

" C A N   T W O   W A L K   T O G E T H E R   E X C E P T  
T H E Y   B E   A G R E E D   ? "

- Amos 3: 3

Notes on a study of the causes for  
the present break in the unity of  
our Synodical Conference.

Zion Ev. Lutheran Church  
G. Radtke, Pastor  
Monroe, Michigan  
1954

## I N T R O D U C T I O N

It has been the conviction of all of the Synods which are members of the Synodical Conference Lutheran Church (Wisconsin, Norwegian, Missouri, and Slovak Synods) that complete agreement in all details of doctrine is necessary for true unity and the basis for all church fellowship - altar, pulpit, and prayer fellowship.

On this basis the Synodical Conference had been founded and existed until recent years. That unity was a work of the Holy Spirit and a confessional blessing to us and our fathers. But we know that the devil is busiest where the Truth of God's Word is faithfully and zealously confessed and practiced, for there the devil time and again lays stumbling blocks and traps through manifold temptations. In the early years of the Synodical Conference such temptations were warded off with sound, clear confessions of the Truth...the Missouri Synod usually taking the lead in these matters and becoming a sure guide and strong arm for the sister synods.

In these later years temptations have gained entrance, been entertained, tolerated, and have thereby grown into errors of doctrine and practice within the Synodical Conference...particularly in and through our former champion, the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod.

With heaviness of heart, warnings, fears, and tears we have prayerfully sought to admonish, strengthen, and correct these errors, but as the Lord warned..."a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump". To date our admonitions have born no fruit toward repentance, and it is high time (yea, past time) to come to a firm confessional stand against these errors.

To do this it is necessary that we have studied and know the facts, and that we together find strength, by the study of His Word and directives, to stand together (or alone if necessary) in the whole Truth apart from the leaven of error in doctrine and practice. We hereby pray God for the gift of His Holy Spirit to bless this study to that end!

The following historical introduction (both the Union Committee report to our Synod, August, 1953, and the resolutions adopted by the Synod, October, 1953) will show clearly and factually how weaknesses, then errors, and finally persistence in those errors has now been identified with the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod and thereby broken the bond of unity in the Synodical Conference.

## T H E F A C T S T O D A T E

(Report of the Floor Committee on Church Union to the Convention assembled at Watertown, Wisconsin, August 5-12, 1953.)

The standing Committee in matters of Church Union says at the end of its Report that "We hold that the Lutheran Church - Missouri Synod has disrupted the Synodical Conference and made it impossible for us to continue our affiliation with the Missouri Synod and our joint labors in the service of the Lord."

The Standing Committee thus reports that its earnest labors over the years have failed of their purpose to keep that unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace that once characterized our union in the Synodical Conference.

The possibility of discontinuance of our affiliation with the Lutheran Church- Missouri Synod does not come upon us without warning and fills us with sadness and deepest regret. We have always recognized our deep obligation to the Missouri Synod for its service in the early days of our Synod in leading us away from gross unionistic practice and showing us the way to honest biblical teaching and practice. We still find that honest biblical teaching expressed in the Missouri Synod Brief Statement. In the Synodical Conference we have worked together with the Missouri Synod in blessed unity of mind and spirit in the field of Negro Missions in this country and in Nigeria, also in such local endeavors as the Bethesda Lutheran Home, Institutional Missions, and others. We have freely made use of the Missouri Synod's Colleges and Seminaries. Our relation to Missouri has been very dear to us, and any disturbance of that relation must be correspondingly saddening.

The strain on our cordial relations with the Missouri Synod has been growing steadily more severe since 1935 when the Missouri Synod again resumed negotiations with the American Lutheran Church with a view to establishing pulpit and altar fellowship.

The history of the Common Confession will show how the break in relations has gradually been widening. In 1939 our Synod rejected the doctrinal statement agreed upon by the Missouri Synod and the American Lutheran Church as a basis for possible union. At its convention in Fort Wayne in 1941 the Missouri Synod refused to withdraw the 1938 Resolutions. In 1944 the Missouri Synod published a single document called the "Doctrinal Affirmation" which was soon discarded because the American Lutheran Church refused to accept it.

Negotiations continued in spite of our objections and warnings, and in 1950 the Missouri Synod adopted a Common Confession. The American Lutheran Church also adopted it as a basis for church fellowship with Missouri. In conferences, District Synod Meetings, and Joint Synod Meetings our Synod studied the Common Confession, offered its criticisms, and unanimously rejected it at New Ulm in 1951 as inadequate to settle the doctrinal differences that had separated members of the Synodical Conference from members of the American Lutheran Church. Our objections went unheeded. The Missouri Synod on the contrary had resolved: "That we rejoice and thank God that the Common Confession shows that agreement has been achieved in the doctrines treated by the two committees."

The Common Confession has been accepted by the Missouri Synod as a settlement of doctrinal differences between Missouri and the American Lutheran Church; this acceptance has been reaffirmed by Missouri, and it has been made clear that she is determined to abide by that decision.

We have repeatedly requested that Missouri Synod and its officials to suspend negotiations with the American Lutheran Church leading toward union with that body until the American Lutheran Church itself relinquishes its position that there is an area of wholesome and allowable difference of opinion in matters of doctrine and that complete agreement in doctrine is not necessary for union.

The Missouri Synod has consistently declined to retreat from its position on the Common Confession, has persisted in carrying forward its negotiations with the American Lutheran Church in spite of our pleas, and at Houston in June of this year 1953, while asking its praesidium to continue to "take the steps necessary to bring about a God-pleasing disposition of the matters" mentioned in our Synod's memorial, it at the same Convention resolved to "continue its discussions with the representatives of the American Lutheran Church." The so-called Part II of the Common Confession is offered as an answer to the Wisconsin Synod's objections, but at the same time is also presented to the American Lutheran Church as a basis for continued negotiation.

The net results of the Missouri Synod's resolutions made at Houston is that action on the Common Confession and Part II of that Confession has been postponed until 1956 at the earliest. In the meantime negotiations with the American Lutheran Church will continue in spite of our pleas and criticisms.

The issue that has opened this serious breach between our Synod and the Missouri Synod and threatens the continuance of the Synodical Conference is Unionism. Unionism is the underlying issue in the controversies regarding the chaplaincy, cooperation with unaffiliated church bodies in service centers, prayer fellowship, and scouting. The same unionistic spirit is observable in the arrangements that have been made for communion with Lutherans not in fellowship with us, under the excuse of emergency; in negotiations with lodges to make changes in their rituals, and in cooperating in various other areas with the excuse that safeguards have been set up to avoid unionism.

