

STATEMENT OF REASONS
FOR
PRESENTING SUBSTITUTE RESOLUTIONS
ON
DOCTRINAL MATTERS
TO THE
1958 CONVENTION
OF THE
EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN SYNOD

AN OPEN LETTER TO THE UNION COMMITTEE OF THE EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN SYNOD

BY:

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Eau Claire, Wisconsin
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The Members of the Union Committee
Evangelical Lutheran Synod
Bethany Lutheran College
Mankato, Minnesota

Dear Committee Members:

Prof. G. O. Lillegard, Chairman
Prof. M. H. Otto
Rev. T. Aaberg
Dr. Paul Randolph
Mr. Stanley Ingebretson

The substitute resolutions which I presented to the 1958 Convention of the Evangelical Lutheran Synod concerning our Synod's membership in the Synodical Conference have been referred to your committee by the President for study, evaluation, and a report to the 1959 Convention of our Synod. The following presentation is a detailed statement of reasons which motivated me to prepare and introduce those resolutions. At this time I wish to express my sincerest appreciation to the Union Committee for giving me this opportunity to present my views in regard to these matters.

In studying and evaluating the resolutions and this presentation, I humbly request that you take into consideration the fact that I am not a theologian but rather that I am a layman with a limited background in these matters. As a layman, however, I am very concerned about and disturbed by the chaotic situation that now exists in the Synodical Conference---and in our own Synod too. The statements and reasons that follow represent an honest and a sincere attempt to objectively analyze and evaluate this situation---all from a layman's point of view. I have been encouraged in this endeavor by other laymen and by clergymen of our Synod alike. However, the statements, opinions, convictions, and recommendations expressed herein are wholly and purely my own which, after prayerful consideration, I feel the Lord has directed me to set down in this present document. They should not be construed to represent the views of any other group or any other individual. Should there be others who share my views, they will all have to speak for themselves in regard to these matters.

I am submitting this document in complete humility because of a fear and a love of God and because of a love for my Christian brothers throughout our Synod. I bare no malice toward anyone concerned in these matters. If, during the study of this presentation, any statement contained herein is construed to be a criticism of any official of our Synod or any other individual or group, I pray and hope that it will be considered as objective constructive criticism on an impersonal basis and that it will not be considered as agitation or interference. It is my hope that the method of presentation and format will not be considered as being cruel or brutal but rather as my manner of expression. Finally, it is my hope that this presentation will not be considered as being a complete chastisement of the Evangelical Lutheran Synod and all that it stands for, but rather as being a dissertation, perhaps critical, of only one portion of our Synod's many activities and responsibilities, namely church union.

As I view the perilous times in which we live and the gravity of the situation in which our Synod now finds itself, I cannot help but believe that our Synod will face a momentous decision at its 1959 convention with tremendous and far-reaching consequences. Accordingly, I also believe that it is not only necessary that your Committee becomes familiar with the reasons and arguments as to why I prepared and introduced the substitute resolutions at our 1958 convention, but also that each and every member of our Synod becomes similarly familiar. I recognize that there are many diverging points of view in our Synod today in regard to these matters. It is my intention, therefore, to distribute a mimeographed copy of this presentation to each pastor of our Synod upon receiving clearance from your Committee, or on or about March 1, 1959, with the hope that the Lord will move the recipients to bring these matters to the attention of their congregations prior to our 1959 convention. In proposing this wide distribution it is not my purpose to impose my reasons, my arguments, or my point of view as expressed herein on my brothers throughout the Synod, but rather it is my purpose to have these reasons and arguments made known, to have them considered and carefully examined, and to have their merits determined by each recipient prior to our 1959 convention. I am proposing this wide distribution not because of any lack of confidence in your committee, but rather because it is my firm conviction that each pastor and delegate at the 1959 convention of our Synod will have to declare himself, one way or another, in regard to these matters. With this wide distribution, the arguments expressed by some at our 1958 convention to the effect that the subject matter of these substitute resolutions was "new" and that insufficient time was available for proper consideration, particularly at the congregational level, should not re-occur at our 1959 convention!

May the Lord grant that the words and statements contained herein will be of service to our Synod!

another church body should be of tremendous concern to all of us and must be reviewed in accordance with the teachings of Scripture. Yes, it behooves all of us to take note now --- before it is too late!

PART II: BACKGROUND

The errors of the Missouri Synod which caused our Synod to invoke the apostolic injunction of Romans 16:17 pertain to certain unscriptural statements on the doctrines of objective justification, conversion, and election, and to certain unscriptural principles and practices governing prayer fellowship and unionism. These errors were probably due to an unrealistic and overly-zealous attempt by the Missouri Synod to settle its doctrinal differences with the unionistic and heterodox American Lutheran Church, and by modernistic inroads made in their own midst caused by the devil and all his angels in the name of the intoxicated "Ecumenical movement". These errors have been manifested in various acts, documents, policies, and practices of the Missouri Synod throughout the past twenty (20) years. They are, namely, the opening of negotiations by the Missouri Synod with the American Lutheran Church in 1935, without the consent of the other constituent synods of the Synodical Conference, for the purpose of settling past doctrinal differences between them with the goal of establishing fellowship relations; the adoption in 1938 by the Missouri Synod of The St. Louis Articles of Union which purported to be a doctrinal basis for union with the American Lutheran Church but which contained false doctrine as concerns the doctrines of objective justification, conversion, and election (the same old errors to which the American Lutheran Church had consistently subscribed through the years); the adoption in 1944 by the Missouri Synod of the Saginaw Resolution which drew an unscriptural distinction between joint prayer and prayer fellowship; the emergence in 1945 of the Chicago Statement, signed by a number of prominent Missouri Synod clergymen, which laid down unscriptural principles of church fellowship; the agreement between the Missouri Synod and the National Lutheran Council by which the Missouri Synod entered into joint welfare work and joint armed services work with a federation of liberal and heterodox Lutheran church bodies; the adoption in 1950 by the Missouri Synod of the Common Confession which was proudly hailed as a complete settlement of all past doctrinal differences between the Missouri Synod and the American Lutheran Church, but which also contained false or misstated doctrine and was inadequate as such a purported settlement because of its lack of antithetic statements; the participation by the Missouri Synod on the congregational level in the unionistic and work-righteous youth organizations and movements, such as the Boy and Girl Scouts, Campfire Girls, etc; and the participation by the Missouri Synod in the unionistic and Scripturally corrupt chaplaincy program of our nation's armed forces.

In 1 Corinthians 1:10 God clearly tells us through the Apostle Paul what our relationship with another church body in fellowship with us must be: "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." From the previously mentioned overt unionistic acts and practices of the Missouri Synod

--- from its acts of omission and commission --- it is entirely clear that our Synod and the Missouri Synod no longer spoke the same thing --- that our Synod and the Missouri Synod no longer were perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment. The Missouri Synod had caused divisions and offenses contrary to the doctrines which we had learned!

The actions of our Synod together with that of the Wisconsin Synod through the years in regard to these troublesome issues is a matter of historical record and ~~will not be dwelt upon here. It is our fervent prayer that the Lord will judge our repeated brotherly admonitions and protests these many years as having fulfilled His command in Galatians 6:1 which states, "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" and in Ephesians 4:2-3 which states, "With all lowliness and meekness, with long suffering, forbearing one another in love; endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace".~~

Since our Synod and the Missouri Synod are constituent synods of the Synodical Conference, our protests and admonitions were presented at the Synodical Conference level. The Synodical Conference, however, was controlled by the Missouri Synod by ~~virtue of its large size and consequent large majority. The response from the Missouri Synod in regard to our protests and brotherly admonitions is equally~~ a matter of historical record, and it will be sufficient to say that our protests met only with an unyielding spirit and attitude, year after year, which only tended to aggravate rather than resolve the issues. At the 1955 convention of our Synod the Union Committee reported that continued argument by word and pen would result only in indifferentism and in compromise of Scriptural doctrine and practice. It was reported that an impasse had been reached and that further negotiations would be fruitless. It was now obvious, as it was in Luther's day, that the Missouri Synod, like Zwingli, "had a different spirit"!

The time had come when our Synod must testify by action against the errors of the Missouri Synod. The time had come when our Synod must heed God's command in the apostolic injunction of Romans 16:17 and the warning stated in verses 18 and 19 following; "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. ~~For your obedience is come abroad unto all men. I am glad therefore on your behalf; but yet I would have you wise unto that which is good, and simple concerning evil.~~" Accordingly, in 1955 our Synod suspended fellowship relations with the Lutheran Church Missouri Synod on the basis of Romans 16:17. At that time our Synod also stated that the exercise of such relations cannot be resumed until the offenses contrary to the doctrine which we have learned have been removed by them (the Missouri Synod) in a proper manner. Our Synod further ~~stated that we wish to continue and establish fraternal relations with those who agree with us in our stand and who testify with us against these present errors and unionistic practices; and that we wish to labor for a re-alignment of Lutherans faithful to the Lutheran Confessions on more realistic lines than those which prevail under the present chaotic conditions in the Synodical Conference. Our Synod authorized its officers to attend to whatever problems may arise concerning our suspension of fellowship relations with the Missouri Synod in connection with the work of the Synodical Conference realizing that, in the case of cooperative~~

RESOLUTION NO. 1

"RESOLVED, that the Evangelical Lutheran Synod withdraw its membership from the Synodical Conference."

PART I: INTRODUCTION

In 1955 the Evangelical Lutheran Synod (Norwegian Synod) ~~suspended fellowship relations with the corporate body known as the Lutheran Church - Missouri Synod on the basis of Romans 16:17, which states "Now, I beseech you, brethren, mark them which cause divisions and offenses contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned; and avoid them."~~

This action, although remorseful and solemn, was taken only because the Missouri Synod had subscribed to certain teachings, practices, policies, principles, and statements on Scripture which were contrary to the Holy Word of God. This action was taken only after twenty (20) years of continuous testimony, memorials, and pleading by our Synod to our erring sister Synod had been without success and was to no avail. This action was taken only because the Missouri Synod had departed from the old Scriptural principles and the spirit of the Synodical Conference. Moreover, this action by our Synod was taken only after the Missouri Synod gave every indication that it would continue in its erring ways and pay no heed to our testimony. The evidence by which the Missouri Synod had convicted itself through deeds and false teachings and practices was considered by our Synod to have been sufficient and complete. No more evidence was needed. The Missouri Synod had indeed caused divisions and offenses contrary to the doctrines which we had learned. As a result, our Synod at its convention in 1955 with a sad heart took action and invoked the apostolic injunction of Romans 16:17 to the extent that fellowship relations with the corporate Missouri Synod were suspended.

