconsin Synod Commission on Doctrinal Matters, have been presenting our testimony on Church Fellowship in the meetings of the Joint Committees on Doctrinal Unity on the basis of the attached presentation. (See page 5) in the January, 1960, meeting of the Joint Committees, The Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod presented its **Theology of Fellowship, Part I**. This was supplemented in May 1960 by a further document entitled, **Confessional-Organizational Forms, Separatism, Unionism, Joint Prayer**. In this supplementary presentation of the Missouri Synod committee it is held that ordinarily Christians unite to exercise, extend, and guard the fellowship which the grace of God has bestowed upon them, on the basis of a confession which expresses a common, total submission of faith to the whole revealed counsel of God. It is, however, contended that we also have a responsibility and an obligation to express the "growing edge" of fellowship in a limited way

toward those who are outside our confessional-organizational grouping. Hence, in reaching out to those not yet in confessional fellowship with us there is the possibility of the beginning of the practice of fellowship.

The Missouri Synod Committee maintains that when we have the practical opportunity to witness before those not in confessional fellowship with us we cannot simply in principle exclude joint prayer, but that the propriety or impropriety of joint prayer must in each case be decided on the basis of a conscientious evaluation of the **situation** and of the **character, purpose, and effect** of that joint prayer. It is also contended that the justifiability of public prayer at civic functions must be determined on the same basis.

This viewpoint was tested in the May 1960 meeting of the Joint Committees on Doctrinal Unity at the hand of a number of specific cases. The items discussed were: The Conference of Lutheran Professors of Theology (June 7-9, 1960), the Intersynodical Committee on Parish Education meetings (also held annually), and those of its subcommittee, the Intersynodical Catechism Committee (February 18-19, 1960). All of these are conferences between Missouri Synod leaders and leaders of other Lutheran church bodies with whom they are not in doctrinal unity and hence not in confessional fellowship. Our Wisconsin Synod men have also been repeatedly invited to participate in these conferences. The meetings mentioned are in each case held within the framework of conference devotions.

According to the Scriptural principles of fellowship as we hold them such joint devotions with people with whom confessional fellowship has not been established are ruled out as unionistic. Thus for us proper discipline means asking those within our confessional fellowship not to participate in these expressions of fellowship.

In contrast, the Missouri Synod representatives hold that such joint devotions cannot simply be ruled out in principle. Hence for them an earnest concern for discipline merely means carefully evaluating each of these interconfessional conferences and gaining the assurance from the men participating that their approval of such devotions is justifiable on the basis of the **situation** (a fruitful opportunity to bear witness to Scriptural truth) and on the basis of the **character, purpose, and effect** of these joint devotions.

The discussion at the May meeting therefore revealed that these instances of Missouri Synod practice and the official evaluation of them are in full harmony with the viewpoint on fellowship set forth in the presentation of the Missouri Synod committee.

We as a committee believe that our full admonitory testimony on the Scriptural support of our convictions and on our adverse evaluation of the Missouri Synod viewpoint has been given and that the differences have not been resolved. In this sense we have declared to the Joint Committees on Doctrinal Unity that we have reached an impasse, and we are now reporting this to the Synodical Conference convention. Our communication to the Joint Union Committees reads as follows:

St. Louis, Missouri, May 19, 1960

To: The Joint Committees on  
Doctrinal Unity—Synodical Conference

Our Synod in its convention of 1959 instructed our Commission on Doctrinal matters "to continue and accelerate the discussions in the Joint Union Committees to bring about complete unity of doctrine and practice in the Synodical Conference . . . to give primary consideration in their discussions to the area of fellowship . . . to continue its efforts in the Joint Union Committees until agreement on doctrine and practice has been reached, or until an impasse is reached and no such agreement can be brought about." (Wisconsin Synod Proceedings, 1959, page 195.)

Our Commission on Doctrinal Matters must regretfully express the conviction that in our efforts to resolve our differences with respect to the Scriptural principles of church fellowship—differences which we hold to be divisive—an impasse has been reached. Pursuant to the instructions given to our Commission, we shall need to report this to the constituents of our Synod. We feel that this our conviction ought also be brought to the attention of the Synodical Conference Convention.

Commission on Doctrinal Matters  
Wisconsin Ev. Lutheran Synod  
Carl Lawrenz, Chairman  
Oscar Siegler, Secretary

We sincerely regret that the earnest wrestling with the problem on the part of the Thiensville Conference of Theologians has not resolved the impasse. Therefore we plead with all of our brethren at the Synodical Conference Convention to give this matter their prayerful consideration by evaluating this sad situation in the light of God's Word.

THE COMMISSION ON DOCTRINAL MATTERS  
August 2, 1960

**REVISED—OVERTURE OF THE FOREIGN DELEGATES AT  
THE THEOLOGICAL CONFERENCE AT THIENSVILLE,  
WISCONSIN**

We, the overseas delegates of the independent churches at the Conclave Theologicum, respectfully submit to the Doctrinal Committees of the synods of the Synodical Conference and to all others concerned the following plan for a solution of the present difficulties:

- a. Whereas the four presentations of the Doctrinal Committees of the synods of the Synodical Conference on fellowship are very valuable in exploring the factual and scriptural ground, they yet present considerable difficulties for a synthesization; and
- b. Whereas the matters of fellowship (*koινωνia*) and of joint prayer seem less crucial than the Doctrine of the Church (*ekklesia*) and CA VII; and
- c. Whereas the impact of the ecumenical movement demands more attention to the relationship of the **Una Sancta** to the confessional principle than the four documents seem to show; and
- d. Whereas for the necessary understanding of the **Una Sancta** itself, basic questions call for consideration, e.g.
  - (a) Whether the point of departure should be an individual believer or the given **Una Sancta** and whether this "given" involves not only all believers as joined to Christ, (Gal. 3, 26-28) but also the whole body of revealed truth as taught by Christ, (I Tim. 3:15; Gal. 4:26) and
  - (b) Whether the church of CA VII refers to the **Una Sancta** as distinguished from the visible church or churches or as operative in them; and
- e. Whereas further study is necessary for a solution and whereas further study might be helped by the cooperation of men, who represent churches whose lot is critically involved in the outcome, with the committee members who have hitherto worked together,

Therefore we, the overseas delegates to this conference, beg leave to suggest

1. That the four committees be augmented by an overseas committee and together with them constitute a joint committee, which will be representative of our world-wide communion and which may appoint a smaller, representative joint committee to meet together as and whenever necessary; and
2. That the four presentations be referred to this enlarged committee as material to be studied and supplemented by definite

- contributions from the overseas committee and by whatever further material is deemed necessary, and that all these be taken into account as soon as possible; and
3. That the Synodical Conference be petitioned to provide the means to carry out this undertaking; and
  4. That this joint committee present the results at an early date to the officials of the Synodical Conference and of its constituent synods for consideration; and
  5. That this Conclave Theologicum be recessed until summoned again by the officers of the Synodical Conference; and
  6. That we request all our churches to pray for God's blessings upon these endeavours.