In this matter of unionistic practice Missouri has departed from the position that it once held, a position that made it a stronghold of the Church and a banner to repair to, and that was one of the strongest links that bound us together in the Synodical Conference. Missouri has broken that link.

Your Committee therefore makes the following recommendations: (The recommendations which the Committee then made and were also adopted by the Synod Convention will follow later. At this point we insert the findings of the Standing Committee on Church Union as summarized page 5 of their mimeographed report.)

- We hold that the Lutheran Church - Missouri Synod
1. by its "deviation to an ever increasing extent from the position we have so long held and defended together," and "from which we find ourselves unable to depart"; and
  2. by its failure to heed our admonition in some of the matters (Scouting, Joint Prayer, Suspension of Negotiations); and
  3. by declining early action on our objections to the Common Confession as a settlement of the controversies in the doctrines treated therein,

has disrupted the Synodical Conference and made it impossible for us to continue our affiliation with the Missouri Synod and our joint labors in the service of the Lord.

At this point we want to insert a condensed year by year review of Missouri's departure from pure doctrine and practice.

1929: For a number of years, committees of the synods in the Synodical Conference, including our own Wisconsin Synod, had been meeting with a committee of the then Iowa Synod (now united with the former Ohio and Buffalo Synods in the American Lutheran Church) in efforts to reach agreement in points of doctrine that had from the beginning separated the Iowa Synod from us. The former Buffalo Synod also joined in the discussions. The doctrines in controversy were chiefly these: Of Conversion and Election; Of the Holy Scriptures as the Word of God; Of the Church and church fellowship; Of the Pastoral Office; of the Antichrist; of Chiliasm; of Sunday; of Open Questions.

As a result of these joint studies, a confessional statement was completed in 1928 which was supposed to show that the Iowa Synod was now agreed with us in these doctrines. The confessional statement came to be known as the CHICAGO THESES.

The Missouri Synod, at its convention in Chicago in 1929, was the first Synod of the Synodical Conference to pass judgment on the Chicago Theses. The reader might do well to study carefully the action of that Synod, taken after it had considered whether it could adopt the Chicago Theses as a settlement of the old doctrinal controversies with the Iowa Synod. The reader will find the report of the committees of the Missouri Synod and the resolutions adopted by the convention appended hereto.

The Missouri Synod, heeding objections raised by its own members and by its convention committee, completely rejected the CHICAGO THESE because they were not clear, did not set forth properly the old points of controversy, and did not expressly reject the former false teachings of the Iowa Synod. The Missouri Synod also resolved not to deal any further with Iowa because that Synod, by negotiating with other false Lutheran bodies, showed that it was unionistic in spirit.

Finally, the Missouri Synod appointed a committee of its own to set up a clear confessional statement as it ought to be.- It may well be that in this year it was the Missouri Synod which, by its clear-cut action, saved the Synodical Conference from accepting an inadequate confession.

1) Proceedings of Mo.Syn. 1929, pp.110f.

1932: At its convention in this year, the Missouri Synod received and accepted the excellent doctrinal statement drawn up by its committee appointed in 1929. This statement became known as the BRIEF STATEMENT. The old Iowa Synod, and later the American Lutheran Church, never accepted the Brief Statement, simply because they had never in fact changed their false doctrinal position and therefore could not subscribe to the clear and honest confession of the Brief Statement.

1935: This year brought an astonishing development. Let us mark it well. The American Lutheran Church (Iowa, Ohio and Buffalo Synods) had meanwhile been organized. This church body adopted a resolution saying that the American Lutheran Church desired to confer with "those Synodical bodies with which we are not in fellowship, with the end in view of establishing pulpit and altar fellowship". (Waverly Resolutions) 2) This invitation was sent, not only to the Synods of the Synodical Conference, but also to the liberal United Lutheran Church. The American Lutheran Church wanted to try to join hands in both directions.

In this year our Wisconsin Synod received a similar invitation from the United Lutheran Church. (Savanna Resolutions) 3) To this our Synod gave the answer that it would gladly see all Lutheran churches united, but could not honestly enter into doctrinal discussions with the United Lutheran Church until that body cleansed itself of its unionistic and unlutheran practice, thus showing that it was in earnest about establishing real unity. 4)

The action of the Missouri Synod, however, was most surprising and significant. This Synod had in 1929 very clearly declared that negotiations with the Iowa Synod must stop until Iowa had adjusted its negotiations with unionistic Lutherans according to the Word of God. But Iowa had instead, joined the American Lutheran Church and was negotiating with the United Lutheran Church and with the Norwegian Lutheran Church (now known as the Evangelical Lutheran Church). NEVERTHELESS, the Missouri Synod now ACCEPTED the invitation of the Waverly Resolutions and resumed doctrinal discussions with a unionistic church body that had never accepted the Brief Statement.

This was a turning point in the history of the orthodox Missouri Synod, and marked the beginning of a liberal movement in that church body.

2) Quartalschrift, Jan. 1935, p. 63f.

3) Quartalschrift, Jan. 1935, p. 64ff.

4) Proceedings, Wis. Synod, 1935, p. 107ff

1938: At its convention the Missouri Synod received the first results of its new negotiations with the American Lutheran Church and accepted a compromise confession of faith by joining its Brief Statement with A DOCTRINAL DECLARATION of the A.L.C.(American Lutheran Church), adding to these a series of resolutions which in substance stated that certain doctrines of Holy Scripture are not divisive- that is, that there need not necessarily be agreement on these doctrines in order to have scriptural fellowship with the American Lutheran Church.

The doctrines mentioned were those of the Antichrist, Conversion of the Jews, Resurrection of the Martyrs, and Millenium. This position, that there are non-divisive doctrines, was new in the orthodox Lutheran Church. It is contrary to Scripture and to the teaching of the Fathers and it contradicts directly the Missouri Synod's own resolutions of 1929. Very many members of the Missouri Synod did not realize what their convention had done. 5)

5) Quartalschrift July 1938, p. 208ff;

Oct. 1938, p. 264 ff.

Confessional Lutheran, April 1947, p. 41ff.