That our Synod's action in 1955 was only partial and incomplete, and to that extent was perhaps ill-conceived, having resulted only in untold confusion and a possible weakening of our Synod's position, will be the subject of the greater part of this presentation. In these crucial days when orthodox Lutheranism is being subjected to its most severe tests by the devil through the modernists, it now behooves each and every one of us to take inventory of our own Synod's actions lest we may ignorantly or unwittingly succumb to the modernist and thus present the devil with his greatest victory. It behooves each and every one of us at this time to take account of and guard against, with all our might, those tendencies and actions of our Synod which indicate that we too are beginning to weaken --- which indicate that we too are beginning to place human reason and wishful thinking above God's Holy Word --- which indicate that we too are beginning to place the idolatrous "synod or church-body worship" above worship of God and hearing His commands --- which indicate that we too are beginning to parallel in practice, word, and deed those church bodies which we have, in the past, condemned for the same practices, words, or deeds. That our Synod may be unrealistically and over-zealously attempting to maintain fellowship relations with one church body and attempting to restore fellowship relations with still

schools, Bethesda Home, and other institutions of similar nature, it will take time to bring about a God-pleasing solution of their problems (p.46, 1955 Synod Report).

Our Synod had now taken action! This action, as far as it went, was in accordance with God's Holy Word. It was hoped that our Synod's action in 1955 was arrived at through conviction -- through the convictions of each and every pastor and delegate in attendance at the 1955 convention. From the statements of several of our Synod's constituent members and by the actions of our Synod since its 1955 convention, however, such a proper conclusion now appears to be somewhat questionable. This is unfortunate and most regrettable! In this connection it must be noted that, although our Synod suspended fellowship relations with the Missouri Synod, it did not withdraw from the Synodical Conference. Our Synod has, both prior to and since 1955, proclaimed its membership in that body as a constituent synod along with the Missouri Synod where we supposedly sit together in a so-called "unity of spirit, principle, and purpose." This is even more disturbing when one considers the fact that the Synodical Conference has been and continues to be controlled, through its large majority, by the Lutheran Church - Missouri Synod, a church body which our Synod has not officially been in agreement with nor in fellowship with since 1955. That our Synod took some action in accordance with God's Holy Word in 1955 is not being questioned in this presentation. That our Synod's action in 1955 was only partial and incomplete, however, is being questioned and criticized. Such incomplete action was most regrettable and it was not in accordance with God's Word. To a certain extent, such action represents hypocrisy --- such action represents only a qualified obedience to the Word of God!

It is conceivable that our suspension of fellowship relations came as somewhat of a shock to the Missouri Synod. It is conceivable that this amazement at our Synod's action manifested itself in a somewhat "changed spirit" at the Missouri Synod's 1956 convention. At that convention the Missouri Synod adopted certain resolutions, some of which seemed to sound a note of humility and regret which might possibly be an expression of genuine repentance. The 1956 convention of our Synod was held shortly after the Missouri Synod convention. There was insufficient time prior to our Synod's convention that year to properly study, interpret, and evaluate the new resolutions passed by the Missouri Synod. However, sensing a possible changed spirit within the Missouri Synod, faint though these possibilities were, our Synod in 1956 found it impossible to take any further action toward completing the severance of ties with the Missouri Synod without leaving a nagging doubt as to whether a genuine offer from the Missouri Synod had not been rejected. Perhaps, if our Synod at its 1956 convention had the time to take a second long, hard, look at some of the other resolutions which were adopted by the Missouri Synod at its 1956 convention but which were somehow overlooked by our convention, any such possible nagging doubt may have soon been dispelled. As a result of this sensing a changed spirit within the Missouri Synod, our Synod in 1956 authorized our Union Committee to meet with the union committees of the other constituent synods of the Synodical Conference to determine whether or not the constituent synods are now in doctrinal agreement while the suspension of fellowship relations with the Missouri Synod was maintained in effect. At that convention our Synod also expressed a desire to take part in a proposed international conference of conservative Lutheran theologians, affiliated with the Synodical Conference, to

Synod

this prior to their 1957 convention by means of addressing a series of questions to the Praesidium of the Missouri Synod. Upon receiving the answers in reply to these questions, the Union Committee for the Wisconsin Synod stated that "the major basis upon which we resolved to enter into further discussions with the Missouri Synod has been removed" (emphasis mine). From these replies to their questions, the Wisconsin Synod's union committee determined at the time that any hopes for a change in spirit in the Missouri Synod and that any signs given at its 1956 convention that might possibly be a sincere expression of humility, regret, or genuine repentance were false hopes and false signs. The questions and the answers thereto were presented to our Union Committee by the Wisconsin committee. Our Union Committee fully reported on these questions and answers to the 1957 convention of our Synod. Our Synod, however, seemed to pay little attention, if any, at its 1957 convention to the findings of the Wisconsin Synod's Union Committee. It would appear that in 1957, and again in 1958, our eyes had been closed to the seemingly obvious implications of the answers given by the Praesidium of the Missouri Synod to the queries submitted by the Wisconsin Synod's Union Committee!

PART III: OBSERVATIONS OF THE MISSOURI SYNOD SINCE 1955

It is fitting at this point to quote a considerable portion of the report concerning the 1958 Synodical Conference Convention written by the Chairman of our Synod's Union Committee which appeared in the October 1958 issue of CLERGY BULLETIN as follows:

"To judge by the attitudes and statements at the last meetings of the Union Committee, it would seem that we will be able to come to agreement on the doctrines and principles at issue in the Synodical Conference. After all, those in the Committee who stand for the traditional teachings and principles of the Missouri Synod have the tremendous weight of a century of sound teachings to support their contentions. But negotiations seem likely to break down when it comes to evaluating the Boy Scouts, the Chaplaincy, and unionistic practices in general. Yesterday's (Sept. 7th) MINNEAPOLIS TRIBUNE reported that a National Lutheran Council leader (Dr. Empie) had prophesied that the Missouri Synod would be a full-fledged member of the National Lutheran Council within ten years, basing his prediction on the fact that the Missouri Synod has been taking an increasing part in various activities of the National Lutheran Council. We believe that is a safe prediction to make as matters stand now. (emphasis mine) For the Missouri Synod will have to execute a definite "about face" if its old stand is to be maintained, and will have to exercise strict church-discipline if the growing (emphasis mine) liberal element is not to take complete charge of the Missouri Synod as a corporate body."

"Our Norwegian Synod suspended fellowship with the Missouri Synod in 1955 on the basis of the charge that there was false doctrine in the Common Confession, and that the Saginaw Resolution on Prayer Fellowship was unscriptural, or at least opened the door for sundry unionistic practices. If the Common Confession is effectively put aside and superseded by a correct statement of the doctrines at issue, and if the Resolution on Unionism adopted by the Synodical Conference in 1956 is upheld and put into practice, the way would be

prepare one clear, comprehensive statement concerning doctrine and practice for today on the basis of Scripture (p. 42-46, 1956 Synod Report).

To date the proposed international conference of conservative Lutheran theologians has not been held. The union committee of the constituent synods of the Synodical Conference have met repeatedly since 1956 to determine if the synods which they represent are now in doctrinal agreement. These committees have assumed the task of preparing a common doctrinal statement to serve the Synodical Conference as per resolution of the 1956 convention of the Synodical Conference, in conjunction with their task of determining whether or not the constituent synods are now in doctrinal agreement. It is understood that all basic doctrines which have been at issue in the Synodical Conference are being considered and studied, and a statement concerning each such doctrine is being prepared. It is also understood that each such statement will not be complete until it has been ratified by the Synodical Conference and by all of the constituent synods of the Synodical Conference in convention assembled. This is necessarily time consuming. Considering the progress that has been made to date by the committees, it would seem highly unlikely that this work will be completed prior to the middle or late 1960's, or even later. When and if completed, and that seems to be highly problematical, the ratified statements concerning each doctrine will be known as the Joint Statement of Doctrine.

Whether or not the task of preparing a common doctrinal statement to serve the Synodical Conference as per resolution of the Synodical Conference in 1956, a task originally intended by our Synod to be accomplished by the international conference of conservative Lutheran theologians, should have been assumed at this time under the conditions that prevailed in conjunction with the assigned task by our Synod of determining whether or not the constituent synods of the Synodical Conference are now in doctrinal agreement, is not important now since our Synod has approved of this action in 1957 and again in 1958, each time granting our Union Committee authority to continue their discussions and negotiations. Having been a delegate to the 1956 convention of our Synod, however, it must be reported that it was not the spirit nor thought of that convention that our Union Committee should become involved in a long, drawn-out series of discussions and negotiations extending over the years, possibly decades, in attempting to establish merely whether or not our Synod was now in doctrinal agreement with the Missouri Synod (and the other synods, as well) as a result of the seemingly hopeful expressions and resolutions the Missouri Synod had adopted at its 1956 convention. It was the spirit and the thought of our convention in 1956, moreover, that our Union Committee should meet with their counterparts representing the other synods of the Synodical Conference, particularly the Missouri Synod, as quickly as possible (within the year and confront them with the doctrines and practices at issue within the Synodical Conference so as to determine if that newly-acquired hope which we had derived from the resolutions adopted by the Missouri Synod was justified. Interpretations of these new resolutions by the Missouri Synod representatives would have surely been acquired in this manner so that we could then determine whether the divisions and offenses, which had been the cause of our Synod's invoking the apostolic injunction of Romans 16:17 in 1955, had been or were being, in fact, removed.

The Union Committee of the Wisconsin Synod acquired an interpretation of the so-called "hopeful" resolutions adopted by the Missouri Synod. They accomplished

cleared for establishing fellowship with the Missouri Synod again, unless we go beyond the demands made in 1954 and make the Boy Scouts and Chaplaincy questions the (original emphasis) issues on which to continue the suspension of fraternal relations. That is something which our Pastoral Conference and Synod should be prepared to discuss thoroughly by the summer of 1959."

Let us now review some of the actions or deeds of the Missouri Synod since our Synod suspended fellowship relations with that Synod in 1955. Whether the expressions made and the resolutions adopted by the Missouri Synod at its 1956 convention actually represent a "change of heart" or if they were only "good words and fair speeches to deceive the hearts of the simple" is not within our province to judge. However, the Bible does say in Matthew 7:20, "Wherefore by their fruits ye shall know them":

First of all, shortly after our 1955 convention (August 1955), President J.W. Behnken of the Missouri Synod in speaking for his Synod in the LUTHERAN WITNESS denied categorically and emphatically all protests which our Synod and the Wisconsin Synod had presented to the Missouri Synod concerning its errors. He stated that we had made "charges", but had not furnished convincing evidence from the Word of God to prove those "charges". To this we could only say that we had repeatedly, through the past many years, supplied the necessary convincing evidence from the Word of God but that this evidence had not succeeded in convincing President Behnken nor his Synod (p. 38, 1956 Synod Report).