## II

WHEREAS, it is important that individual members of the Synodical Conference become familiar with the matters at issue; and

WHEREAS, this is possible only if the pertinent documents are made available and are carefully examined; therefore be it

RESOLVED, that we respectfully request the presidents of the four constituent synods of the Synodical Conference to make copies of the statements on fellowship prepared by the doctrinal committees of the four synods available for distribution to all pastors, teachers, and presidents of congregations within their synods; and be it further

RESOLVED, that we urge all pastors of the Synodical Conference, together with their members to give these documents careful study.

### **RE: UNPRINTED MEMORIAL FROM THE EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN SYNOD**

(An unprinted Memorial from the Evangelical Lutheran Synod (1960 Synod Report, page 41, paragraph 2, to the top of page 43) was submitted on the floor of the Synodical Conference Convention by your delegates. The following report regarding our memorial was not discussed for lack of time, but will be taken up after Easter, 1961, as well as the Memorial following it.)

The floor committee on doctrinal matters has given serious and prayerful consideration to the controversy which has arisen within the Synodical Conference on the doctrines of the Church, Church and Prayer Fellowship, and on Joint Prayer.

The committee wishes to state at the outset that it has approached the consideration of this memorial in full awareness of, and concern for, the troubled hearts and minds of many brethren in the Synodical Conference, especially in the Evangelical Lutheran Synod, and in this spirit offers the following resolutions.

(1) WHEREAS, the four doctrinal committees of the constituent synods of the Synodical Conference have drafted statements in the matter of Church Fellowship, both theological and practical, and while these committees found areas of agreement, they also found areas of divergence; and

(2) WHEREAS, the areas of divergence have caused the Evangelical Lutheran Synod to present a memorial to this Convention, entitled "Unprinted Memorial from the Evangelical Lutheran Synod", wherein it outlines specific areas of divergence, and requests a study of its memorial by this Convention and an answer to it; and

(3) WHEREAS, the differences have been acknowledged at the Conclave of Theologians held at Thiensville, Wisconsin, July 20 to 30, 1960, and at its recessed meeting held at this session of the Synodical Conference; and

(4) WHEREAS, the memorial requests a judgment which cannot simply be given in "yes" or "no" answers; and

(5) WHEREAS, the urgency of action is recognized because the recessed convention of the Evangelical Lutheran Synod will reconvene in November, 1960, to consider the answer of the Synodical Conference to its memorial; and

(6) WHEREAS, a review of the Memorial and especially the condi-

tions set forth in the Preamble constituting the first three "whereases" indicate that the information cannot be judged easily; and (7) WHEREAS, if judgment is made, it can only be made on the basis of a conditional affirmative or negative answer or an affirmative or negative answer with expressed exceptions and explanations, and

(8) WHEREAS, the first "whereas" in the unprinted memorial states that the "Doctrinal Committee of the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod is condoning prayer fellowship in instances clearly disallowed by even her own clearly expressed principles", while the Doctrinal Committee of the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod contends it is not condoning prayer fellowship, but acting in good faith on its interpretation of the Word of God in this respect, and

(9) WHEREAS, in the second "whereas" in the unprinted memorial the statements made go beyond the instructions given by the 1954 and 1956 conventions of the Synodical Conference as recorded in the proceedings, and

(10) WHEREAS, the third "whereas" in the unprinted memorial refers to an agreement by the doctrinal unity committees of the four synodical bodies, which was found to have been suggested, but on which no action has been recorded in the minutes of the Joint Committees on Doctrinal Unity, and

(11) WHEREAS, information given the floor committee on doctrinal matters concerning this agreement both by the representatives of the four doctrinal unity committees and in the open hearing at this convention indicates that, although strong objections were raised, no formal action was taken to prevent unilateral action by the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod; therefore be it

(1) RESOLVED, that the bases for the unprinted memorial have lost considerable vigor and effectiveness, and be it further

(2) RESOLVED, that we ask the Evangelical Lutheran Synod to review its unprinted memorial in the light of the above information, and be it further

(3) RESOLVED, that we ask the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod to review the actions to which serious objections have been raised by its sister synod, and be it further

(4) RESOLVED, that we urge the following recommendation, made in all brotherly love to both the Evangelical Lutheran Synod and the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod, for their consideration and adoption: that the Evangelical Lutheran Synod be asked to suspend the action indicated in its unprinted memorial and that the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod be asked to suspend the activities objected to in the unprinted memorial until such time as the overseas theologians have made their presentation and the matter is concluded.

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This committee has reviewed the memorial relative to a uniform procedure in adopting doctrinal articles as recommended by the Joint Committee on Doctrinal Unity and outlined on page eight of the Book of Reports and Memorials and recommends its adoption by this convention.

### MEMORIAL

WHEREAS, The Synodical Conference is only an advisory body, whose decisions are binding only after concurrence by the constituent synods; and

WHEREAS, The Wisconsin Synod resolved "to petition the 1960 Synodical Conference Convention to set up a uniform procedure to be followed by all constituent synods in adopting doctrinal articles, prepared by the Joint Union Committees, said procedure to be: Every article shall be submitted immediately upon completion directly to each synod of the Synodical Conference for adoption or rejection" (Proceedings, 1959, p. 197); therefore be it

RESOLVED, That the Joint Committees approve this resolution of the Wisconsin Synod; and be it further

RESOLVED, That the Joint Committees recommend that the convention of the Synodical Conference adopt the procedure proposed by the Wisconsin Synod; and be it finally

RESOLVED, That the Synodical Conference Joint Committees be authorized to make such revisions in the final documents as may be recommended by the constituent synods.