1939: Our Synod, in convention assembled, rejected the doctrinal basis set up by the Mo. Synod and the Am. Lutheran Church in 1938, and called upon the Mo. Synod to suspend further negotiations with the Am. Luth. Church until that body had given up its unionistic position. Our Synod also said that, if and when doctrinal discussions with the Am. Lutheran Church could properly be taken up again, efforts ought to be made to prepare one single confessional document that clearly stated the pertinent doctrines and rejected the errors hitherto held by the Am. Luth. Church. 6)

6) Proceedings, Wis. Synod, 1939, p. 39ff.

1941: At its convention in Fort Wayne the Missouri Synod refused to withdraw the confession adopted in 1938. It did recognize the necessity of a single document and instructed its Committee on Doctrinal Unity to prepare such a single statement of agreement with the Am. Luth. Church. In the meantime, however, the Am. Luth. Church in convention had declared that "it is neither necessary nor possible to agree in all non-fundamental doctrines". Despite this clear contradiction of God's Word, the Missouri Synod arranged to continue negotiating with the Am. Luth. Church. 7) It also laid plans for joint work

with the American Lutheran Church in relief of foreign missions and in work among service men.

In this same summer, our Synod asked for discussion with the other member-synods of the Synodical Conference to head off the danger that was threatening us through the Missouri Synod's drift from its former position in doctrine and practice. 8)

7) Proceedings, Wis. Synod 1941, p. 74ff.

8) Proceedings, Wis. Synod 1941, p. 78

1943: Our Synod again appealed to the Missouri Synod to stop its negotiations with the American Lutheran Church, since it had become more and more plain, and also had been admitted by Missouri Synod's Committee on Doctrinal Unity, that there was a basic difference between the Am. Luth. Church's stand on unionism and that of the Missouri Synod. 9) Nevertheless, negotiations continued.

9) Proceedings, Wis. Synod, 1943, p. 64ff

1944: This was a fateful year. The Missouri Synod published the single document of confession which its committee had prepared with the committee of the Am. Luth. Church. This document was called the DOCTRINAL AFFIRMATION. It was in large part an enlargement upon, but less clear than, the Brief Statement. It had a short life; for the Am. Luth. Church rejected this confession in 1946. That was to be expected, since the Am. Luth. Church had always refused to accept the Brief Statement itself as adequate. 10) The fact is that the Am. Luth. Church had not given up a single one of its false doctrines, and did not intend to do so. 11) Yet even after the Affirmation was dead, the Missouri Synod did not stop negotiations despite all our pleas and warnings. Instead, the liberal movement in the Missouri Synod, which had gained control in 1938, grew steadily stronger. 12)

10) Confessional Lutheran, May 1947, p. 55ff

11) Quartalschr. Jan. 1947, p. 64f; April 1947 p. 132f; July 1947, p. 206f.

12) Quartalschr. Jan. 1947, p. 70f;  
Confessional Lutheran, Dec. 1944 and ff.

In 1944, at its Convention, the Missouri Synod abandoned its former correct position against 'Scouting' and opened the door to this unchristian influence.

At the same time it adopted a new doctrine of prayer fellowship which is neither Lutheran nor scriptural. 13)

13) A.C.D.P. Report Jan. 1, 1951.

1945: Matters grew ever more serious. In the Missouri Synod, pastors and churches were becoming more and more lax, and the Synod increased its cooperation in church work with false-teaching bodies. The poison against which our Synod warned in 1939 was taking hold. Our Synod in this year protested against numerous instances of unionism in the Missouri Synod. 14) Then the "liberals" within the Missouri Synod revealed themselves fully. They met in a convention of their own and adopted a set of theses which came to be known as THE CHICAGO STATEMENT. This document rejected the old Missouri Synod position on true church unity and the Bible passages quoted in the Brief Statement in support of the old position. 15) Originally this "A STATEMENT" was signed by 44, pastors and professors, who came to be called simply "THE 44"; but eventually several hundred signed it. The leaven of error grows quickly. Many, many in the Missouri Synod, still faithful to the old truths, struggled and protested, but seemed helpless against the leadership. Note: To this day these men have been free of church discipline, although requested by their Synod not to make public their unorthodox confessions!

14) Proceedings, Wis. Syn. 1945, p. 72f.

15) Confessional Lutheran, March 1946, p. 25f;  
June 1946; March 1947; Nov. 1949, p. 131.

1947: In this year the Am. Luth. Church finally told the Missouri Synod that, as far as the A.L.C. was concerned, they felt that they had enough unity with the Mo. Synod and were tired of formulating new doctrinal declarations. They were ready to unite as they were, and would not under any circumstances change their position. 16) The A.L.C. declared that it believed in a "wholesome and allowable latitude of theological opinion on the basis of the teachings of the Word of God" - which simply means that the Missouri Synod and the A.L.C. need not teach the same doctrines in order to unite. The A.L.C. then called upon the Missouri Synod for union on the basis of the 1938 arrangement (see above).

However, the Mo. Synod at its convention finally set aside the 1938 union document. This document was not retracted - merely set aside as no longer adequate. But the Mo. Synod continued negotiations with the Am. Luth. Church and found no success in disciplining the "44" in its own midst. So the cancer kept growing. 17)

OUR SYNOD in this year denounced Scouting and called on the Mo. Synod to return to its old position. 18) This the Mo. Synod has never done.

16) Confess. Luth. June 1947, p.64ff; Quartlschr. July 1947, p. 206f (283).

17) Confess. Luth. Aug.-Sept. 1947&ff; Apr. 1948, p.42ff; Quartalschr. Oct. 1947

18) Proceedings, Wis. Synod, 1947, p. 100ff

1949: Our Synod in convention finally demanded in its "Six Questions", that Mo. Synod clean its house of the increasing evils of unionism and Scouting that were dividing the Synodical Conference. 19)

19) Proceedings, Wis. Synod. 1949, p. 111ff.

1950: Finally, the Mo. Synod adopted the new confessional document known as the COMMON CONFSSION. It was adopted also by the A.L.C. Many in the Mo. Synod refused to accept it; it was not unanimously adopted at the convention. For it is an untruthful and unclear confession, a unionistic document that hides the difference between the Mo. Synod and the A.L.C. instead of settling it. 20) Thus the Mo. Synod had by 1950, completely reversed its position taken in 1929.

20) Conf. Luth. Dec. 1951, p.139ff; Proceedings, Wis. Synod 1951, p. 144ff.