Secondly, our Synod again asked the Missouri Synod to reject at its 1956 convention the 1938 St. Louis Articles of Union as a satisfactory doctrinal statement because it contained false doctrine. We had repeatedly pleaded with and had repeatedly asked the Missouri Synod to reject these resolutions ever since their adoption in 1938 but to no avail. It should be noted that in 1947 the Missouri Synod officially resolved "that the 1938 resolutions shall no longer be considered a basis for the purpose of establishing fellowship with the American Lutheran Church". Thus, the Missouri Synod abandoned the 1938 St. Louis Articles of Union only as a basis for negotiations with the American Lutheran Church and not as a statement of doctrine. Thus, they were set aside -- thus, they were withdrawn. But, they were not rejected and they still remained untouched as a confessional document. Not once did the Missouri Synod acknowledge officially that the 1938 Articles of Union even might contain false doctrine. What was the status of the 1938 Articles of Union prior to the 1956 convention of the Missouri Synod? They were an officially authorized doctrinal statement of the Missouri Synod, complete with false doctrine, ready to be seized upon and available for use by any and all would-be modernists and unionists as an officially approved basis for justifying their false teachings. What response did the Missouri Synod at its 1956 convention give to our Synod's request that they reject the 1938 St. Louis Articles of Union as a satisfactory doctrinal statement? Officially, our Synod's request was not even considered!

Thirdly, our Synod again asked the Missouri Synod to reject at its 1956 convention the Common Confession as a satisfactory doctrinal statement because it was inadequate and it too contained false doctrine. The Wisconsin Synod had similarly called for the rejection of the Common Confession because of its

inadequacy as a satisfactory doctrinal statement. We had repeatedly called for the rejection of the Common Confession ever since its adoption in 1950. Our pleas, together with those of the Wisconsin Synod, had gone unheeded. What response did the Missouri Synod at its 1956 convention give to our Synod's and the Wisconsin Synod's requests that they reject the Common Confession as a satisfactory doctrinal statement? The Missouri Synod officially stated that "whereas the Common Confession represented a sincere attempt on the part of that Synod to achieve unity of doctrine with the American Lutheran Church and, whereas honest and painstaking scrutiny of both Part I and Part II of the Common Confession had revealed nothing in conflict with the Sacred Scriptures and the Lutheran Confessions; therefore be it RESOLVED that the Common Confession, one document composed of Parts I and II, be recognized as a statement in harmony with the Sacred Scriptures and the Lutheran Confessions". The Missouri Synod also officially stated that "whereas it appears from recent historical developments that the Common Confession can no longer serve as a functioning union document; therefore be it RESOLVED that hereafter the Common Confession (Parts I and II) be not regarded or employed as a functioning basic document toward the establishment of altar and pulpit fellowship with other church bodies". Shortly after the conclusion of the 1956 convention of the Missouri Synod, the Wisconsin Synod's Union Committee addressed several questions to the Praesidium of the Missouri Synod in regard to the meaning of the resolutions adopted by the Missouri Synod at that convention. In response to a query from the Wisconsin Synod concerning which are the "recent historical developments" referred to at the 1956 convention, the Praesidium answered that the term "recent historical developments" refers to "the probable union of the American Lutheran Church with the Evangelical Lutheran Church and the United Evangelical Lutheran Church on the basis of the United Testimony on Faith and Life". It must be noted here that the Praesidium did not include in its definition of the "recent historical developments" the objections raised by the other constituent synods of the Synodical Conference against the Common Confession. In response to another query from the Wisconsin Synod as to whether the resolutions adopted by the Missouri Synod at its 1956 convention, in fact, set aside or replaced the resolutions adopted at its 1950 convention which proclaimed the Common Confession as a settlement of all past doctrinal differences with the American Lutheran Church, the Praesidium answered that the 1950 resolutions concerning the Common Confession have not been set aside or replaced but remain true and were upheld at the 1956 convention in the 1950 setting of negotiations. They further stated that the 1956 resolutions declare that the Missouri Synod stands by what they have said in the Common Confession, Parts I and II. The Praesidium further stated that the "recent historical developments", however, have induced the Missouri Synod to set aside the Common Confession as a functioning basic document toward the establishment of altar and pulpit fellowship with other church bodies (1957 Wisconsin Synod Report, p. 132-134). Thus, the Missouri Synod has abandoned the Common Confession only as a functioning basic document toward the establishment of fellowship relations with other church bodies and not as a statement of doctrine. Thus, it has been set aside --- thus, it has been withdrawn. But the Common Confession, like the 1938 St. Louis Articles of Union, has not been rejected. It still remains untouched as a confessional document. Not once did the Missouri Synod acknowledge officially that the Common Confession even might be inadequate or contain false

or misstated doctrine. On the contrary, they affirmed that it was a statement in harmony with the Sacred Scriptures and the Lutheran Confessions. It is true that the Missouri Synod adopted a resolution at its 1956 convention which stated that they reject any and every interpretation of documents approved by their Synod which would be in disagreement with the Holy Scriptures, the Lutheran Confessions, and the BRIEF STATEMENT. Nevertheless, with its long history these past 20 years of seemingly being unable to properly interpret the Holy Scriptures the Lutheran Confessions, and the BRIEF STATEMENT, wouldn't it be safe to presume that the Missouri Synod will continue to have difficulty recognizing these wrong interpretations unless it executes the "about face" referred to by the Chairman of our Union Committee? And why did the Missouri Synod set aside the Common Confession even as a functioning basic document toward the establishment of fellowship relations with other church bodies? There was only one official reason, and that was because the American Lutheran Church ran off and merged with two other heterodox church bodies. It is safe to say on the basis of the resolutions adopted by the Missouri Synod at its 1956 convention, that had not the American Lutheran Church taken the action it did, the Common Confession would be very much a functioning union document today, false doctrine and all. Now, it might be asked, what is the status of the Common Confession today? The Common Confession, like the 1938 St. Louis Articles of Union, is an officially authorized doctrinal statement of the Missouri Synod, complete with false or misstated doctrine. There is only one restriction on its use, and that is, it cannot be used as a document on which to base the establishment of fellowship relations with other church bodies.

Fourthly, our Synod again asked the Missouri Synod to reject at its 1956 convention the 1944 Saginaw Resolution on Joint Prayer and Prayer Fellowship. Our Synod had repeatedly called for the rejection of this resolution ever since its adoption in 1944. What response did the Missouri Synod at its 1956 convention give to this request by our Synod? The Missouri Synod officially stated that it has spoken clearly and unambiguously on fellowship, prayer fellowship, and unionism, and that, however, implications and interpretations have been attached to these expressions of the Missouri Synod which have disturbed the consciences of some; therefore the joint theological faculties of the Missouri Synod are requested to furnish comprehensive studies on these matters and make them available to the members of the Missouri Synod at least one year prior to its 1959 convention. It must be stated here that, although the studies were to be made available at least one year prior to the 1959 convention of the Missouri Synod, no action concerning these matters and the studies was indicated or directed to be taken at that convention or any future convention. The immediate implication of this action by the Missouri Synod is that these matters had not been previously studied, or at least not studied comprehensively by the Missouri Synod. After reviewing the report of our Union Committee to the 1955 convention of our Synod, one finds that this can hardly be the case. In this report it was stated that this matter was repeatedly, through the years, referred for study (p. 40, 1955 Synod Report). Then, it would seem that there can be only one other reason for this action by the Missouri Synod, and that is to promote further delay in taking any positive action concerning this matter of the 1944 Saginaw Resolution.

The Chairman of our Union Committee in his report on the 1958 convention of the Synodical Conference, as quoted previously, suggests that if the Common Confession is effectively put aside and superseded by a correct statement of the doctrines at issue, one of the conditions for the resumption of fellowship relations with the Missouri Synod will have been met. The term "effectively put aside" is a rather ambiguous term, and it is not clear what is actually meant. ~~However, there is only one way in which a statement of doctrine containing false doctrine can be effectively put aside. And that is to reject it --- not set aside --- not abandon --- not withdraw --- not cancel --- but plainly and simply, reject!~~ To advocate any course of action concerning a doctrinal statement which contains false doctrine short of outright rejection is in itself a compromise of the Sacred Scriptures! Any action short of outright rejection establishes a qualified obedience to Holy Writ! Consequently, any action other than outright rejection of false doctrine, if advocated, is not based on the Word of God but only on human reason and rationalization! Our Synod in the past has steadfastly and rightly insisted, based on the Word of God, that both the 1938 St. Louis Articles of Union and the Common Confession contain false doctrine. The Missouri Synod, on the other hand, at its 1956 convention affirmed that the Common Confession be recognized as a statement in harmony with the Sacred Scriptures and the Lutheran Confessions. Now, it is obvious that a doctrinal statement cannot be in harmony with the Sacred Scriptures and the Lutheran Confessions, and still contain false doctrine! On the basis of all past official pronouncements of our Synod concerning the Common Confession, we cannot advocate and pursue any action other than that which would call for the outright rejection of that document and still remain fully obedient to Holy Writ. On the basis of the official action taken by the Missouri Synod at its 1956 convention concerning the Common Confession, is our Synod even justified in continuing to hope any longer that they may reject it as a doctrinal statement? Or is our Synod now contemplating changing its stand and no longer willing to maintain that the Common Confession contains false or misstated doctrine so as to justify pursuing a course of action short of outright rejection? If this be the case, it would appear that our eyes then have surely been closed to the clear teachings of Scripture!

Let us now assume that the Common Confession can be superseded by a correct statement of the doctrines at issue. Such a statement no doubt, as long as it is Scripturally correct, would be adopted by all Synods in the Synodical Conference --- including the Missouri Synod. If the Missouri Synod is allowed to take some action concerning the 1938 St. Louis Articles of Union, the 1944 Saginaw Resolution on Prayer Fellowship, and the Common Confession short of their outright rejection, what will be their status under this new statement of doctrine in the Missouri Synod? What will be their status in the Synodical Conference? What will be their status in our Synod? If these statements which contain error and false doctrine are passively allowed to remain "on the books", which statement will contradict which? After all, the Missouri Synod will then have subscribed to all of them as doctrinal statements. It would seem that our Synod will have to adopt some sort of a chronological system of accounting for all the doctrinal statements adopted and used by the Missouri Synod so that we will know which statement to use in dealing with that Synod at a given time. Some will say that this is an exaggeration and is far fetched. But is it really far-fetched? Isn't this a very possible "end result"

of the present negotiations at the Synodical Conference level? It may be said by some that the Missouri Synod, as a corporate body, is not that insincere. On the contrary, the sincerity of the Missouri Synod certainly can and should be questioned! If the Missouri Synod really was concerned over any lovelessness or lack of brotherliness on their part in inter-synodical relations as they also officially stated at their 1956 convention, and if the Missouri Synod really no longer considers the Common Confession a functioning union document, why did they take the action they did concerning the Common Confession? Wouldn't it seem reasonable to expect that they would have rejected it, if for no other reason than out of love for their protesting brothers in our Synod and the Wisconsin Synod? Wouldn't it seem reasonable to expect that they would have officially considered, at least, our Synod's request concerning the 1938 St. Louis Articles of Union? What other possible use can these two documents have? What value are they to the Missouri Synod now? Or, does the Missouri Synod have some other use intended for these two statements of doctrine which is unknown to us at this time?