THE JOINT COMMITTEES ON DOCTRINAL UNITY  
Herbert J. A. Bouman, Secretary

### RESOLUTIONS ADOPTED ON DOCTRINAL MATTERS

WHEREAS, the four doctrinal committees of the constituent synods of the Synodical Conference have drafted statements in the matter of Church Fellowship, both theological and practical; and

WHEREAS, while these committees found areas of agreement, they also found areas of divergence; and

WHEREAS, the areas of divergence have caused the Commission on Doctrinal Matters of the Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod to submit a communication to the Synodical Conference wherein they have advised that in their efforts to resolve the differences with respect to the Scriptural principles of church fellowship—differences which they hold to be divisive—an impasse has been reached; and

WHEREAS, the impasse was discussed at the Conclave of Theologians held at Thiensville, Wisconsin, July 20 to 30, 1960, and at its recessed meeting held at this session of the Synodical Conference; and

WHEREAS, the overseas delegates at the Conclave, desirous of being of assistance in this matter, presented an overture which, together with another proposal of the Wisconsin Synod Commission on Doctrinal Matters, was adopted by the Conclave and referred to the floor committee on doctrinal matters at the Synodical Conference for formulation of recommendations to this session of the Synodical Conference; and

WHEREAS, our Lord sets forth similar guidance for us to follow in cases of controversy, in Acts 15; therefore be it

(1) RESOLVED, that we respectfully request the overseas delegates from Australia, Brazil (in view of its impending status as an independent church), England, Germany, and India, to formulate an evaluation of the statements on fellowship prepared by the doctrinal committees of the four synods; (The following ruling of President Bradac is recorded in the minutes that the overseas men are not asked to settle the fellowship question or serve as referees) and be it furthermore

(2) RESOLVED, that we further request the overseas delegates to supplement the said evaluations by whatever additional material they deem pertinent and necessary; and be it furthermore

(3) RESOLVED, that the materials named in resolutions 1 and 2 be presented to each of the doctrinal committees of the four constituent synods, and that we urge that in view of the gravity of the situation this presentation be made, if at all possible, in person by the overseas delegates by early spring of 1961; and be it furthermore

(4) RESOLVED, that the findings gained from these individual presentations be given into the hands of the elected officials of the Synodical Conference; and be it furthermore

(5) RESOLVED, that the Synodical Conference provide the means to carry out this undertaking; and be it furthermore

(6) RESOLVED, that the officials of the Synodical Conference be requested to implement the above resolutions; and be it finally

(7) RESOLVED, that we request all our churches to pray for God's blessings upon these endeavors.



## RESOLUTIONS ADOPTED REGARDING A RECESSED CONVENTION

- WHEREAS, It is obvious that the time remaining at this Convention is insufficient to deal with the central problems of the Synodical Conference, and
- WHEREAS, time is required to carry out the resolutions of the Convention regarding the assistance of our overseas brethren, and
- WHEREAS, every possible avenue should be explored for the purpose of being led to God-pleasing solutions of our problems, therefore be it
- RESOLVED, that this Convention be convoked for a recessed meeting after Easter, 1961, and be it further
- RESOLVED, that the Praesidium of the Synodical Conference together with the several Synodical Presidents, be empowered to determine exact time and place, and be it further
- RESOLVED, that the entire program of the recessed Convention be devoted to the doctrinal issues, and be it further
- RESOLVED, that the Synodical Conference Praesidium and the Synodical Presidents be designated the interim committee to deal with all matters related to our current problems, and be it finally
- RESOLVED, that all members of the Synodical Conference be asked to keep the welfare of the Synodical Conference and of the Kingdom of our Lord, Jesus Christ in their unceasing intercessions before our heavenly Father.

## DOCTRINAL COMMITTEE REPORT

### I. RE RESOLUTION #7, p. 51, 1960 SYNOD REPORT:

“WHEREAS, Pastor G. Becker has requested that the Synod answer the question “Does the Common Confession contain false doctrine in its statement on Justification” as charged in his memorial and the memorial of the Lime Creek congregation, be it

RESOLVED, That we ask our Doctrinal Committee to study this matter and bring an answer to the November recessed convention.”

#### A. The Position of the Doctrinal Committee on this question:

We re-affirm our position as presented to the 1960 General Pastoral Conference:

1. The Common Confession does **not** settle the doctrinal controversy between the A.L.C. and the Missouri Synod on the doctrine of Justification.
2. The statement on Justification in the Common Confession is not as clear as it could and should be.
3. The statement is not the best way to express Objective Justification by any means.
4. We would not want to use the statement in a doctrinal statement of our own.
5. We do not believe the statement on Justification in the Common Confession is in itself false doctrine.

#### B. Why We Refuse to Label the Statement on Justification in the Common Confession as False Doctrine:

The sentence in the Common Confession specifically objected to in the Lime Creek Congregation’s memorial is as follows: “We believe and teach: By His redemptive work Christ is the Propitiation for the sins of the whole world; hence forgiveness of sins has been secured and provided for all men. (This is often spoken of as objective justification.) 2 Cor. 5, 19.” The memorial declares that this is not objective justification, that it is not scriptural, but against Scripture. The Doctrinal Committee holds that the above-quoted

statement from the Common Confession **may be understood** as teaching objective justification, and for the following reasons:

1. The expression "forgiveness of sins" is generally equated with the term "justification", as the following quotations will show:

APOLOGY: "To attain the remission of sins is to be justified."  
Art. IV (II), 76

QUENSTEDT, J. A.: "The imputation of Christ's righteousness is essentially nothing else than the remission of sins, and the remission of sins is nothing else than the imputation of Christ's righteousness, so that either word separately taken expresses the whole nature of justification."—(Theologia Didactico-Polemicæ Systema Theologicum, Part 3, Chap. VIII, Sec. 1 on Justification, Thesis 14, P. 524. Pub. Wittenberg, 1696.)

PIEPER, F.: "Die Suende nicht zurechnen" ist nach dem Sprachgebrauch der Schrift (Rom. 4, 6-8) so viel als 'die Suende vergeben', 'die Suender rechtfertigen'." (That is, 'not imputing sins' is according to scriptural usage (Rom. 4, 6-8) the same as 'forgiving sins', 'declaring sinners righteousness'.)—Dogmatik II, p. 412.