1951: Our Synod studied the Common Confession (in Conferences, Special District Conventions, and again at this Convention), rejected it and simply told the Mo. Synod that the time had come to declare that we can no longer regard her as an orthodox church body unless she retreats. We stated that, unless the Common Confession is rescinded and the other unionistic practices are halted, we shall have no choice but to declare that the Missouri Synod has separated herself from us. 21)

21) Confess. Luth. Dec. 1951, p.139ff; Proceedings, Wis. Synod, 1951, p.144ff

1953: The Missouri Synod refuses to rescind the Common Confession, but reaffirms her stand and proposes for study until 1956 Part II of the Common Confession, which is supposed to clear up the objections of our Synod and add what we think is missing. Part II does not do this; it is as unsound and unclear as Part I. Nor did the Missouri Synod take a single step to halt the liberalism in its midst. Some pastors and congregations have already left the Missouri Synod; others are still protesting. But it is clear that the Missouri Synod has fallen away from pure Lutheran doctrine and practice, and refuses to be corrected. 22)



At present, then, we find ourselves in the following position:  
We have rejected the Common Confession for exactly the same reasons that caused the Missouri Synod in 1939 to reject the Chicago Theses. At that time, our Synod accepted the verdict of the Missouri Synod and laid the Chicago Theses aside; all negotiations were halted.

Today, the Missouri Synod ignores our rightful objections to the Common Confession; adopts it and continues negotiations against which we have protested since 1939.

In addition to the untruthful situation created by the adoption of the Common Confession as agreement in the doctrines treated therein between the Lutheran Church - Missouri Synod and the American Lutheran Church, the Missouri Synod has in this same spirit continued ever onward in the matters of scouting, chaplaincy, unionistic prayer, unionistic practices, etc.

Our Synod, especially through the representatives of our Standing Committees on Church Union, fraternally, patiently, and Scripturally admonished our erring sister-synod of Missouri since 1939. Considering the fruitless replies and lack of results from such admonitions, our Synod in its 1953 Convention at Milwaukee adopted the following resolutions: (After listing them on the next page, we shall consider the points one by one and give special attention to each error of doctrine and practice listed in point I.

-NOTES ON THE MATERIALS PRESENTED THUS FAR-

- THE '53 RESOLUTIONS -

The following Resolutions were amended and reformulated on the basis of the original Floor Committee report and were adopted by our Wisconsin Synod at its Milwaukee Convention, October, 1953, in the form printed below:

1. That we declare that the Lutheran Church - Missouri Synod
  - A. by reaffirming its acceptance of the Common Confession as a "settlement of past differences which are in fact not settled" (Proc. 1951, page 146), and
  - B. by its persistent adherence to its unionistic practices, (the Common Confession, joint prayer, scouting, chaplaincy, communion agreement with the National Lutheran Council, cooperation with unorthodox church bodies in matters clearly not in the field of externals; negotiating with lodges and the Boy Scouts of America with the plea that this gives opportunity to bear witness, under the same plea taking part in unionistic religious programs and in the activities of unionistic church federations; negotiating for purposes of union with a church body whose official position it is that it is neither possible nor necessary to agree in all matters of doctrine and which contends for an allowable and wholesome latitude of theological opinion on the basis of the teachings of the Word of God)

has brought about the present break in relations that is now threatening the existence of the Synodical Conference and the continuance of our affiliation with the sister Synod.

2. That we without delay make this declaration known to the President of the Lutheran Church - Missouri Synod, to the President of the Synodical Conference, and to the other Presidents of the constituent synods.
3. That we herewith approve the Protest \* (see footnote after point 6) agreed upon by our representatives immediately following the St. Paul convention of the Synodical Conference, 1952.
4. That we prevail upon the President of the Synodical Conference to arrange a program for the convention in 1954 that would devote all its sessions to a thorough consideration of our declaration in Point 1 and of the doctrinal issues involved.
5. That the Conference of Presidents make a special effort during the coming year to provide all our congregations with thorough instruction regarding the issues and doctrines involved.
6. That while during the period up to the next meeting of the Synodical Conference we, in view of President Behnken's offer, still anxiously and prayerfully await an indication that the Lutheran Church - Missouri Synod will not persist in its present stand as set forth in Point 1, we remain in a state of confession.

Galatians 6: 1-2:  
Romans 15: 5-6:

- THE '53 RESOLUTIONS CONT. -

\* (See Point 3, page 9):

"Since it is God's will that the trumpet do not 'give an uncertain sound' (I Corinthians 14:8), and since a faith that is not ready to confess in clear and unmistakable terms 'creates a basically untruthful situation' ('A little leaven leaveneth the whole lump,' Galatians 5:9) -

"We, therefore, declare, in order to guard our own faith and to remain true to our God, that, though we do not at this time disavow our fellowship with the Missouri Synod in the Synodical Conference, yet, because the confessional basis on which the synods of the Synodical Conference have jointly stood so far has been seriously impaired by the Common Confession, we continue to uphold our protest and to declare that the Missouri Synod by retaining the Common Confession and using it for further steps toward union with the ALC is disrupting the Synodical Conference (see Constitution, Article 5). Thus while we await a decision by our Synod in this grave situation we continue our present relationship with the Missouri Synod only in the hope that it may still come to see the error of its way.

"Hence we find ourselves in a STATE OF CONFESSION (theologically expressed, IN STATU CONFESSIONIS).

"We hope and pray that the truth may prevail and that God in His grace may avert the threatening disruption of the Synodical Conference."

Beginning now on the next page (11), we shall consider the '53 Resolutions of our Synod point-for-point.

- NOTES -

1. That we declare that the Lutheran Church - Missouri Synod
  - A. by reaffirming its acceptance of the Common Confession as a "settlement of past differences which are in fact not settled" (Proc. 1951, page 146), and
  - B. by its persistent adherence to its unionistic practices (the Common Confession)

has brought about the present break in relations that is now threatening the existence of the Synodical Conference and the continuance of our affiliation with the sister Synod.

WHAT ARE THE DIFFERENCES THAT THE "COMMON CONFESSION" SHOULD FACE?

- Prof. John Meyer, Luth. Seminary, Thiensville, Wis.

Under the heading "Missouri Lutherans Thaw A Little" the Christian Century for February 15, c., commented on the recommendation of a Missouri Synod committee that the synod "do not apply for membership in the National Lutheran Council at this time". Then it added: "Another move to avoid isolation was the agreement reached by another Missouri Synod committee that no insuperable doctrinal barrier now exists between the American Lutheran Church and this denomination. It remains to be seen whether this February thaw will carry over into the mild weather in June when the triennial convention of the Missouri Synod meets in Milwaukee". Thus the Christian Century evaluates the widely publicised new document of agreement as evidence of a softening in Missouri's doctrinal position. Is it right in this assumption?