Let us continue our observations of the Missouri Synod since 1955. Although the Boy Scout issue and the Chaplaincy issue may not have actually been included as a basis of our 1955 resolution suspending fellowship relations with the Missouri Synod, are they not the fruits of the larger issue --- unionism? It's the fruits of this larger issue, however, that the average layman sees. He sees the Missouri Synod congregation with its Boy and Girl Scout troops, with its Campfire Girls, and yes, with its Walther Leagues conducting dancing parties. If he is a member of our nation's armed forces, he may occasionally meet a Missouri Synod chaplain. He sees and reads about the Missouri Synod pastors who lead joint prayers and take part otherwise officially in unionistic religious ceremonies at public secular gatherings. Although he knows that our Synod does not condone these practices, the average layman becomes confused if he is not absolutely certain about his Bible teachings. He finds it difficult to understand why our Synod does not condone these practices; yet, the Missouri Synod does. After all, he reasons, both Synods belong to the Synodical Conference and they are supposed to be agreed in these matters.

It has been variously stated in our Synod in recent years that there has been a change of spirit within the Missouri Synod. Let us now take another look at the Missouri Synod. How many Boy Scout and Girl Scout troops have been discontinued in the congregations of the Missouri Synod since 1955 because of Scriptural reasons? Very few, if any! In fact, the Missouri Synod at its 1956 convention encouraged the formation of these unionistic and work-righteous junior organizations within their congregations by transferring jurisdiction for them from that Synod's Commission on Fraternal Organizations to its Board of Young People's Work. This Board was also directed to prepare appropriate materials for the guidance of congregations who sponsor such organizations. How many chaplains have been recalled by the Missouri Synod since 1955 because of Scriptural reasons? Again, very few, if any! In fact, the Missouri Synod at its 1956 convention encouraged the faculty of Concordia Seminary in St. Louis to continue conducting its chaplaincy course so that the Seminary students may become informed of the need and requirements of this specialized ministry. Several of their men were lauded

for their efforts in this regard. Have there been fewer and fewer Missouri Synod pastors who participate in joint prayers and other religious ceremonies at public gatherings since 1955? Not so! On the contrary, time and again we see and read about formerly conservative Missouri Synod pastors who now take part in an official and a religious way at public secular functions.

Does this all sound like the Missouri Synod has changed its ways and has started walking in the old ways with us again? Unfortunately, NO! The seeds of unionism were sown in the Missouri Synod long ago. Unionism has grown and spread like "wild fire", making serious inroads throughout that Synod since 1955 as it did prior to that time. It is like a malignant tumor eating at the very heart and core of that Synod. Quite recently the Seminary students at Concordia Theological Seminary in St. Louis conducted a "straw vote" among themselves as to whether or not the Missouri Synod should become a member of the Lutheran World Federation. A substantial majority of those students who voted, favored membership in that heterodox body. At about the same time, a considerable number of Seminary students at St. Louis questioned, and thereby denied, the Verbal Inspiration of Scripture. Is this an indication of what the Missouri Synod will be like in the future? Is this the Missouri Synod of old? Is this the Missouri Synod with whom we are negotiating today, prayerfully, and hoping against hope that we may achieve agreement tomorrow? Are not these the signs of our times? Are these some of the signs that Dr. Empie used in basing his prediction that the Missouri Synod will be a full-fledged member of the National Lutheran Council within 10 years?

It would seem that the cancerous calamity of unionism will continue to consume conservative theologians and lay people alike in the Missouri Synod unless, as the Chairman of our Union Committee reported, that Synod executes an "about face" and exercises strict church-discipline to keep the liberal element from taking over completely. If this "about face" does not take place soon, it is not at all difficult to understand, judging on the basis of past policies, practices, and deeds, the prediction concerning the Missouri Synod's membership in the National Lutheran Council within 10 years. We must now ask ourselves, is the Missouri Synod ready, willing, and able to exercise strict and effective church-discipline? In order to answer this question, we must first ask ourselves are their lay people informed on these matters? Are all of their clergy informed on these matters? Are their congregations ready and willing to discontinue all the Boy and Girl Scout troops which are now numbered in the hundreds? Is the Missouri Synod ready and willing to recall all their chaplains? Are their chaplains ready and willing to be recalled? ~~Is the Missouri Synod ready and willing to stamp out all the other modernistic and unionistic practices, such as joint prayer, dancing, "high church", etc?~~ To all of these questions, based on the official record of the Missouri Synod and its deeds and practices, we must sadly answer an emphatic, NO! Then, is the Missouri Synod able to exercise strict and effective church-discipline? It would appear, not anymore --- not if it is to keep from bursting wide open at its seams!

~~A Missouri Synod congregation in Eau Claire, Wisconsin, was unaware of any controversies in the Synodical Conference until it was informed of them during a recent pastoral vacancy by its pastor-elect who met with the congregation to explain~~

his stand prior to accepting the call. A most liberal pastor of another Missouri Synod congregation in Eau Claire, who has given church burials to lodge members and who has conducted religious ceremonies at public functions, still maintains his office as pastor "in good standing". Is this an example of strict and effective church-discipline in the Missouri Synod?

Where is this so-called "change in spirit" by the Missouri Synod that has been referred to repeatedly in our Synod the past 2½ years? Can it be found anywhere? The official record of the Missouri Synod together with its acts, practices, and policies do not indicate that there has been such a change since 1955. Where is it then? Maybe this change can be found only in the Union Committee which represents the Missouri Synod of late. If that is the case, our Synod should thank God for having placed conservative, God-fearing men in that position. It may then be possible for an agreement to be reached with these men on the doctrines and practices at issue in the Synodical Conference as the Chairman of our Union Committee suggests. But do these men who represent the Missouri Synod on this committee actually represent the will of the Missouri Synod? Will the statements and agreements entered into by this group with our Synod's representatives actually be accepted and practiced by the Missouri Synod? These may be difficult questions for us to answer now. However, on the basis of past performance, including since 1955, we will certainly have to answer, "NO" to both questions --- until the Missouri Synod gives a clear indication that it has executed an "about face"! Doctor Pieper in CHRISTIAN DOGMATICS, Vol. III, page 423 states: "A church body is orthodox if the true doctrine, as we have it in the Augsburg Confession and the other Lutheran Symbols, is actually taught in its pulpits and its publications and not merely 'officially' professed as its faith. Not the 'official' doctrine, but the teaching determines the character of a church body, because Christ enjoins that all things whatsoever He has commanded His disciples should actually be taught and not merely acknowledged in an 'official document' as the correct doctrine". As long as our Synod persists in continuing the present negotiations, it is imperative that we keep this statement by Dr. Pieper always foremost in mind in judging the validity of any doctrinal agreement entered into by the Missouri Synod and in determining our future relations with that Synod.

There is still another unscriptural error or practice which many large Missouri Synod congregations have adopted and which our Synod will have to concern itself with in determining our future relationship with the Missouri Synod and the Synodical Conference. This error is variously known as "Romanizing tendencies", "high-church", etc. Our Synod has not as yet officially taken note of the existence of this practice, nor have we made any representations to the Missouri Synod concerning it. The Missouri Synod officially took note of this error at its 1956 convention and warned its pastors, teachers, and theological students to exercise an appropriate measure of caution in liturgical practices, and it instructed those officials concerned to deal vigorously with offenses in the area of liturgical practices. Although this represents a strong stand on the part of the Missouri Synod, it is necessary that we once again refer to Dr. Pieper's statement and draw a differentiation between what is stated and what is taught. Since that 1956 convention, a so-called learned Missouri Synod theologian has stated publicly words to the effect that the Lutheran Church is closer to the Roman Catholic Church in doctrine and practice than any other Protestant Church. Such a statement could

have been expected from officials of the heterodox Lutheran World Federation who are possessed with the Ecumenical intoxication that is sweeping the world; but hardly could it have been expected from a theologian of the Missouri Synod.

While attending the University of Wisconsin, I attended and was a member of the Synodical Conference sponsored Calvary Lutheran Student Center on the campus. All the while I attended the University, Calvary was under the able direction and supervision of an elderly conservative Missouri Synod pastor. Shortly after I graduated, this pastor retired and a new pastor was called. He was a young man and also a Missouri Synod pastor, originally from the West Coast. Quite recently I met one of my old college classmates whom I had gotten to know at Calvary and who had continued on at the University for his PhD. He was a member of a Missouri Synod country church, but he made his church home at Calvary while conducting his pre- and post- graduate studies, and after that, while he was employed as an assistant professor at the University. As could be expected in our meeting, the conversation eventually shifted to the various controversies that now beset the Synodical Conference. It was soon apparent that my friend had acquired a most liberal and unionistic point of view since I had last seen him nearly six years earlier. Among other disturbing ideas which he related was that he considered the liturgy to be the most important part of the church service. He stated that it is very difficult these days to find two pastors alike who will agree on the doctrines of the Bible and the interpretations thereof. He further stated that, because of this, the sermon cannot any longer be considered very important in a church service and the liturgy must assume an ever increasing role. I could not agree with him. I had always been taught that God's Holy Word was the most important part of any church service, and that the liturgy only prepared the sinner for receiving His Holy Word which comes to us in the sermon. In short, the liturgy is like a road-side marker --- it points toward the sermon. More recently, I attended a church service at Calvary. It will be sufficient to say that it was, all in all, a pretty good "show" but not much of a worship service in my opinion. I have singled out Calvary in this presentation because it was a matter of personal experience. However, we hear time and again about similar practices being conducted in churches, here and there, throughout the Missouri Synod.

Let us all remember that Calvary is a Synodical Conference sponsored institution. Although our Synod provides no monetary support for Calvary, it would seem that we do have a hidden responsibility --- a moral responsibility --- concerning what is preached and taught there as long as we persist in maintaining our membership in the Synodical Conference. In conjunction with the "Romanizing tendencies" in the Missouri Synod, it should also be noted that a number of its pastors are now advocating intercessory prayers for the dead. It would seem that our Synod will soon have to take official notice of these new errors that are contaminating the Missouri Synod!

As quoted previously, the Chairman of our Union Committee believes that it will be possible to reach an agreement with the Missouri Synod on the general doctrines and principles at issue in the Synodical Conference and that the way would then be cleared for establishing fellowship with the Missouri Synod again because in reality, the official basic stated reasons for suspending fellowship

relations in 1955 will then, in fact, have been removed. After reviewing all of the foregoing presentation, including those many, many other errors not included in the basic stated reasons for the suspension of fellowship relations, how can our Synod even consider lifting the suspension with only the basic general issues settled! It may be possible to achieve agreement with the Missouri Synod Committee on the doctrines and practices at issue. It may even be possible to reach agreement with the Missouri Synod Praesidium also. Every indication now, however, points to the fact that we will have tremendous difficulty in reaching agreement in practice with the whole Missouri Synod as a corporate body. And if such agreement is somehow ever reached, it may very possibly result only because we have altered or compromised our stand to some extent.