PIEPER, F.: "The forgiveness of sins constitutes the entire justification, not merely a part of it . . . In Rom. 4, 5-8 Paul uses the term 'justify' and the terms 'iniquities forgiven', 'sins are covered', synonymously; with these terms he describes the entire justification."—(Dogmatics II, 537; cf. Dogmatik II, 648)

DIERCKS, T.: "Christ's active and passive obedience is therefore the basis of man's justification. However, man's justification does not consist in two acts, in the forgiveness of sins and the imputation of Christ's righteousness, but these two things are the 'negative and positive expression' of the same act, and either one expresses the act of justification."—(Reconciliation and Justification, p. 41)

HOVE, E.: "By his atoning work Christ has produced in God's heart a full forgiveness of sin for all men."—(Iowa Dist. Report, 1901, p. 13f, as translated in the Clergy Bulletin, Sept. 1958, p. 98)

For his use of the term "justification" consider this statement: "And this that God reckons the individual repentant and believing sinner righteousness for the sake of Jesus Christ—this is properly justification."—(p. 101, C.B., Sept. '58)

GRACE FOR GRACE: ". . . life and salvation are again procured for the whole world by the resurrection of Christ and have come upon all men in Christ . . ."—(p. 164, a reproduction of Thesis V, of Tract #4 1872)

2. Because of this use of the term, we may correctly substitute the word "justification" for the expression "forgiveness of sins" in the statement of the Common Confession in order to test it out for false doctrine. It would then read as follows: ". . . hence justification has been secured and provided for all men. (This is often spoken of as objective justification.)"
3. Against the contention that the word "declared" should then have appeared after the words "secured and provided", we state simply that justification in itself (or, as in the CC "forgiveness of sins") is in itself a declaratory act, and hence the "declared" is in the word "justification."
4. Since the statement in question can be understood as teaching objective justification, as shown in points 1-3 above, we feel compelled to put this interpretation on it, so far as the Missouri Synod is concerned, and, for the following reasons:
  - a. That this is the understanding which the Missouri Synod has of the terms involved is clear from correspondence between our Committee and the President of the Missouri Synod. On November 19, 1959, we asked Dr. Behnken this question: "Secondly, with reference to Article VI of Part I of the

Common Confession, apart from the controversy with the A.L.C., we could accept this statement on Justification if the expression "forgiveness of sins" is interpreted as including justification as well as redemption. Is not this the understanding that the Missouri Synod has of this statement? Otherwise, if "forgiveness of sins" were to be restricted to redemption, could it not then be said that the Common Confession does not teach objective justification correctly?" Dr. Behnken replied on December 21, 1959, as follows: "The Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod understands that the expression 'forgiveness of sins' is to be equated with justification, as the Lutheran Confessions frequently equate them. This certainly also includes redemption. It is impossible to think of objective, or universal, justification apart from objective, or universal, redemption, or vice versa. You may certainly tell your people that this is the Missouri Synod position."

- b. That this is the intended interpretation of the Missouri Synod also in the statement on Justification in the Common Confession is evident from a resolution passed by that Synod in 1956: "Resolved that we reject any and every interpretation of documents approved by Synod which would be in disagreement with the Holy Scriptures, the Lutheran Confessions, and the **Brief Statement.**"

### **C. Regarding our Synod's Past Pronouncements on This Matter.**

It is a matter of record that individuals, and perhaps committees, have labeled the statement of the Common Confession on Justification as false doctrine.

It is also a matter of record that the Synod itself has never officially declared that the Common Confession contains false doctrine. Indeed, when we in 1955 drew up our Resolution of Suspension, in which we listed our charges against the Missouri Synod, we went no further regarding the Common Confession than to declare, "... we find it to be a document of compromise which does not in any way reject the errors of the A.L.C. and which is, therefore, inadequate as a settlement of past doctrinal differences and unsatisfactory as a basis for union."

### **D. RECOMMENDATIONS to the 1960 Recessed Convention:**

- RESOLVED, 1. We hold that the Common Confession does not settle the doctrinal differences between the Missouri Synod and the A.L.C., since the words used can be given a double meaning.
2. We hold that it may be said that the Common Confession is in harmony with Scripture inasmuch as what it says may be understood as presenting the true scriptural doctrine. The fact that a document does not settle a doctrinal controversy does not in itself make the statement or confession false doctrine. Compare the Apostle's Creed as a doctrinal statement.

## **II. REPORT ON THE 1960 CONCLAVE OF THEOLOGIANS**

The second Theological Conclave was held at the Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary, Thiensville, Wisconsin, July 20-30. The Thiensville Faculty was host. Delegates were present from Germany, England, Brazil, Argentina, Canada, Australia, India, and the Philippines, as well as from each synod of the Synodical Conference in the United States. The following essays were read and discussed: **The Authority of Scripture in the Church** by Dr. Wm. Oesch of the Lutherische Hochschule at Oberursel, Germany; **Holy Scripture Reveals the Church as the Creation of the Triune God**, by Prof. Martin Naumann of Concordia Seminary, Springfield, Illinois; **The Doctrine of the Church as Reflected in the Book of Concord**, by S. G. Mazak; Cudahy, Wisconsin; "The Historical Expressions of this Doctrine" 1); **From Apostolic Times to the Reformation**, by Dr.

Manfred Roensch, Heidelberg, Germany; 2); **From the Reformation to the Present**, by Dr. Paul Peters, Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary, Thiensville; **The Ecumenical Movement in the 20th Century as to Theology and Organization**, by Prof. G. O. Lillegard, Bethany Lutheran Seminary, Mankato; **The Possibility and Advisability of Contacts with Roman Catholic Theologians for Doctrinal Discussions**, by Rev. John Daniel, Bethlehem, Pa.; **Preaching as a Medium for Indoctrinating the Members of the Church**, by Prof. Otto Goerl, Concordia Seminary, Porto Alegre, Brazil; **The Administration of the Sacraments—Baptism and Holy Communion**, by Rev. Arne Kristo, Port Credit, Ontario, Canada; **The Worship of the Church**, by Dr. Walter E. Buszin, Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, Mo.; **Church Discipline**, by Rev. Irwin J. Habeck, Milwaukee, Wis.; **Church Organization as an Expression of the Function of the Church**, by Rev. Oscar Naumann, President, Wisconsin Synod, Milwaukee, Wisconsin; **The Outreach of the Church—Missions**, by Rev. Edgar Hoenecke, Plymouth, Michigan; **Conversations with other Lutherans and Contact with 'Lonely Lutherans' the World Over**, by Dr. John W. Behnken, President, L.C.-M.S., St. Louis, Mo..

Besides these essays on various aspects of the Conclave theme, **THE DOCTRINE OF THE CHURCH**, there were authoritative reports on the contemporary theology and church conditions in Germany, Czechoslovakia, Norway, Canada, England, Australia, Brazil, Argentina, India, and the Philippines.

The essays delivered, with one exception, were characterized by a sound scriptural and truly Lutheran tone, and revealed a heart-warming unanimity of doctrine and devotion to the cause of proclaiming the whole counsel of God. The exception indicated above was the paper on the "Administration of the Sacraments", which contained a number of disturbing notes; the dubious statements were noted in the discussions and frankly disavowed.