This is not an academic question for us. Our own Synod will have to declare itself with regard to the above named agreement. If the Committee's action is ratified by the Missouri Synod in its convention in June, the document will stand before us as a confession of our sister synod, particularly with reference to those points of doctrine on which there was disagreement between the members of the Synodical Conference and the constituent elements of the A.L.C. ever since the Election controversy 70 years ago disrupted the Conference. As the former Buffalo Synod and the former Iowa Synod never, for doctrinal reasons held membership in the S.C., the differences between them and the S.C. are of even longer standing.

It would carry us too far afield now to discuss these differences in detail; it will have to suffice to mention them briefly. But so much is indispensably necessary for a proper evaluation both of the new articles now presented to the Church for approval and of the Brief Statement, reaffirmed by the 1947 convention of the Missouri Synod.

1881

We begin with the Buffalo Synod.

The errors of this synod center in the doctrine of the Church.

They define the Church as "the visible gathering of the believers." This position they took from the beginning of their history (1845) and they still stressed it some 25 years ago when during the discussions of the Intersynodical Committee (which led to the formulation of the Chicago Theses) a representative of the Buffalo Synod insisted that the Church must be visible because Christ said "By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples" (Jh. 13,35), till Prof. J.P. Koehler of our Synod set him right. It will not be necessary to mention ramifications of this error of Buffalo's.

Buffalo also mutilated the spiritual priesthood of believers by denying the keys to the individual Christians. "Were the members of the Lutheran congregations to presume that they by virtue of their personal anointing and their state of grace, i.e., by virtue of their spiritual priesthood, possessed the office of the keys,

this would be the same enthusiasm which is found in the Pope" (Informatorium, I, 37). "Not the body of a local congregation, but the body of the apostles and today of those persons serving in the holy ministry, shall be the highest and final court" (l.c., II.5.6). "Thus the congregation may not judge and order or declare that a sinner be considered as a heathen man and a publican" (Synodical Letter 2, 28).

Naturally, since the individual believers do not possess the keys, no congregation is qualified to establish the administration of the means of grace in its midst: the ministry is instituted over the Christians by the Son of God as constituting a special order.

Synods are governing bodies by divine right, appointed to decide what is contrary to the Word of God.

So much about Buffalo.

The second body that was merged into the A.L.C. in 1930 was the Iowa Synod founded in 1854 in opposition to the Missouri Synod.

One of the chief purposes for organizing the Iowa Synod was to create a body in which divergent theological opinions on certain Biblical doctrines might enjoy equal rights, and would not be condemned as divisive of church fellowship. Those holding non-conforming views were not merely to be tolerated temporarily as weak brethren, but were to possess all rights as members in good standing. This is the theory of Open Questions.

As Open Questions were listed: Chiliasm, Antichrist, the "first resurrection" (resurrection of martyrs), and related matters, the doctrine of Sunday and the doctrine of the Church and its office.

Regarding conversion the opinion prevailed in the former Iowa Synod that whether a sinner "will be saved or will be lost depends in the last analysis on his free self-determination either, for or against grace" (G. Fritschel), the sinner being enabled to reach his decision by (prevenient) grace.

Regarding the Lutheran Symbolical Books the Iowa Synod took the stand that only such doctrines are binding which are formally introduced, e.g., by "We believe teach, and confess." But a doctrine which is mentioned only casually does not thereby acquire confessional standing.

The Ohio Synod, founded in 1818, was one of the charter members of the S.C., but in 1881 formally resigned its membership in that body. The occasion arose out of the Election controversy, Ohio dissenting from the form of doctrine held by the other members of the S.C. In connection with the error in this article also two or three other errors of Ohio became manifest.

Regarding the election of grace Ohio defined its position in 1881 that "the predestination of the elect unto life eternal took place in view of their faith (Intuitu fidei)." In addition to the mercy of God and the merits of Christ also the faith of a man must be considered, if not as a motivating cause, at least as an explanatory cause (Erklaerungsgrund) why God elected him unto eternal salvation in preference to others. The foreseen faith explains *cur alii prae aliis*. The doctrine of an election unto faith was branded as Calvinism.

Regarding the conversion of a sinner Ohio not only correctly held that if a person is not converted this is due to the fact that he did not react properly to the saving efforts of the Holy Spirit on his heart, but added: If he had reacted properly (*haette er sich recht verhalten*), which by virtue of the grace working on him he was able to do, he would without fail have been converted and saved. From this it follows incontestably that conversion and salvation in a certain respect depend also on man, not on God alone (Theol. Zeitblaetter, 1887). The proper reaction, proper conduct, proper attitude (*das rechte Verhalten*) consists in the "suppression (Unterlassung) of wilful resistance". All men, even the best of Christians, resist grace by nature; but there is also a "special resistance in addition to the natural, a wilful resistance, which a person at the time, when he displays it is able to suppress (*lassen*) with the powers at his disposal" (Theol. Zeitblaetter, 1904). We note that a sinner may refrain from wilful resistance just as he may refrain from committing fornication or murder. Thus to suppress

wilful resistance does not constitute a merit, but it explains why a certain sinner is converted. This position is declared to be necessary if we wish to escape the Calvinistic notion of an irresistible grace.

Regarding justification Ohio rejected the truth that in Christ God declared the whole world justified of all sins (Rom. 5, 18; 2 Cor. 5, 19) and branded it as a "doctrine annulling (vernichtend) the Biblical doctrine of justification" (Theol. Zeitblaetter, 1905). "We believe and confess: Through the reconciliation achieved by Christ the holy and gracious God has made advances toward us (ist uns entgegengekommen) so that now He can forgive us our sins and justify us; but justification itself does not take place before by the grace of God a spark of faith is kindled in the heart of a poor sinner; and then God forgives him his sins." Consistently this notion makes out of faith a factor in the act of justification, not the organon leptikon for receiving a ready blessing.

Another difference pertained to the analogy of faith. Ohio (and Iowa) considered all Christian doctrines as constituting a "recognizable, harmonious whole, or system," which overrules the formulation of all individual doctrines.