Missouri Synod officials have stated publicly on various occasions of late, words to the effect that conditions in the Synodical Conference have never been better. After considering all available evidence, both official and otherwise, how can such a statement, as a whole, be justified at this time as a statement of truth! Isn't it really fiction rather than fact? If conditions in the Synodical Conference have never been so good, we can only conclude that the Missouri Synod is speaking for itself. All available evidence indicates that the Missouri Synod as a corporate body has not altered its official position materially, if at all. If conditions within the Synodical Conference have improved greatly for the Missouri Synod, then the inference is obvious, namely, that both our Synod and the Wisconsin Synod have altered or weakened their respective positions. Is not the priceless heritage of God's Holy Word more valuable to our Synod than to willingly, or unwittingly, surrender it to the unionist? The prediction that the Missouri Synod will be a full-fledged member of the National Lutheran Council within 10 years, a prediction concurred in by the Chairman of our Union Committee as matters now stand, should haunt the consciences of us all as we ponder our Synod's future relations with that Synod and the Synodical Conference in 1959!!

PART IV: OBSERVATIONS OF THE WISCONSIN SYNOD SINCE 1955

The Wisconsin Synod provides us with a good example of what may happen to a church body that does not fully obey God's Word. Prior to 1955 the Wisconsin Synod was strong and stood solidly with our Synod on every controversial issue in the Synodical Conference. In 1955 their Union Committee recommended that the Wisconsin Synod terminate fellowship relations with the Missouri Synod on the basis of Romans 16:17-18. At their 1955 convention the Wisconsin Synod adopted the preamble to a resolution which called for the termination of fellowship with the Missouri Synod on the basis of Romans 16:17-18 but postponed the adoption of the resolution itself until a later date. In so doing the Wisconsin Synod embarked upon a policy of partial or qualified obedience to God's Holy Word. In adopting the preamble to the resolution, the Wisconsin Synod clearly placed the Missouri Synod under the indictment of Romans 16:17-18. The evidence was complete as far as the Wisconsin Synod was concerned in 1955 --- no more was needed! The Missouri Synod "had created divisions and offenses by its official resolutions, policies, and practices not in accord with Scripture" (1955 Wisconsin Synod Report). Thus, the Wisconsin Synod had "marked" the Missouri Synod --- thus, they had pronounced the Missouri Synod "guilty"! But there is where their action stopped. By postponing the adoption of the resolution itself, they failed to carry out the remainder of God's

command in the apostolic injunction of Romans 16:17, namely, "avoid them". Here is where the Wisconsin Synod adopted a partial or qualified obedience to God's Word. Having "marked", they failed to "avoid"!

The Wisconsin Synod gave as reasons for postponing action on the resolution the fact that this resolution had far reaching consequences and the postponement heeded the Scriptural exhortations to patience and forbearance in love by giving the Missouri Synod opportunity to express itself in its 1956 convention. The 1955 convention of the Wisconsin Synod was recessed until 1956 after the Missouri Synod had held its convention and the resolution terminating fellowship with the Missouri Synod was then considered again. At this recessed convention the Wisconsin Synod, like our Synod, sensed a "change of spirit" within the Missouri Synod. Having had insufficient time to study the significance of the resolutions adopted by the Missouri Synod, the Wisconsin Synod held their resolution terminating fellowship in abeyance until their 1957 convention. During the interim, the Wisconsin Synod's Union Committee addressed questions to the Praesidium of the Missouri Synod in order to establish the significance of the 1956 Missouri Synod resolutions as stated in Part III of this presentation. The answers to these questions by the Praesidium revealed that the Wisconsin Synod had based its action at its recessed convention in 1956 upon a false hope. Accordingly, in 1957 the Wisconsin Synod's Union Committee recommended to its Synod that fellowship with the Missouri Synod be terminated. The Wisconsin Synod at its 1957 convention, after long and bitter debate, voted to reject the report of its floor committee and the recommendation of its Union Committee, both of which called for a termination of fellowship with the Missouri Synod. In its place the Wisconsin Synod adopted a resolution which called for a continued vigorously protesting fellowship with the Missouri Synod. Once again the Wisconsin Synod had failed to heed completely God's Holy Word. Once again the Wisconsin Synod had placed the Missouri Synod under the indictment of Romans 16:17. Once again the Wisconsin Synod had pronounced the Missouri Synod "guilty". And once again the Wisconsin Synod did not take the complete action prescribed in that apostolic injunction. Instead of failing to take the prescribed action as it had done in 1955, this time the Wisconsin Synod flatly refused to take the action.

Here we have the picture, the Wisconsin Synod, which had been so strong in its stand through the years, now was weak! In 1957 the Wisconsin Synod was so weak that it could not even agree on the meaning of Romans 16:17. Since that 1957 convention, the Wisconsin Synod seems to have weakened even more. It appears no longer certain as to what it stands for. It appears no longer certain what the doctrines of Scripture at issue mean and has adopted a "doubt theology". In short, the Wisconsin Synod no longer walks in the old ways with us.

A number of pastors, teachers, and congregations have left the Wisconsin Synod since its 1957 convention because it failed to heed the clear teachings of Scripture and was now embarked on a unionistic course. More are certain to follow! Since their 1957 convention, the officials of the Wisconsin Synod have variously attempted to explain the actions of the Wisconsin Synod in 1955 and 1957. It would appear from a recent letter by Prof. Lawrenz, Chairman of the Wisconsin Synod's Union Committee, which was given wide circulation in the Wisconsin Synod, that a

"new" philosophy is being developed. In this letter by Prof. Lawrenz, he interprets the reason for the postponement of action by the Wisconsin Synod on its resolution terminating fellowship with the Missouri Synod in 1955 as being a lack of sufficient evidence. Yet, lack of evidence was never given in 1955 as a reason for this postponement. Is this not a rather empty argument now since sufficiency of evidence has nothing to do with the action postponed, but has only to do with establishing the basis for applying the indictment contained in Romans 16:17? The Wisconsin Synod was able to apply that indictment to the Missouri Synod unanimously with the evidence at hand in 1955 when it approved the preamble to that resolution! Once the indictment was applied, no evidence was needed to "avoid them". However, Prof. Lawrenz does not accept that fact. He maintains that there is an area wherein human judgment must enter in order to determine when to comply with the "avoid them". It would seem that Prof. Lawrenz does not recognize that to "avoid them" is pure and simple obedience to God's Word after the erring brother has been "marked". Thus, Prof. Lawrenz has adopted for the Wisconsin Synod a policy of qualified obedience to the Sacred Scriptures --- obedience qualified by human judgment. In this connection, it should be noted here that the "new" (new in spirit, not necessarily in membership) Union Committee of the Wisconsin Synod is satisfied that the 1956 convention of the Missouri Synod "effectively set aside" the Common Confession. This stand is contrary to the stand taken by the "old" Union Committee.

This example by the Wisconsin Synod of a conservative church body beginning to decay and disintegrate because it did not heed God's commands should serve as ample warning to us all. If our Synod intends to remain true to the Scripturally founded doctrines, and yet persists in remaining a member of the Synodical Conference we may find ourselves, in the not too distant future, having to deal with the Wisconsin Synod like we have had to deal with the Missouri Synod these past many years. It would seem that the Wisconsin Synod is causing offense to our Synod by virtue of its continued fellowship with the Missouri Synod, regardless of the technicality that it is now being called a "protesting" fellowship. It would seem that the same would apply to the Slovak Synod too.

PART V. OBSERVATIONS OF OUR SYNOD SINCE 1955

This, perhaps, will be the saddest part of the entire presentation. In 1955 our Synod suspended fellowship relations with the Missouri Synod, both of which were constituent Synods of the Synodical Conference. But our Synod did not withdraw from the Synodical Conference, well knowing that the Synodical Conference was controlled by the Missouri Synod. This ambiguous action by our Synod was justified in our midst at the time by a genuine desire not to suspend fellowship relations with the Wisconsin and Slovak Synods. Admittedly, the proper procedure in accordance with the Scriptures and in accordance with the constitution of the Synodical Conference, after our Synod had suspended fellowship relations with the Missouri Synod, would have been for the Missouri Synod to withdraw from the Synodical Conference. After all, they were the ones that had caused the divisions and offenses, and they were the ones that had departed from the old Scriptural principle

and the spirit of the Synodical Conference. But it was illogical for us to presume or expect that the Missouri Synod would take such an action since they controlled the Synodical Conference by virtue of their large majority. It was even more illogical for our Synod to presume that the Missouri Synod would vote itself out of the Synodical Conference especially since, as we have seen throughout this presentation, the Missouri Synod has steadfastly maintained that they are not guilty of the errors that our Synod has claimed. The burden then fell upon our Synod to carry out completely the God given command to "avoid them" by withdrawing from the Synodical Conference, regardless of the fact that, in the process, we would have also withdrawn our fellowship with the Wisconsin and Slovak Synods at that level. It was our Scriptural duty to do so, but we did not act! We refused to withdraw from the Synodical Conference in 1955, 1956, 1957, and in 1958. Our Synod's obedience to God's command in the apostolic injunction of Romans 16:17 was incomplete!

Let us consider for a moment the implications of our Synod's action, or more appropriately, lack of action, since 1955. We have boldly stated to the world that our Synod no longer walks hand in hand in the bonds of fellowship --- in true unity of spirit and purpose --- with the Missouri Synod because of that Synod's official adherence to false doctrine and unscriptural practices. On the basis of that pronouncement by our Synod, our pastors and congregations were asked, and rightly so, to cease all fellowship relations with all pastors and congregations in the Missouri Synod who were not of one mind and one spirit with us. Yet, at the same time, our Synod has proclaimed before all the world the fact that we are still members of the Synodical Conference. At this level our Synod together with the Wisconsin and Slovak Synods --- and, yes, with the Missouri Synod too --- participate in joint negotiations; participate in and contribute to joint endeavors, such as mission work, cooperative schools, cooperative institutions, etc; and even participate in fellowship. Yes, we are doing all this at the Synodical Conference level jointly with a church body with which we are neither in doctrinal agreement nor in fellowship. This situation is most confusing to the layman. Our Synod has, in fact, implied by its actions that what applies at the congregational level concerning our suspension resolution does not apply at the synodical level. By its actions at the Synodical Conference level, our Synod has adopted a dual or double standard of values. By these actions our Synod has acquired a split personality. But worse than that, our Synod by its continued membership in the Synodical Conference and by its actions at that level, has adopted a policy of partial and qualified obedience to God's Holy Word. This is most shocking and is inexcusable! This is a compromise of the Sacred Scriptures! Is there even one passage in Scripture that will support our present policy of a dual standard which results in a partial and qualified obedience to Holy Writ? Romans 16:17 does not say "avoid them at this level and fellowship with them at that level". It just clearly and simply states "avoid them"! There are no exceptions --- there are no qualifications! Since Romans 16:17 clearly does not condone our present policy, doesn't it seem that this policy is being justified only through human reason and rationalization?