At the request of the Synodical Conference Joint Doctrinal Committee the matter of Fellowship was also included on the program of the Conclave. The discussions did not bring the group any closer to a solution than had previous efforts. However, the overseas brethren did raise the question whether the Doctrinal Committees of the several synods had plumbed the depths of the subject and been as thorough in their presentation as they might have been. It was also suggested that perhaps we should all step back and take another look at what we had thus far presented, whether we could actually say this was our final word. This led to an overture from the overseas brethren which was later presented to the Synodical Conference convention, on which our delegates to that convention are reporting.

The overseas delegates took an active part in the Conclave. They are conservative theologians who in their various countries have had to face the same liberal influences which have made inroads into the Synodical Conference. In their battle for conservative Lutheranism they have found much consolation in the support they have received from the Synodical Conference in this country. They are much alarmed over the possibility of a collapse of the Synodical Conference, which in their view would give glee to their liberal opponents. They would like to do something if possible, to save the Synodical Conference, and they all made fervent pleas for time to work.

The Praesidium of the Synodical Conference has been authorized to elect a Planning Committee to arrange for a similar meeting in the future.

### **III. FACTORS THAT SHOULD BE TAKEN INTO ACCOUNT WHEN DETERMINING WHETHER OR NOT TO WITHDRAW FROM THE SYNODICAL CONFERENCE**

#### **A. Negative**

1. The unsatisfactory "tentative" **Fellowship II** presentation of the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod.
2. Contemplated meetings with the NLC and TALC on the part of the Missouri Synod Doctrinal Committee, despite our pleas to desist until unanimity had been reached on the propriety and manner of participating in such meetings. (Cf proposed Resol. #4, Part III, of the Syn. Conf. Conv. Doc. Com.—p. 21.)
3. Prayer fellowship at the above and similar meetings with non-synodical Conference Lutherans, e.g., Lutheran Professors' Conferences, Catechism Revision Committee meetings, National Lutheran Education Association meetings, despite our conviction that such praying is not in harmony with Scripture. (Cf above referred to resolution #4)
4. Instances of individual aberration within the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod.
5. Existence of a liberal element in the Missouri Synod in prominent positions.
6. Unrest in our own Synod over continued association with the Synodical Conference, of which the Missouri Synod is a member, because of the aforementioned factors.
7. Your Doctrinal Committee's failure or inability to convince the Missouri Synod's Doctrinal Committee of the scriptural correctness of our position on Fellowship.

#### **B. Positive**

1. Scripturally correct statements on Scripture and AntiChrist already adopted by the Joint Doctrinal Committee of the Synodical Conference and the one on Justification almost ready for adoption.
2. Growing alarm and concern for the preservation of the truth in their Synod on the part of many Missouri Synod pastors and lay people.
3. The lack of pertinent up-to-date information on the issues in controversy on the part of many Missouri Synod pastors and lay people.
4. Conservative stand or action of several Missouri Synod 1960 District conventions, e.g., Texas, Southern Wisconsin, Northern Illinois (cf Confessional Lutheran, July & Aug. 1960), Iowa West, Minnesota.
5. Attempts at exercising proper discipline.
6. Dr. Behnken's public statement at Milwaukee acknowledging failure to exercise a prompt and efficient discipline and promise to give serious attention to remedying the situation.
7. The plea of many Missouri Synod people to stand by them in their struggle and to help them restore their Synod to its former conservative position.
8. The sympathetic position taken by the Doctrinal Committees of the Slovak and Wisconsin Synods.
9. The unanimity of the Conclave of Theologians on all doctrines discussed except Fellowship.
10. The scripturally correct platform of the Synodical Conference and the absence of any unscriptural actions.
11. The attention the 1960 Synodical Conference Convention gave to our Synod's position, as it appeared in our Unprinted Memorial, which it could not act on for lack of time.
12. The resolution to recess the 1960 convention of the Synodical Conference until after Easter, 1961, to consider just such matters as are referred to in our Unprinted Memorial.
13. The resolution of the Synodical Conference that the Overseas Brethren evaluate the studies on Fellowship by the four Synods and supplement the same with their own contribution, which they are to report to the Joint Doctrinal Committee of the Synodical Conference prior to the recessed convention of the Synodical Conference.

14. The bearing the recessed convention of the Synodical Conference will have on the matters in the Synodical Conference that disturb us.
15. The feeling of the Overseas Brethren that the Synodical Conference is the last bulwark for conservative Lutheranism and their fears that their work and influence would be grievously affected if the Synodical Conference were to begin to disintegrate.
16. The influence of Dr. Oesch's series of pamphlets on the Synodical Conference situation (Memorandum Inter Nos), which are being disseminated among the Synodical Conference pastors and teachers, which project has the approval of the Missouri Synod Praesidium.

Some of the passages that should be considered in evaluating the above-mentioned favorable or unfavorable factors

Matt. 7, 15: Beware of false prophets

Rom. 16, 17: Mark them which cause divisions and offenses contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned and avoid them

I Cor. 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

I Cor. 13, 13: And now abideth faith, hope, charity, these three: but the greatest of these is charity.

Gal. 6, 1: Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual, restore such an one in the spirit of meekness; considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted.

Eph. 4, 3: Endeavor(ing) to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.

15: Speak(ing) the truth in love.

2 Thess. 3, 14, 15: And if any man obey not our word by this epistle, note that man, and have no company with him, that he may be ashamed. Yet count him not as an enemy, but admonish him as a brother.

2 Tim. 4, 2: Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine.

Tit. 1, 9: Hold(ing) fast the faithful word as he hath been taught, that he may be able by sound doctrine both to exhort and to convince the gainsayers.

Tit. 3, 10: A man that is an heretick after the first and second admonition reject.

James 5, 20: Let him know that he which converteth the sinner from the error of his way shall save a soul from death, and shall hide a multitude of sins.

2 John, 10: If there come any unto you, and bring not this doctrine, receive him not into your house, neither bid him God speed; (11) For he that biddeth him God speed is partaker of his evil deeds.

#### **IV. MATERIALS PERTINENT TO THE MATTERS TO BE DISCUSSED AT THE RECESSED CONVENTION**

(Cf Resol. #8, p. 51, '60 Report)

1. Union Committee reports and the Synod's action on the same.  
(In synodical reports for 1956-60)
2. Our Doctrinal Committee's presentations to the Joint Doctrinal Committee meetings of the Synodical Conference.  
(Included in the material submitted herein by our Syn. Conf. delegates)
3. Doctrinal Statements, such as **Common Confession, Brief Statement**  
(These and other such statements may be found in a collection called "Doctrinal Declarations," or obtained separately, from our Lutheran Synod Book Co.)