The above, briefly outlines, were the differences that separated the constituent elements of the present A.L.C. from the S.C. 70 years ago. Every one can see at a glance how deeply they affect our Christian faith. They are not, as an A.L.C. writer (Dr. Schramm) recently deigned to call them, "points of human theology - as distinguished from "doctrine" in the true, Biblical sense of that term" (Lutheran Standard, March 4, 1950) The errors were upheld by the synods of Buffalo, Iowa, and Ohio, not as weaknesses in which they sought for further enlightenment, but as essential points of their theology. Their theology will cease to be the same the moment they give up these points, or any of them; just as the theology of the S.C. would become untrue if any of those errors were admitted.

Note. All direct quotations in the foregoing (except the last) are taken from T. J. Grosse, Unterscheidungslehren (4th. ed. 1909).

"WHAT ARE THE REQUIREMENTS OF A CONFESSIONAL WRITING TODAY?"  
by Prof. John P. Meyer

I

We have been called upon to take a stand over against the document known as the Common Confession. Our stand must be a confession of our faith urged on us like the confession of Peter and John, "We cannot but speak the things that we have seen and heard. "Acts 4:20."

Peter and John made the confession of their faith before a threatening council. Our faith too must be willing to endure hardships; otherwise we are not ready to confess.

Our first concern must therefore be to become established in the faith. Faith can dwell only in a broken and a contrite heart. Jesus sternly rebukes those who have the idea that they can achieve any merit of themselves. Faith consists in the firm confidence that God "hath made Him to be sin for us who know no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him," 2 Cor. 5, 21.

Since faith is created and preserved only by the God appointed means, the Word and the sacraments, we must diligently use these means to refresh our faith. In particular we must fortify our hearts with regard to such doctrines as have been in controversy, and on which a confession is now asked of us. It behooves us to study these doctrines so that where they are presented as the Scripture presents them, we may join in the confession. And if the confession does not measure up to the fullness of Scripture truth, or even obscures the Scripture truth, we cannot join in the confession.

## II

In the Common Confession two synods which in the past did not practice church fellowship, here jointly present a confession of the doctrine which they now hold in common.

We know that the spectacle of a divided Lutheranism provides a convenient excuse to many for neglecting the Word. It is therefore good news to hear that two synods formerly divided are now able to present a common confession of faith. The fact that we were ignored in the formulating of the Common Confession is of minor importance. If only the Word of Christ is confessed in all its purity we will rejoice.

We must, however, demand that the Common Confession present the doctrines in clear and unequivocal language, specifically referring to those points that were in question. Wholeheartedly to subscribe to it only in so far as it agrees with God's Word, is in reality no subscription.

There have in the past been real differences between the Synodical Conference and the American Lutheran Church concerning Justification, Conversion, Election, the Church and Ministry, Open Questions and the Bible, the Last Things, and in recent years also disagreement regarding the inerrancy of the Scriptures. On these doctrines the Common Confession must speak in clear and unmistakable language. Error must be definitely excluded so that there is no room for past differences to thrive under its wording.

Faithfulness to our Lord and His Word demands of us that we carefully scrutinize the Common Confession. This will not be easy. We may be charged with being loveless and over suspicious. Yet it is real love that prompts us to study and test our brother's confession and point out its insufficiencies to him if we can find such.

We dare not study the Common Confession in the spirit of self-righteous arrogance. On the other hand, we may also expect of Christians that they do not question our motives when they see us studying it so carefully.

## III

Looking briefly at some of the doctrines involved, we ought to carefully note the following points: in Justification we must give close attention to the function assigned to faith. In Regeneration? How do we get faith? In Election? Did God elect us unto faith or in view of faith? In the case of the Church and Ministry, did Christ give the keys to the individual Christians, and have Christians the right to call persons to administer the keys publicly? May we, without harm, declare any error even in secondary articles of faith to be non-divisive of church fellowship? How shall we regard the Pope, when we see him proclaiming justification by works and pronounces a curse on all those who teach justification by faith alone? And does the Common Confession uphold the truth of Verbal Inspiration?

## IV

The document is being offered to us for approval. If we accept a confession as a settlement of former differences which leaves the door open for those very differences we make ourselves guilty of denial. If we find the document inadequate we shall have to state our reasons clearly to the Synodical Conference. If we find that it leaves the door open for errors, the entire doctrinal foundation of the Synodical Conference would be changed. This would lead to most far-reaching consequences. It will also cause serious complications. We must not, however, from the beginning anticipate such an outcome, but must act on the assumption that a crisis can still be averted.

Our Missouri brethren accept the Bible as the inspired Word of God, the only norm of all doctrine. If they can be shown that they have erred in adopting the Common Confession, they will repent and that quickly. This can be done through Missouri's Union Committee who can give us the assurance that these errors will be speedily corrected. May God give us light to see the truth and the faith to confess it even in the face of adversity.

A REVIEW OF THE COMMON CONFESSION  
(Prepared at the Request of the  
Standing Committee on Church  
Union)

Among the doctrines that have been in controversy between the Synodical Conference and the synods now composing the ALC there are especially three in which the place that is assigned to faith plays a peculiarly important part. These are the doctrines of Justification, Conversion, and Election. In each case the sola gratia of the Reformation is at stake.

If the function of faith in justification is limited exclusively to that of trustingly accepting, as a "fertiges Gut", the declared verdict of God concerning the sins of all men, then the sola gratia of the Gospel shines forth in all its pure splendor. If on the other hand faith is thought and spoken of as a factor, the factor which makes justification complete, objective justification is eliminated, and then the sola fide does not join the sola gratia in attributing glory to God alone, but inevitably diverts a part to man.

If in the article on Conversion faith is treated altogether as the gift of God, to the elimination of all boasting of man (Eph. 2:9), and to the exclusion of any contributory cause or act on the part of man, then again the sola gratia shines forth strong and clear, to the sole glory of God. But if the conferring of faith, though emphatically attributed to God alone, is even in the slightest degree conditioned upon the attitude of man, then the purity of the sola gratia is impaired and its rays are dimmed and beclouded. A part of the glory that is God's alone is diverted to man. A small but nevertheless decisive part in his conversion has then been contributed by man, and this favorable attitude which actually constitutes the first stirrings of faith, the first token of a new life, has thus been ascribed to the spiritual resources of unregenerate man.