The awkward position in which our Synod presently finds itself is somewhat of a paradox in that we are not practicing what we preach. In fact, we ourselves are now guilty of unionistic practices at the Synodical Conference level. This present state of affairs is a rather sad commentary on confessional Lutheranism!

Through the years our Synod has roundly and soundly criticized the World Council of Churches, the Lutheran World Federation, the National Lutheran Council, the American Lutheran Church, the Evangelical Lutheran Church, and more recently, the Missouri Synod for unionistic practices. Yet, here we find ourselves guilty of the same practice. Considering the principle of the matter only, just how much different is our Synod's somewhat promiscuous relationship with the Missouri Synod in the Synodical Conference from that of the relationship which the Missouri Synod presently has with the constituent church bodies which compose the National Lutheran Council?

What has been the net result of our apparent dual-standard qualified-obedience policy toward the Missouri Synod? It practically means that we have taken no stand at all. It appears that we are straddling the fence! Our Synod is neither with the Missouri Synod nor against them. Our policy is contradictory and meaningless. What little effect our overall suspension resolution may have had on the Missouri Synod in 1955 has long since gone by the board. And that is because we as a Synod did not place our suspension resolution into effect and enforce it at the level where it may have done the most good -- the place where the Missouri Synod would have felt the affects of our suspension resolution most --- the Synodical Conference level. This is especially apparent when one considers the relative sizes of the two Synods involved. In our 1955 suspension resolution we stated that we would labor for a re-alignment of Lutherans faithful to the Lutheran Confessions on more realistic lines than those which prevail under the present chaotic conditions in the Synodical Conference. If it is really our purpose to labor for such a re-alignment of Lutherans faithful to the Confessions, can we honestly say that we have shown them the way by remaining in the Synodical Conference with the Missouri Synod? Can we honestly say that we have even encouraged them? By continuing our membership in the Synodical Conference our Synod is presenting to the whole wide world a lie because such membership automatically implies that we are walking hand in hand with the Missouri Synod in true unity of spirit and purpose, preaching the unconditioned Gospel. This lie is causing untold confusion within our Synod, within the other Synods, and throughout the Lutheran Church as a whole. God commands in 1 Corinthians 14:40 "Let all things be done decently and in order". It would hardly seem that our Synod is complying with that command. In continuing this practice of "whisky-washy" dual standard, qualified obedience, our Synod is now being despised by liberal and conservative men alike throughout the Lutheran Church. In short, our Synod appears to have lost its self-respect! Most of the pastors and teachers who have recently left the Wisconsin Synod because of its failure to obey God's Word want no part of our Synod either. Why? Because they would be refuting the stand they took when they left the Wisconsin Synod if they joined or practiced fellowship with our Synod now with its present policy and practice. They definitely feel that our Synod's present position or stand is meaningless as long as we remain in the Synodical Conference.

In our 1955 suspension resolution we stated that we desired to continue fraternal relations with those who agree with us in our stand and who testify with us against the errors and unionistic practices of the Missouri Synod. This has been interpreted as establishing a practice of "selective fellowship" by our Synod. Whether or not "selective fellowship" by our Synod or its individuals can

be justified on the basis of Scripture is beyond the knowledge of the author of this presentation. However, "selective fellowship" has been practiced by a number of our pastors and congregations with Missouri Synod pastors and congregations since our Synod suspended fellowship relations with the CORPORATE Missouri Synod in 1955. Because individual human judgment is involved in determining what constitutes "unity of spirit and purpose" a wide variation in "selective fellowship" standards has developed, depending upon how liberally or how conservatively this phrase is interpreted in each instance. A certain amount of misunderstanding and offense has been caused in our Synod because of the wide variation in the practice of "selective fellowship" with Missouri Synod pastors and congregations.

Our Synod's continued membership in the Synodical Conference, since our 1955 suspension resolution has also been justified, to a large extent, on the basis of "selective fellowship". Our Synod has maintained that we remain true to the old Scriptural principles and spirit of the Synodical Conference, whereas it has been the Missouri Synod that has departed from these principles and this spirit. On the basis of "selective fellowship" our Synod has reasoned that it can and should continue its membership in the Synodical Conference and continue its fellowship with those synods, congregations, and individuals who agree with us in our stand and who testify with us against the errors and unionistic practices of the Missouri Synod even though these synods, congregations, and individuals continue to maintain officially their fellowship with, their affiliation with, or their membership in the Missouri Synod. This line of reasoning does not seem to be in complete accord with Scripture, at least not in complete accord with Romans 16:17!

Our Synod's 1955 resolution stated that we suspended fellowship relations with the Lutheran Church - Missouri Synod, a corporate body. As a corporate body, the Lutheran Church - Missouri Synod is an entity --- a legal entity --- of the visible church here on earth. As in the case of all corporate bodies, the Lutheran Church - Missouri Synod is composed of members acting together as a unit in order to pursue or accomplish a common purpose. The will of any corporate body concerning a particular matter or issue is usually the will of the majority of its membership, and the minority should be and is always considered to be abiding by the will of the majority in regard to that matter or issue as long as they retain their membership in the corporate body. This is true regardless of the fact that the minority may never agree with the will of the majority in regard to that particular matter or issue. This is true as long as the minority remains subordinate to the will of the majority, whatever the reason. This is true only until the minority removes itself from the will of the majority --- by removing itself from the corporate body.

In the case of the Lutheran Church - Missouri Synod, or any other synod for that matter, its membership is composed of individual congregations, pastors, and teachers. We can only presume that, in the case of the issues in controversy within the Synodical Conference the past two decades, the will of the Lutheran Church - Missouri Synod has been and continues to be the will, either knowingly or ignorantly, of the majority of its members. We are aware that there has been a substantial minority of its congregations, pastors, and teachers who have not been in agreement with the majority as expressed in the will of the Lutheran Church - Missouri Synod in regard to these matters at issue within the Synodical Conference.

Yet, this minority must be considered officially as abiding by the will of the majority as long as they remain in membership with the Lutheran Church - Missouri Synod, no matter how loudly and long they may protest the will of the majority and no matter what the reasons may be for continuing their membership in the Lutheran Church - Missouri Synod. This minority can only remove itself from being considered as abiding by the will of the majority, by terminating its membership in the Lutheran Church - Missouri Synod. In 1955 our Synod placed the whole Lutheran Church - Missouri Synod as a corporate body under the indictment of Romans 16:17. In so doing we placed the minority of that Synod as well as its majority under the indictment. In suspending fellowship relations with the corporate Lutheran Church - Missouri Synod, we suspended fellowship relations with the minority of that Synod as well as its majority. It must be noted here that our suspension resolution does not state that we suspended fellowship relations with those in the Lutheran Church - Missouri Synod who no longer are of one mind and spirit with us, but rather our resolution simply states that we suspended fellowship relations with the Lutheran Church - Missouri Synod. On this basis the practice of fellowship (selective fellowship) by our Synod with the minority of the Lutheran Church - Missouri Synod is in itself a breach of our 1955 suspension resolution. Yes, it is true that our Synod in that same resolution further on stated that we desired to continue fellowship relations with those who agree with us in our stand and who testify with us against the present errors of the Lutheran Church - Missouri Synod. However, if this latter statement by our Synod is applied to the minority of the Lutheran Church Missouri Synod in attempting to justify "selective fellowship", isn't this a contradiction of the basic resolution itself? If our basic resolution had stated that we suspended fellowship relations with those in the Lutheran Church - Missouri Synod who are no longer of one mind and spirit with us, then this latter statement would be complimentary, rather than contradictory, and our resolution would then clearly sanction "selective fellowship" with the individual members of that Synod.

By formal agreement the Wisconsin Synod and the Slovak Synod are in fellowship with the Lutheran Church - Missouri Synod and with our Synod. Church bodies in fellowship with one another officially imply, on the basis of Scripture, that they are of one mind and one spirit. Since we have determined that the Lutheran Church - Missouri Synod and our Synod are no longer of one mind and one spirit and have, as a result, suspended fellowship relations, doesn't it follow that officially our Synod is no longer of one mind and one spirit with the corporate Wisconsin Synod and the corporate Slovak Synod as long as they officially persist in maintaining fellowship relations with the corporate Lutheran Church - Missouri Synod? Doesn't it follow that their official will to continue fellowship relations with the Lutheran Church - Missouri Synod, as determined by the majority of their members, has been causing offense to our Synod since 1955 no matter what the circumstances of that fellowship may be? Wouldn't it seem, on the basis of our suspension resolution, that the practice of fellowship relations with the Wisconsin Synod and the Slovak Synod on any level is also prohibited as long as these synods maintain their official fellowship relations with the Lutheran Church - Missouri Synod?

If "selective fellowship" is to be practiced, how long is it to continue with a synod in fellowship with the Missouri Synod or a congregation maintaining membership in the Missouri Synod? Does it continue indefinitely? Or, is there a

point reached when we must sever our relations with such a congregation or Synod even though they continue to stand with us and testify with us? If so, how is this point determined? Is it by human judgment? If it is by human judgment, does this not place us in the unscriptural position of claiming then that human reason is necessary in determining when to "avoid them"? It must be noted that they had been "marked" officially by our Synod ever since 1955.

Let us now take a page from our own Synod's historical beginning back in 1917 and look to the level of the congregation for a possible clearer example for this argument. A congregation in most cases is also a corporation. Its membership consists of individual human beings. Let us assume that one of the congregations in our Synod finds that it can no longer agree with the doctrinal position of our Synod. Let us also assume that, for conscience sake, it is the will of the majority of that congregation to terminate membership in our Synod. Let us also assume that within this congregation there is a substantial minority who desires to remain in fellowship with our Synod and who agrees with our position, but for some reason continues its membership in that congregation. Would our Synod and its remaining member congregations still consider themselves to be in fellowship with that congregation? It is safe to presume that they would not since the congregation's name would be struck from the membership rolls of our Synod. Would our Synod and its remaining member congregations still consider themselves to be in fellowship with the minority of that congregation who agrees with the position of our Synod? It would also be safe to presume that they would not, at least not as long as the minority continues to abide by the will of the majority by continuing its membership in that congregation. Moreover, it is very likely that our Synod would strongly recommend and encourage this minority to withdraw from the congregation and form a new congregation. We would, no doubt, justify our attitude and action on the basis of Romans 16:17 and 1 Corinthians 1:10. Once this had been accomplished, fellowship with this new congregation by our Synod probably would then be considered. If this is the attitude and action which our Synod would take in regard to a congregation, one of our former congregations, why do we apply a different attitude or standard to the synodical level? Wouldn't it seem that, rather than having maintained or continued fellowship (selective) with the minority of the Missouri Synod since 1955, our Synod should have strongly recommended and encouraged those congregations of the Missouri Synod who agree with us to withdraw from that Synod and form a new Synod? Wouldn't it seem that after this had been accomplished, our Synod would then consider the establishment of fellowship relations with this new Synod?