4. Dr. Oesch's **Memorandum Inter Nos** pamphlets on the Synodical Conference situation.  
(Two installments have already been issued and two more are anticipated. All may be had for \$1, in advance, from Mr. Carl Oesch, 1638 Main St., Highland, Illinois)
5. The four papers delivered at the 1959 special Fall Pastoral Conference.

The Rev. T. Aaberg  
 The Rev. T. Teigen  
 Prof. M. Otto  
 Dr. O. E. Overn  
 Mr. S. Ingebretson

## MEMORIALS

Thornton, Iowa

To the Evangelical Lutheran Synod

Pastor M. E. Tweit, President

In 1955 our synod suspended fellowship relations with the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod on the basis of Rom. 16:17, "Now I beseech you, brethren, mark them which cause divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned; and avoid them." However, we did not leave the Synodical Conference, in which both the Missouri Synod and our synod enjoy all the rights and privileges of full fledged membership. This situation involves our synod in joint worship and work with the very synod over against which our synod applied Rom. 16:17, thereby accusing the Missouri Synod of being guilty of "causing divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned."

Because of this limited fellowship on our part with the Missouri Synod, many both inside and outside of our synod have shown a misunderstanding of our synod's position on the "avoid" of Rom. 16:17 and on the question whether or not our synod holds that the Missouri Synod is guilty of "causing divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned." It is our conviction that to help "clear the air" among us, our synod should clearly state its position on these two questions. And to that end we petition the Evangelical Lutheran Synod to declare at this recessed convention;

1. Is there room for human judgment in the matter of "avoiding" in Rom. 16:17 **AFTER** a synod has "marked" another synod as being guilty of "causing divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned"?
2. Is the Missouri Synod of 1960 guilty of "causing divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned", as stated in Romans 16:17?

We feel that our request is both valid and proper, since this is the very Scripture passage, and the **ONLY** passage, our synod used in our suspension resolution of 1955, and reaffirmed in 1959, to wit: "Whereas, the causes of our 1955 resolution for suspension of fellowship relations with the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod have not been removed: be it Resolved, That our suspension of fellowship relations with the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod be continued." Syn. Report, p. 35.

Respectfully,

Luther Younge, Delegate, Richland Lutheran Church  
 L. H. Hiller, Delegate, Richland Lutheran Church  
 John A. Moldstad, Pastor, Richland Lutheran Church

**East Grand Forks, North Dakota**

Reverend M. E. Tweit

Route 2, Box 103

Lawler, Iowa

Dear Reverend Tweit:

Since the Scriptures do not require that the Evangelical Lutheran

Synod remain in the Synodical Conference and since the voting procedure in the Synodical Conference is against the smaller synods and should rather be a unit vote of each synod and since the Evangelical Lutheran Synod has tried in vain to correct the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod since 1939, this congregation therefore believes that our Synod should leave the Synodical Conference. (Adopted September 20, 1960)

In behalf of the River Heights congregation, I remain,

Yours truly,  
Odean A. Olsen, signed  
Secretary, River Heights Lutheran Church  
**Rochester, New York**  
Church Council  
Indian Landing Bible Lutheran Church

Evangelical Lutheran Synod  
Jerico, Iowa

We hereby submit the following memorial:

Whereas our Synod has repeatedly marked the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod as causing division and offenses contrary to the doctrine we have learned (Rom. 16, 17) by its unionistic spirit, and

Whereas, The Lutheran Synodical Conference has not severed fellowship with the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod, therefore be it

Resolved, That the Evangelical Lutheran Synod withdraw from the Lutheran Synodical Conference.

Paul G. Anderson, pastor  
Layton N. Northrup, president of the Council

## **Action of the Synod:**

### **Lime Creek Memorial**

*WHEREAS, The Rev. Gerhart Becker has resigned from the Synod and is no longer pastor of the Lime Creek congregation, and*

*WHEREAS, The floor Committee on Doctrinal Matters has been informed that a member of the Doctrinal Committee of the Evangelical Lutheran Synod has counselled with the congregation on this matter,*

*1. BE IT RESOLVED, To ask the congregation if it still holds to the position stated in the Memorial.*

### **Ascension Memorial**

*2. The Memorial of the Ascension Lutheran Church, Eau Claire, Wisconsin, (1960 S. R. p. 46) to the 1960 convention has been rescinded by action of the congregation, October 16, 1960. This fact is herewith noted and recorded.*

### **Synodical Conference Membership**

*WHEREAS, Our Synod at its June Convention resolved to send delegates to the Synodical Conference convention to present the reasons for our action in declining to participate in joint doctrinal meetings with the Doctrinal Committee of the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod; and*

*WHEREAS, The Floor Committee of the Synodical Conference did not come in with their report on this matter until the last day of the convention; and*

*WHEREAS, There was not sufficient time for a thorough discussion of this report; and*



WHEREAS, *The Synodical Conference, largely due to our "un-printed memorial," resolved to recess their convention until the spring of 1961; be it therefore*

3. RESOLVED: *That we defer our final decision regarding our membership in the Synodical Conference until our 1961 Convention.*

### **Suspension Resolutions**

WHEREAS, *Our permanent Doctrinal Committee recommended to the Synod "that the Synod make a thorough study of its reasons for suspension of fraternal relations with the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod in 1955 with the view of ascertaining whether the continuation of the suspension is justified or not," S.R. p. 45 and*

WHEREAS, *A memorial from the delegates and pastor of the Richland Lutheran Church, Thornton, Iowa, has been presented to this convention concerning the use of Rom. 16, 17 in our so-called "Suspension Resolutions" of 1955, and*

WHEREAS, *Our so-called "Suspension Resolutions" of 1955, and particularly the sentence of those resolutions which states: "Therefore we hereby declare with deepest regret that fellowship relations with the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod are suspended on the basis of Rom. 16, 17, etc." has been subject to misunderstanding both within and without our Synod, therefore*

4. BE IT RESOLVED, *That the Synod affirm the position stated in the article entitled "Meaning of Our Suspension" in the Sentinel of Aug. 11, 1955.*

#### **"The Meaning of Our Resolution of Suspension"**

"When our Synod at its recent convention resolved to suspend fraternal relations with the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod, it thereby declared it could have no further pulpit and altar fellowship with the members of that Synod. That means that Missouri Synod pastors will not be permitted to preach in our churches, nor will our pastors be permitted to preach in theirs. It also means that we shall not be transferring members between Missouri and Norwegian Synod congregations as has been our practice heretofore. On the other hand, we have no desire to suspend fellowship with those who take the same stand on the issues confronting us as we do.