In describing the doctrine of Election it is again of extreme importance that there be no confusion concerning the exact place assigned to faith. Does faith in any way determine or explain God's choice of an individual believer, or is our believing itself a result of that choice? Again the sola gratia is at stake. For unless it be clearly stated that the faith of the believer in time is itself a gift with which God in eternity, purely out of grace and for the sake of Christ, has endowed those whom He has chosen as His own, then this faith will stand there as a factor considered by God in arriving at His choice. It will be a cause outside of God, and the election will no longer be one of grace alone. If, however, Eph. 2:8 is heeded and faith is thought and spoken of as the gift of God, unto which He has chosen us from eternity (Eph. 1, 4F), then the sola gratia stands unimpaired, and the glory is God's alone.

These considerations touch upon the very heart of the Gospel and therefore are matters about which especially Lutherans should be particularly sensitive. The Sola gratia and sola fide are not separate and independent concepts, lying side by side on the same level. In that case they would contradict and neutralize one another. But the latter, sola fide, is rather an unfolding of the former, emphasizing and bringing into a sharp focus the true meaning of gratia sola (Ro. 4:16). Any deviation from this perfect relationship of the two terms to each other can only produce a distortion of the true picture.

A careful scrutiny of these three articles in the Common Confession - Justification, Conversion, and Election - especially with regard to the function assigned to faith, is therefore imperative.

Art. VI. JUSTIFICATION

Any clear and correct presentation of this article requires not merely the inclusion of the term "objective justification," but a clear statement that in the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ God has already declared every sinner righteous in His sight. For the non-imputation of the trespasses of the world



(2 Cor. 5:19) is to be identified with the establishing of a public verdict of acquittal (dikaioti Katastathesontai - Ro. 5:19) upon those whose justification was revealed and proclaimed by the Resurrection of Christ (Ro. 4:25).

This truth is impaired when the article states that forgiveness "has been secured and provided for all men." For this still leaves room for the thought that the justification of the sinner is not complete until the missing factor of personal (subjective) faith is supplied, a thought which is even suggested in the Article by its description of justification as taking place on the basis of Christ's righteousness, which He imputes to the sinner through the Gospel and which the sinner accepts by faith.

Since this formulation admits of false answers to the question concerning the function of faith in justification, the article must be rejected.

#### Art. VII. CONVERSION

In view of past controversies on this subject a clear and correct presentation of the doctrine of Conversion must include a rejection of the untenable distinction between a natural and a willful resistance of man, as well as of any other attempt at explaining the mystery "cur alii prae aliis?" (Cf. Brief Statement, Art. 12-14)

We note that the Common Confession not only fails to include such a specific rejection, but that its positive wording does not exclude the thought of man's preparing himself for conversion by his refraining from such willful resistance.

We also note the lack of any definite reference to the total spiritual disability of natural man as described in the classic passages (Eph. 2:1-3; Ro. 8:7; 1 Cor. 2:14), or of a clear statement on this subject (cf. Brief Statement, Art. 11). In view of the other deficiency mentioned above this is a particularly unfortunate omission.

Since the article thus leaves room for the error that man's conversion is at least in part conditioned upon his own attitude or preparation, and since this is precisely the issue that was in controversy between the synods of the American Lutheran Church and the Synodical Conference, it must, as a confession, be rejected. The purely receptive function of faith has not been maintained.

#### Art. IV. ELECTION

Since the Scriptural doctrine of Election is meant to comfort the believer with the assurance that his faith is secured unto him by God's eternal decree (Mt. 24:24; Eph. 1:3-5; 2 Tim. 2:19; 2 Th. 2:13), a correct presentation of this important doctrine must include

- a) a clear and unmistakable statement that this election is an election unto faith (Act. 13:48; Eph. 1:5; 2 Th. 2:13);
- b) the positive assurance that this election is a cause of our salvation and what pertains thereto (Trgl. 1065, # 8; Ro. 8:28-30; Jn. 10:27-29; cf. Jn. 6:65);
- c) definite recognition of the certainty of this election ("which cannot fail or be overthrown," - Trgl. 1079, # 45. Cf. also Mt. 24:24; Jn. 10:27-29; Ro. 8: 28-30, 38f.).

These vital and indispensable statements are, however, not to be found in this article of the Common Confession. This article must therefore be rejected because it fails to say what is required in a Scriptural presentation of the doctrine of Election. Acts 20:27; Deut. 4:2.

The article also falls short of confessional clarity by failing to state that God's eternal decree of election did not merely set up a description of

those who will be saved, but means that He has chosen "each and every person," a specific number, unto faith and eternal life. (Personenwahl - Form. Conc. S.D. XI, # 23; Brief Statement, Art. 39.)

Since the Common Confession in this article of predestination - by which doctrine the Scriptures take the matter of our faith and salvation entirely out of our hands and place it completely into the hands of our loving God and Father - neglected to assign clearly and unmistakably to faith its place in God's act of election, this confession thereby failed in the supreme test concerning the sola gratia, and has opened the gates wide for the synergistic error.

#### Art. V. MEANS OF GRACE

Whether the term "verbal inspiration" be used or not, it is certainly necessary that a confessional document which undertakes to present the doctrine of Inspiration for our times and conditions speak clearly and unmistakably on two points:

- a) that all that was written in the Holy Scriptures was given by the Holy Ghost;
- b) that as a result of this inspiration, and as an article of faith, inerrancy be claimed not merely for the Scriptures as a whole, but for each particular statement that they contain.

We note that Article V uses the expression "content and fitting word," occurring in the Pittsburgh Agreement and officially explained by one of the contracting parties as not meaning verbal inspiration. This interpretation has never been disavowed by the American Lutheran Church.

Furthermore, the words "Holy Scriptures in their entirety" are reminiscent of the "Schriftganzen" of former days, as well as of the "organic whole" of the ALC Declaration of 1938. The Pittsburgh Agreement also speaks of the separate books of the Bible, "taken together," as a complete, errorless, unbreakable whole. Each of these expressions falls under the judgment of an earlier critique, namely that it "makes the statement ambiguous because it may be understood in a limiting sense." (Quartalschrift, 1939, p. 216.)

Because the expression "verbal inspiration" has been under fire by men who really object to the substance of the doctrine we are convinced that under these circumstances we should not even yield the term.

The paragraph on the Lord's Supper states that in the Sacrament Christ enters into the most intimate communion with the members of His Church. If this is meant to refer to the communion of faith, it dare not be restricted to the Sacrament of the Altar, since Scripture knows no such limitation. If something else is meant beyond this, the article will lend encouragement and support to the current trend toward Sacramentalism, which is contrary to the Scriptural concept of the Means of Grace.