Let us return to the example of the congregation that has left our Synod. Let us now assume that one of our other remaining congregations agrees with the stand taken by our Synod but, for some reason, officially continues to practice fellowship with that congregation while retaining its membership in our Synod. What would be the attitude of our Synod and its other congregations toward this congregation? Wouldn't we consider this congregation as having committed error? Wouldn't we strongly recommend and encourage this congregation to desist from this practice of fellowship if it desires to continue its membership in our Synod? Wouldn't we even bring pressure to bear, based on Scripture, on this congregation to desist in this practice? And if this congregation did not heed our Synod's request, wouldn't we terminate its membership in our Synod also? If our Synod would take this attitude in regard to a member congregation, why do we apply a different attitude

or standard to the synodical level? Wouldn't it seem that we should be strongly encouraging the Wisconsin Synod and the Slovak Synod to desist from its official practice of fellowship with the Missouri Synod? In short, why does our Synod insist on applying a different standard to matters at the synodical level than it does at the congregational level? Why does our Synod insist on applying today a different standard to matters and issues at the synodical level than applied at those same levels back in 1917 and which probably is the very reason for our Synod's existence today?

The members of our own Synod are no longer in agreement! After the suspension resolution was adopted by our Synod in 1955, most of our pastors and congregations ceased all fellowship with Missouri Synod pastors and congregations. Some, however, took no action and continued on as if nothing had happened, justifying their position on the basis of "selective fellowship". This lack of action by some of our pastors and congregations has been offensive to others in our Synod. At the present time some of our pastors believe that our Synod's protests to the Missouri Synod have been heard and satisfied and that fellowship relations can and should be resumed as soon as possible. Others in our Synod believe that nothing has been settled and that conditions in the Missouri Synod and the Synodical Conference are actually becoming worse. The repeated, prolonged, and seemingly endless negotiation between our Synod and the Missouri Synod are a continuing source of trouble in our midst. The temptations to compromise doctrine and practice are always present in these negotiations. There are some in our Synod who are of the conviction that our Synod had little or no justification for continuing the present negotiations with the Missouri Synod in 1957 and again in 1958, particularly after the significance of the 1956 resolutions of the Missouri Synod had been interpreted by its Praesidium, and especially since our Union Committee had reported to our 1955 convention that further negotiations with the Missouri Synod would be fruitless, that an impasse had been reached! Those who hold this point of view are of the conviction that any further negotiations with the Missouri Synod cannot be justified until we have some tangible indication of a definite "about face" on its part! On the other hand, there are others in our Synod who believe that the Missouri Synod has changed back to its old ways again and that the present negotiations should be continued, whatever the cost.

It is clear that we in our own Synod are not agreed. It is apparent that we are certainly not as strong in our stand today as we were in 1955. Our Synod's indecision and split-personality may have weakened it to the point where, by compromise, it could stray from the pure doctrines and practices which have been its very foundation. It is possible that our Synod, as we know it today, may eventually disintegrate! May God forbid! However, the same decay that is occurring in the Wisconsin Synod is apparently occurring in our Synod also. A number of our pastors and congregations are not prepared to continue much longer in our Synod's present course and policies no matter which point of view they may advocate!

PART VI: ACTION

It is obvious that our Synod finds itself in a most distressing, awkward,

ambiguous, contradictory, and unscriptural position at the present time in regard to its dual relationship with the Missouri Synod and the Synodical Conference. With the help of God, a way must be found to correct this unfortunate situation --- a way must be found to free ourselves from this curse --- and it must be accomplished with all possible haste! To continue our present course will only result in more confusion and chaos both within and without our Synod; will only result in a further weakening of our Synod that will lead to its disintegration; and will not result in a God-pleasing solution to the problems and issues within the Synodical Conference. Due to these present conditions, it is nearly impossible for any layman of our Synod to either accurately or adequately testify concerning our Synod's stand or position. This we cannot continue!

The present negotiations being conducted between the constituent Synods of the Synodical Conference, even if successful, will not resolve completely the issues between our Synod and the Missouri Synod until, to use the words of the Chairman of our Union Committee, the Missouri Synod executes a definite "about face". As of this date, there is no indication that such an "about face" is contemplated or forthcoming. Our Synod continues in these negotiations only at the risk of compromising Scriptural doctrine and practice. By the time our Synod meets in convention in 1959, twenty-five (25) years, a quarter of a century, will have elapsed since the first issue developed in the current series of controversies with the Missouri Synod. There is little, if any, tangible evidence to show that our repeated and seemingly endless negotiations these many years with the Missouri Synod have borne any fruit. There is little, if any, tangible evidence to show that our testimony and our repeated admonitions and protests to the Missouri Synod these many years have even been heard. It is possible, although extremely doubtful, that the present negotiations may result in an agreement on the general doctrines and practices at issue between our Synod and the Missouri Synod. However, we must constantly keep in mind the fact that in the Missouri Synod of today there is considerable difference between the statements it accepts or the resolutions it adopts and the teachings and practices it condones or even encourages! Let us not be deceived by any agreement arrived at prior to the necessary "definite about face", for such an agreement will surely not be built on "rock" but only on "sand"!

There is a Bible verse which states (Galatians 5:6) "A little leaven leaveneth the whole lump." To put it another way, one rotten apple in a barrel of apples spoils the whole barrel. God has never permitted this simple fact of life to work in the opposite direction; that is, the good apples never make the rotten apple good and wholesome again. In the Missouri Synod, the seeds of unionism were sown long ago. Their roots have been deeply imbedded and it is very unlikely that they will ever again be eradicated. The "leaven" has also been sown in the Wisconsin Synod. Referring to the illustration of the apples, that Synod appears to be over-ripe and about to decay. The Wisconsin Synod no longer walks in the same old ways with us, and our former fears of forsaking our brothers in that Synod, if we withdraw from the Synodical Conference, no longer apply. The fact of the matter is, they are now beginning to forsake us. If our Synod continues on its present course, we can rest assured that the "leaven" will be sown in our midst also, if it hasn't been already. God, through the Apostle Paul gives us a clear warning and command in 1 Corinthians 5:6-8 as follows: "Your glorying is not good. Know ye not that a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump? Purge out therefore the

old leaven, that ye may be a new lump, as ye are unleavened. For even Christ our passover is sacrificed for us! Therefore let us keep the feast, not with old leaven, neither with the leaven of malice and wickedness; but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth." Let us now heed that warning and command!

After analyzing the present calamitous situation in which our Synod finds itself, there appears to be only two courses of action available to our Synod which will remedy this situation. One is to lift the suspension and resume normal fellowship relations again with the Missouri Synod. In order to take this action, however, our Synod must have a proper basis for doing so. One such basis, and the only basis in keeping with God's Holy Word, for this proposed action would be that the divisions and offenses contrary to the doctrine which we have learned have been removed by the Missouri Synod in a proper manner. From all of the foregoing discussion we can clearly see that this has not been accomplished by the Missouri Synod, and it now appears very unlikely that this will ever be accomplished at least not completely. It is much, much too premature to even consider lifting the suspension at this time on this basis. The only other basis on which the suspension could be lifted at this time is to completely disregard God's Holy Word and not require that the offense be removed. If our Synod took this action, we would be casting our lot with the liberals, the modernists, and the unionists within the Missouri Synod. We would then be rejecting all our previous testimony, admonitions, and protests for the past twenty odd years. We would be compromising the Scriptural doctrines and practices. If our Synod took this action, we would clearly show all the world that we no longer fear and love God. Such action is unthinkable --- at any time!

The other course of action available to our Synod is to break cleanly and completely with the Missouri Synod. That is, in addition to changing the present status of fellowship relations from that of being in suspension to that of being terminated, to terminate also our membership in the Synodical Conference and to cease all joint endeavors associated with it, including negotiations. This would also include the disestablishment of the practice of "selective fellowship" as it concerns all pastors and congregations, regardless of stand, in the Missouri, Wisconsin, and Slovak Synods. We have a very sound basis for taking this action --- our own salvation, if nothing else. If our Synod took this action, we would then be righting many of the errors which our Synod has permitted itself to commit or become engaged in in recent years. Such action would eliminate much of the confusion and chaos that now exists in our own Synod and in the other Synods of the Synodical Conference. By withdrawing from the Synodical Conference and by disestablishing the practice of "selective fellowship" with those Synods, we, both as a Synod and as individuals, would then be able to clearly show all the world that we stand firm on the solid rock of God's Holy Word and that we refuse to walk hand in hand with the liberals, the modernists, and the unionists. Such action by our Synod would certainly serve to strengthen and encourage those conservative pastors, teachers, and congregations who may yet remain in the Missouri, Slovak, and Wisconsin Synods, and those who have previously left those Synods. Our Synod would clearly show by such action that we are really and truly "laboring for the re-alignment of Lutherans faithful to the Lutheran Confessions on more realistic lines than those which prevail under the present chaotic conditions in the Synodical Conference". By withdrawing

from the Synodical Conference, our Synod may yet shock the Missouri Synod into a full realization of the divisions and the offenses which they have caused, and it may serve to re-awaken the Wisconsin and Slovak Synods. But more than all this, such action may well serve to unify our own Synod once more, and then we as a Synod and as individuals --- with clear conscience --- will be able to concentrate more whole-heartedly on preaching the unconditional Gospel because we have dissociated ourselves completely from those who do not agree with us!

It was in accordance with these reasons that I prepared and introduced Resolution No. 1, "RESOLVED, that the Evangelical Lutheran Synod withdraw its membership from the Synodical Conference", at the 1958 convention of the Evangelical Lutheran Synod. It is true that not all of these reasons were thought of at the 1958 convention of our Synod when this resolution was prepared and introduced. Some of these reasons were thought of since then and some are based on information that has been made available since the convention. Nevertheless, it is my firm conviction that they all apply. May God grant your Committee the wisdom, the strength, and the courage to adequately consider and recommend appropriate action concerning this resolution to our Synod at its 1959 convention! Once this has been done, may God also grant that our Synod will take action concerning this resolution at the 1959 convention in a way that will be pleasing to Him!