"Our Convention felt it had to suspend relations with the Missouri Synod, because that body was by its tolerance of unscriptural doctrine and practice showing itself to be an erring church body; it had caused divisions and offences in the Church, contrary to the doctrine which we had learned; and there was no indication that it was disavowing these unscriptural tendencies. Therefore, we according to Rom. 16, 17, had to suspend fellowship.

"That phrase, 'suspend fraternal relations' means that we for the time being do not practice any fellowship with the Missouri Synod. If she will in a God-pleasing way remove the offenses she has caused, we can again lift that suspension. It is therefore a break in relations which we hope will be only temporary. For it certainly is the prayer of everyone in our Synod that matters will be adjusted in such a way we may again be permitted to resume fellowship with our former brethren in the Missouri Synod in a real unity of mind and of oneness in spirit.

"This suspension of relations was resolved upon in the same spirit and tender concern for the well-being of the Church as when a member is for valid reasons excommunicated from a Christian con-

gregation—the hope that there may under God be a mending of ways and a return to the fold of those who wish to abide by the Scriptures in all things. God's truth was at stake. May He preserve unto us an unconditioned Gospel for the glory of His Church and His Savior Name." **Lutheran Sentinel**, August 11, 1955, page 228.

5. BE IT RESOLVED, That we reject any interpretation of our suspension resolutions of 1955 which implies

a) that we are at present in church fellowship with the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod;

b) that our continued membership in the Synodical Conference under present circumstances is in violation of Romans 16, 17.

WHEREAS, The situation that called forth this resolution, while not entirely corrected, has changed in the course of subsequent actions by the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod, therefore,

6. BE IT RESOLVED, That the permanent Doctrinal Committee be asked to review all factors and bring a recommendation to our next convention as to the Suspension Resolutions being lifted, retained, or changed.

#### **The Rev. R. Ude's Presentation**

WHEREAS, The "Brief Background" presented by the Rev. R. Ude is regarded by this Committee as a speech made on the convention floor, and not to be included in the Convention Report, and

WHEREAS, It contains subjective judgments which time does not permit us to debate nor answer, therefore

7. BE IT RESOLVED, To refer it to the Permanent Doctrinal Committee for further study.

#### **Part II, Church Fellowship, L.C.-M.S.**

WHEREAS, Part II, Principles Governing the Exercise of Fellowship from the joint theological faculties of the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod has been brought before this convention, and

WHEREAS, There is insufficient time for study and evaluation of this document at this convention, therefore

8. BE IT RESOLVED, That our Permanent Doctrinal Committee be requested to study and evaluate this presentation and communicate its reaction to the Doctrinal Committee of the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod with the request that said committee give an answer to our Committee's evaluation and criticism by March 1, 1961, and furthermore

9. BE IT RESOLVED, That our Doctrinal Committee convey the answer and report from the Doctrinal Committee of the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod to the pastors and delegates who will attend the Recessed Synodical Conference convention scheduled for May 17-19, 1961.

#### **Memorials and A Protest**

In regard to congregations which have sent in Memorials to this session of the convention, be it

10. RESOLVED, That the Synod follow the same procedure as outlined in Resolution #5, Doctrinal Matters, p. 50, of the 1960 Convention Report.

11. BE IT RESOLVED, That the "Protest" read by the Rev. H.

*A. Theiste on behalf of a member, Aletta Aaberg, be turned over to the Permanent Doctrinal Committee for further study.*

## MISCELLANEOUS OVERTURES

### WITHDRAWAL

Suttons Bay, Michigan

September 22, 1960

Rev. M. E. Tweit

Lawler, Iowa

Dear President Tweit:

God has said in His Holy Word:

"A man that is an heretick after the first and second admonition reject."

"If there come any unto you, and bring not this doctrine, receive him not into your house, neither bid him God speed; For he that biddeth him God speed is partaker of his evil deeds."

"Neither be partaker of other men's sins."

"Now I beseech you, brethren, mark them which cause divisions and offenses contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned; and avoid them. For they that are such serve not our Lord Jesus Christ, but their own belly; and by good words and fair speeches deceive the hearts of the simple." Titus 3, 10; 2 John 9, 10; 1 Timothy 5, 22; Romans 16, 17-18.

The Synodical Conference, once the stronghold of Biblical truth, has now become a unionistic fellowship in which truth and error are permitted to stand side by side. By remaining in the Synodical Conference the Evangelical Lutheran Synod has violated the will of God clearly expressed in the passages of Scripture quoted above. I must confess that I have sinned by remaining in a synod and a federation where unscriptural, sinful unionism is practiced. I now declare my sorrow for such sin and my intention with God's help henceforth to obey the Scriptural injunction bidding us flee error. Consequently, I cannot acknowledge the Evangelical Lutheran Synod as an orthodox Lutheran church body nor fellowship with it until it recognizes and confesses its sin, repents and turns from its unionistic course. I therefore declare my withdrawal from the Evangelical Lutheran Synod and ask that my name be removed from the list of permanent members. This action is taken with sincere sorrow and the prayer that the Synod may yet, by God's grace, return to its former Scriptural stand, which made it a blessing to many.

God willing, a more complete statement of the Scriptural reasons which have made this action necessary will be sent to all pastors of the E.L.S. in the future.

Neil N. Hilton, Jr.

### VISITOR'S REPORT

November 1, 1960

Rev. M. Tweit

President of the Evangelical Lutheran Synod

Dear Pastor Tweit,

On October 30, 1960, I attended a meeting of the Ascension Lutheran Church, Eau Claire, Wisconsin.

At this meeting I was permitted to read and copy the minutes of the meeting of October 16, 1960. The minutes show that the Ascension Church rescinded its memorial to the Synod concerning continued membership in the Synodical Conference. The Rev. Keith Olmanson had then asked the congregation whether it desired him to remain as its pastor. The congregation voted against having him remain.

At the October 30 meeting which I attended these actions were

re-affirmed and the Rev. Luther Vangen was asked to serve the congregation as vacancy pastor.