#### Art. IX. THE CHURCH

It is quite obvious that times which are marked by a strong trend toward church union call for particular care in defining the doctrine of the Church, lest there be a failure to cultivate true union or, on the other hand, a union be effected which is not in keeping with the Word of God. There must be careful consideration both of the true nature of the One Church, and of the principles governing the relation of various church bodies to one another. It is therefore essential that under such circumstances a confessional document offer a faithful picture of the Church which is the Body of Christ (Una Sancta), while at the same time duly recognizing the outward form under which this Church functions in the world; that it distinguish between the Church as it stands before God and

the Church as seen by men; that is emphasize the importance both of the invisible faith by which alone men become members of the spiritual Body of Christ, and of their public confession by which alone their mutual relations may be determined.

Hence it is clear that an official confessional document dare not fail to note the obvious implications of the differences which occur in the confessions of these various church bodies, judging them by the fidelity with which they teach the Gospel and administer the Sacraments (*notae ecclesiae*), and making faithful adherence to the Word of God in every respect the irremissible condition of church fellowship. The motivation for such insistence upon purity of doctrine should of course be the fact that the very existence of the Church is based upon the Means of Grace (Eph. 2:30), even as we are bidden of the Savior to observe all things whatsoever He has commanded us. (Mt. 28:20.)

## 1.

### THE NATURE AND WORK OF THE CHURCH

Applying these principles to this Article we find that the first paragraph speaks of the holy Christian Church as something which our Lord has created by His Word and Sacraments. With this thought we are in complete agreement, regretting only that this principle is not consistently applied in the subsequent development. It is externalizing the concept of the Church that this article throughout treats the "commission to preach the Gospel" as a "duty".

The truth that the Lord "filled the hungry with good things" (Lk. 1:53), and that then "out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh" (Mt. 12:34), that thus in preaching the Gospel "it is not ye that speak, but the Spirit of your Father which speaketh in you" (Mt. 10:20), is set aside, and the administration of the Means is reduced to a job imposed on man and executed by man.

The Church must ever be presented as a creation of the Lord also in the work which it performs on earth. This remains true of every individual Christian and of every group formation (no matter how small or how large, or how constituted and organized) in which Christians proclaim the Gospel.

Moreover, the concept "duty" applies to the recalcitrant Old Adam, which remains also in Christians. It thus shifts the attention from what the Church really is to something which is an obstacle to the Church.

## 2.

### THE MARKS OF THE CHURCH

We also agree when it is said that the efficacy of the Means of Grace does not depend on the faith of the administrant. But we hold that in this connection a further statement is indispensable, namely that this use of the Means of Grace constitutes the marks of the Church.

Since the Church (both as a whole and in every individual believer) is born of the Means, and lives by the Means, and administers the Means, the Means are the only, but also the infallible, signs of the presence of the Church (*notae ecclesiae*). Any alteration of the Means will vitiate them, and thus endanger the well being of the Church. Nevertheless the Means may not therefore be considered as constituting the "visible side" of the Church. For though they are essential to the very being of the Church, they are not a part of its essence, which is and remains the Communion of Believers (*communio sanctorum*). Church bodies which have the Means in the purity in which the Lord gave them to us are accordingly *ecclesiae purae*, while church bodies which adulterate the Means are *ecclesiae impurae*.

While among the membership of *ecclesiae impurae* the Lord may have many devout believing children, yet a Christian will heed the faithful warning of the Lord to "beware of false prophets" who in spite of their sheep's clothing threaten to devour him as "ravening wolves" (Mt. 7:15); and every orthodox church body will

carefully avoid fellowship with such churches as "do not hold fast the faithful word" because in spite of their "fair speeches" they are disrupting the (visible) Church, not taking their instructions from Jesus but from their own "belly" (Rom. 16: 17-20).

It is therefore again externalizing the concept of the Church when the Common Confession reduces fidelity regarding the Means, which is a matter of life and death, to a mere question of "duty."

### 3.

#### THE QUESTION OF CHURCH FELLOWSHIP

These considerations concerning the vital importance of the Means of Grace should also underlie the principles laid down in paragraph 5, rather than its renewed emphasis on "duty" and "directives". We are, however, aware that these terms may be correctly understood and except for the lack of definition of "un Scriptural cooperation" and the absence of any reference to the question of prayer fellowship, we find ourselves in wholehearted agreement with the principles in themselves. But we can not approve the statement that "We must also be alert and susceptible to the Lord's leading to establish and maintain fellowship with those whom He has made one with us in the faith." How can we recognize "those whom He has made one with us in the faith"? Their faith is invisible until it comes out into the open by word and deed. How can we know the "erring and wayward" except by their confession?

Furthermore, this statement is not only capable of several contradictory interpretations, but coming from a Church (the American Lutheran Church ) that has by official resolution committed itself to a policy of selective fellowship and occurring in a context that refers to "individuals, church bodies, or church groups," this interpretation may not be ignored, but must be recognized as the intended sense of one of the contracting parties, since it has not been specifically disavowed. And yet this policy ignores the fact that membership in a heterodox church body is in itself a part of the public confession, of an individual as well as of a particular congregation, and is therefore an evasion of the principles which have been correctly defined in the earlier part of this paragraph of the Common Confession.

To quote John 17:21 in this connection is also an obvious misapplication of the text. If we "are His brethren," must we then be "mindful....that we..... may be one"? Is this a "one"ness of our making? It is an outward union?

Therefore we cannot approve of this article of the Common Confession.

#### Art XII. THE LAST THINGS

Our Lutheran Confessions make, without further qualification, the solemn statement that the Pope is "the very Anti-Christ" (Trgl., P. 475, 10). - 2 Thess. 2 provides the Biblical warrant for accepting this as an article of faith. But the qualified statement of the Common Confession (still clearly discernible) leaves room for uncertainty as to the permanence of this conclusion.

We therefore hold that at this point the Common Confession does not adequately restate the Lutheran doctrine, now does it treat this matter as an article of faith, but rather as a historical judgment.

CONCLUSION - Omissions: In the foregoing we have referred to a number of serious omissions in the articles dealing with the doctrines that have been in controversy. In addition to these, we find ourselves constrained to state that in a confession drawn up for the purpose of establishing fellowship between the Missouri Synod and the American Lutheran Church also the doctrine of the Sunday would need to be included, since up to recent date it has been in controversy between these church bodies.