Sincerely,  
Nils C. Oesleby  
Visitor of the Lake Michigan Circuit

### **Proposal — C.L.C.**

WHEREAS, The Lutheran synod known as "The Church of the Lutheran Confession" is spoken of by some among us as a body agreed thoroughly in doctrine and practice with our synod; and

WHEREAS, Certain of our pastors have made public avowal of their close relationship with this synod, and, in some cases, have allegedly spoken of it to their congregational members as a body to which our Synod should in some manner adhere; be it therefore

RESOLVED, That this body ask the Synodical Membership Committee (#18) to present to this session of this convention a statement on the history, doctrinal position, and proposed constitution of the C.L.C., with the view of enabling this convention to make a statement setting forth our Synod's relationship to the C.L.C.

### **PROPOSAL—LUTHERAN SENTINEL**

WHEREAS, The June session of our 1960 convention assigned to this November session the task of evaluating the August 1960 Synodical Conference convention's action with regard to the Doctrine of Fellowship and related matters; and

WHEREAS, The Synodical Conference convention in August recessed until May, 1961, for the purpose of answering this question; and

WHEREAS, Meanwhile, before this November session, our Synod's official organ, the "Lutheran Sentinel," has on several occasions urged that this session "must vote" to withdraw from the Synodical Conference, now, before the May, 1961, convention of the Synodical Conference, when our question is to be answered; be it therefore

RESOLVED, That this session ask the Convention Committee on Publications to present to this session a statement on the basis of which this convention may determine what shall be the policy of the "Sentinel" in discussing synodical policy not yet determined.

### **PROPOSAL—1961 CONVENTION**

WHEREAS, We are greatly concerned for the future of the Lutheran Synodical Conference, of which we are a member, and which is now almost the only remaining bastion of conservative Lutheranism; and

WHEREAS, The very existence of our Lutheran Synodical Conference is greatly endangered because of the intersynodical difficulties of recent years;

WHEREAS, As we face the future we are greatly desirous of working, if possible, in harmony with those other members of the Lutheran Synodical Conference who share our position, which we believe to be that of the Lutheran Synodical Conference and in harmony with the Scriptures; and

WHEREAS, At least two of the member synods of the Lutheran Synodical Conference will hold general conventions in the early part of August, 1961, at which time they will address themselves to the problems of the Lutheran Synodical Conference and its future; and

WHEREAS, It will be most advantageous and helpful to our congregations and pastors to have at their disposal the actions of these other synods regarding our common problems as an important part of the evidence on which we shall have to resolve the question of our membership in the Lutheran Synodical Conference; therefore, be it

RESOLVED, That we set August 21-26, 1961, as the time of our next regular convention.

## Action of the Synod:

### The Withdrawal of Pastor Neil Hilton

1. *The Synod regrets with deep sorrow the withdrawal of the Rev. Neil Hilton from our membership. The Synod appeals to the Rev. Hilton to review as before God whether his application of the Word of God is correct.*

### The Ascension Case

2. *After reviewing the Ascension case it is the considered opinion of the Synodical Membership Committee that Pastor Keith Olmanson was not deposed as pastor by the congregation, but that by his accepting their action he thereby vacated his office as pastor.*

### The Church of the Lutheran Confessions

3. *The Synodical Membership Committee was requested to present to this session of this convention a statement on the history, doctrinal position and proposed constitution of the Church of the Lutheran Confessions. The following statement is hereby presented:*

#### A. Re History

*The Church of the Lutheran Confessions is a group consisting mainly of pastors, professors, teachers, congregations, and individuals who have left the Wisconsin Synod. Headquarters of this group is Immanuel Lutheran Church in Mankato, Minnesota. The group started as an interim conference and organized at Watertown, South Dakota, at its meeting on August 9-12, 1960. They operate a seminary, college and high school at Mankato. Their official organ is the "Lutheran Spokesman."*

#### B. Re Doctrinal Statement

*The following confession is found under Article 3 of their proposed constitution, p. 2:*

*"A. We accept without reservation the canonical Scriptures of the Old and the New Testaments as the verbally inspired Word of God ('verbally'—I Cor. 2:13; 'inspired'—II Tim. 3:16; see also II Pet. 1: 21) and therefore as the sole and only infallible rule of doctrine and life.*

*"B. We confess the Apostolic, Nicene, and Athanasian Creeds and the particular Symbols of the Lutheran Church as published in the Book of Concord of 1580, because they are a true exposition of the teachings of the Word of God.*

*"C. We subscribe to the Brief Statement of 1932.*

*"D. Because of differences that have arisen within the Synodical Conference we have found it necessary to define our position in a particular statement entitled 'Concerning Church Fellowship' as well as in 'Theses on the Relation of Synod and Local Congregation to the Holy Christian Church' and 'Theses on the Ministry of the Keys and the Public Ministry.' This we believe, and beside this no contrary doctrine is to be taught."*

### **C. Re Proposed Constitution**

After a very brief study of the proposed constitution, the Membership Committee wishes to point out the unusual rule found in Article 7, under Conventions:

*"Each member congregation shall be entitled to one delegate. All accredited delegates, male teachers, professors, and pastors shall be entitled to vote."*

Also the committee questions the rule in Article 8, under Disciplinary Action, No. 1:

*"When it has been ascertained that members of this body are causing divisions and offenses contrary to the doctrine which we have learned, the president, in conjunction with the vice-president, shall be held to declare a suspension of fellowship with the offenders."*

*(This is one of the many articles of this constitution that shall remain unalterable and irrevocable.)*

### **Dr. N. A. Madson's "Appeal"**

*4. It was resolved to hear Dr. N. A. Madson's "Appeal" which he read. It was answered by representatives of the Board of Regents and of the Officers of the Synod. Since a question was raised whether the action of the June Convention as reported on page 69, 1960 Synod Report, is still valid; the Synodical Membership Committee reported with the approval of Dr. N. A. Madson that the action as adopted still is valid.*

### **Pastor N. B. Harstad**

*Pastor N. B. Harstad met with the Synodical Membership Committee. Many exceptions were taken to what was said in his written speech. Because it is physically impossible to judge everything said in his speech at this convention, he it resolved that the officers appoint a committee to study this matter further and report to the 1961 Convention of the Synod.*

### **Lutheran Sentinel**

*WHEREAS, Objection has been raised to the appearance in recent issues of the LUTHERAN SENTINEL of certain articles that have presented only one side of an issue not yet resolved by the Synod; and*

*WHEREAS, This matter has been sufficiently discussed for the present on the floor of the Synod, therefore,*

*6. BE IT RESOLVED, That the Standing Committee on Publications be instructed to study the future editorial policy of the LUTHERAN SENTINEL and make a recommendation to the next convention.*

### **1961 Convention**

*7. BE IT RESOLVED, That the Synod hold its 1961 Convention August 22-27.*