RESOLUTION NO. 2

"RESOLVED, That we continue the present discussions by our Union Committee with the Union Committees of the other Synods of the Synodical Conference,"

PART I: BACKGROUND

This resolution was reluctantly included with Resolution No. 1 at the 1958 convention of our Synod. This resolution was only prepared and introduced when it seemed apparent that there was a prevailing and an over-riding spirit at that convention to continue those discussions and negotiations at the Synodical Conference level. This spirit was variously expressed, but it was to the effect that only one more year was needed to determine if our Synod was in doctrinal agreement with the other Synods of the Synodical Conference because the Union Committees would certainly get to the problems at issue within the Synodical Conference now that the preliminary work and discussions had been completed. It was also expressed that our Union Committee had spent much time and energy in preparing our Synod's position in regard to these issues and that we should not cast aside their efforts now that they were so close to utilizing them in the negotiations. At the time, I did not completely agree with this attitude because I felt that our Synod ran the tremendous risk of compromising the Scriptural doctrines and practices so dear to our Synod by continuing these negotiations with the Missouri Synod. However, I finally went along with the spirit of the convention in this regard with the belief that my first resolution was the really important resolution and that to continue the negotiations one more year after all these years would probably do no harm.

At the time Resolution No. 2 was prepared and presented to the 1958 convention, it was envisioned that the negotiations between our Synod and the Wisconsin, Missouri and Slovak Synods would be continued outside the framework of the Synodical Conference. It should be noted, however, that the 1958 convention authorized the continuance of these discussions within the framework of the Synodical Conference. This amounted to a rejection of Resolution No. 2 by our Synod and therefore nullified the purpose of that resolution subsequent to the 1958 convention.

PART II: REPUDIATION

Although the statements contained in Part I above represent, to the best of my recollection, an honest and a sincere re-statement of the position I held with respect to Resolution No. 2 at the time of our Synod's 1958 convention, I must respectfully report that I can no longer agree with the stand I took at that time. If I were presenting these substitute resolutions to our Synod at this present time, I could not include Resolution No. 2, and, if the subject matter of Resolution No. 2 were presently under consideration by our Synod, I would now have to call for its immediate rejection. My reasons for this change of position have been variously stated under the presentation for Resolution No. 1. For one thing, I sincerely believe now that the spirit of the 1958 convention of our Synod was in itself a deception. It was illogical to presume that only one more year was required to establish whether

our Synod is in doctrinal agreement with the other Synods of the Synodical Conference. In fact, it is now obvious that that was an impossible presumption to make. Due to the very nature of these negotiations and due to the intricate mechanics that are involved, our Synod will not know if it is in doctrinal agreement with the other Synods of the Synodical Conference until each of the statements being drawn up by the various Union Committees in these negotiations concerning the doctrines and practices at issue is either finally ratified or finally rejected by each Synod in convention assembled. And it is to be presumed that the work of the various Union Committees will not be completed until the final statement has either been ratified or rejected by each Synod. This will not take one more year, but many more years. Let us take our own Synod, for example. The first statement of doctrine (Verbal Inspiration) produced by these negotiations was presented to our Synod at the 1958 convention. This statement was referred to the General Pastoral Conference for study. If this study is completed by the time of our 1959 convention, our Synod will then have the opportunity to act on this statement at that time. This will have taken one year's time after it was first presented to our Synod. But what about those Synods that do not meet in convention every year? And as statements are completed on the more controversial doctrines, how much time will be required by each Synod for further study? How many times will these statements have to be amended in the process of attempting to gain ratification? Then, can all this actually be accomplished in just one more year as was expressed at the 1958 convention of our Synod? Certainly, no!

Secondly, it is now my firm conviction that the authorization to continue the current negotiations with the Missouri Synod, granted by our Synod in 1957 and again in 1958, was ill-conceived. It should be noted here that the authorization to begin these current negotiations, granted by our Synod in 1956, is not being questioned. I now firmly believe that the authorization to continue these negotiations was not based on proper grounds --- not on Scripture. In considering this point, we must remember that the authorization to begin these negotiations was granted after, not before, our Synod had officially placed the Missouri Synod under the indictment of Romans 16:17 and had suspended fellowship relations. On the basis of Scripture there can be only one justifiable reason for which further negotiations with a church body under the indictment of Romans 16:17 can be authorized --- and that is to see if the divisions and offenses which caused the indictment have been removed. Such negotiations are not for the purpose of gathering additional evidence to prove that the indictment was correct. Such negotiations are not for the purpose of presenting further protests, testimony, and admonitions. It is presumed that the evidence was all sufficient and thoroughly studied and weighed prior to placing that church body under the indictment of Romans 16:17. If the evidence was not sufficient, then the indictment itself was ill-conceived! On the basis of Scripture further negotiations with a church body under the indictment of Romans 16:17 can be justified for the purpose of actually determining whether, in fact, the divisions and offenses have been removed, only after there has been some reasonable indication by that church body's official actions which would show that these divisions and offenses might have been removed. In the case of the Missouri Synod, after having been placed under the indictment of Romans 16:17 in 1955 by both our Synod and the Wisconsin Synod, they adopted certain resolutions at their convention in 1956, although vague in wording, that indicated they may have repented --- that indicated the divisions

and offenses may have possibly, in part, been removed. Faint though these possibilities were, it was then our Synod's God-given duty under our 1955 resolution to investigate this matter to see if the divisions and offenses had actually, in fact, been removed. Our Synod in 1956 authorized our Union Committee to do just that! Subsequent to the 1956 convention of the Missouri Synod, the Praesidium of that Synod clarified and established the implications of those resolutions wherein our Synod had detected the possibility of offenses and divisions being removed. From these clarifications, it was now crystal clear that such was not the case. At this point, all negotiations by our Synod with the Missouri Synod should again have ceased. However, that did not occur. These negotiations were continued in 1957 and again in 1958. Was the justification for continuing these negotiations based upon some official tangible indication that the divisions and offenses had been or were being removed? Not so! Then, what has the justification of these continued negotiations with the Missouri Synod been based upon? It would seem that they were justified only on the faint hope that some day, sometime in the future, the Missouri Synod may remove the divisions and offenses. As of this date, that has not occurred nor is occurring. This fact is borne out by the official record of the Missouri Synod and by the statements of the Chairman of our Union Committee in his report on the 1958 Synodical Conference convention quoted previously in this presentation under Resolution No. 1 on page 8 ("For the Missouri Synod will have to execute a definite 'about face' if its old stand is to be maintained, ---"). I firmly believe that the above reason given for justifying these continued and prolonged negotiations is inadequate, unfounded, and Scripturally incorrect. I do not believe that these negotiations, justified on such a premise, will ever be completely successful or will produce the results our Synod had intended. Therefore, to continue them is not only wrong, but certainly not worth the risks and temptations to our Synod which are necessarily involved.

Finally, if our Synod withdraws from the Synodical Conference as specified in Resolution No. 1, there will be no need for any further negotiations with the other constituent Synods. Our stand will then have been made unmistakably clear. Then, if any congregation or synod expresses to our Synod a desire to establish fraternal relations with us, or if we desire to consider extending the bonds of fellowship to another synod or church body, our Synod can authorize, if available evidence justifies it, special negotiations for that purpose so that we can deal with them separately and individually.

I thank God that He has opened my eyes to this matter of continued negotiations with the Missouri Synod and that He has given me a better understanding of the actual mechanics and intricacies involved in these negotiations!

PART III: THE CONSEQUENCES OF CONTINUED NEGOTIATIONS

It is being stated in our Synod of late that the present negotiations and discussions being conducted between the union committees of the constituent synods of the Synodical Conference should be continued because they are very beneficial in that they provide the first opportunity during these many years of conflict to determine whether or not the synods are actually in doctrinal agreement, and, if

not, where the actual differences exist. Is this not a rather hollow or empty argument for attempting to justify the continued existence of these negotiations? Are the supporters of this argument trying to convey to us the impression that during these many years our Synod did not know if it was in doctrinal agreement with the Missouri Synod? Are they attempting to convey to us the impression that our Synod does not now already know where its differences with the Missouri Synod actually exist? This is a rather illogical situation. If this be the case, it would appear that our Synod's suspension of fellowship relations with the Missouri Synod in 1955 was premature and ill-conceived in that we did not know if we were actually in disagreement with the Missouri Synod. If this is the case, what about the endless hours spent in discussions with the Missouri Synod prior to 1955? What about the volumes of evidence, protests, and correspondence gathered prior to 1955? Are they out of date and no longer applicable? It would seem that such an argument is not in keeping with the facts and, as such, is invalid!

It is also being stated in our Synod that we and the other synods of the Synodical Conference need a new and correct statement of the doctrines at issue --- a clear, comprehensive statement concerning doctrine and practice for today on the basis of Scripture. In fact, our Synod officially subscribed to this idea by authorizing participation in the proposed international conference of conservative Lutheran theologians at our 1956 convention. Why do we need another correct statement of the doctrines at issue? Are not the Sacred Scriptures and the Lutheran Confessions enough and adequate in this regard? Or, have they become obsolete? Are they no longer clear, comprehensive, and adequate for the needs of this 20th century era? Must we have statement after statement heaped one upon another --- one complicating another --- one contradicting another --- one refuting another --- one correcting another --- one restating another? How much confusion will all this create? How are the lay people ever going to understand this sort of confusion? Let's insist on the abolition or rejection of those statements or portions thereof that are unclear and those that contain false doctrine and principles not in accord with the Scriptures! Wouldn't it seem imperative that we keep our theology Scriptural but simple so that the lay people can understand it?

It would seem from the report by the Chairman of our Synod's Union Committee, as quoted in this presentation under Resolution No. 1 on page 8, that our Synod is negotiating and doing business with another church body that gives every indication of becoming more and more liberal and unionistic as time goes by rather than returning to its old Scriptural stand and principles. It obviously appears that our Synod "has the cart in front of the horse" insofar as the present negotiations are concerned. Isn't it imperative that our Synod should now delay any further negotiations with the Missouri Synod until there is indisputable evidence that would show the Missouri Synod has executed or is executing an "about face" as referred to in that report? Yet, in the same report by the Chairman of our Union Committee above, he tells us that, to judge by the attitudes and statements at their last meetings, it would seem that we will be able to come to agreement on the doctrines and principles at issue in the Synodical Conference. What is he trying to convey to us here? What kind of an agreement does he suppose this will be? By what foundation will such an agreement be supported? Is the Chairman of our Union Committee explaining to us that in order to achieve this agreement our Synod is prepared to forsake the Sacred

Scriptural doctrines and principles to a certain extent? Or, is he telling us, sub-consciously, that we are dealing with a unionistic church body which will agree to anything for agreement's sake only? From the report by the Chairman of our Union Committee, it would not be illogical to presume that, by continuing the present negotiations with the Missouri Synod, we are unwittingly negotiating our own membership in the National Lutheran Council! It is difficult to see how any argument attempting to justify our Synod's continued negotiations with the Missouri Synod under these conditions can be based on anything but human reason and wishful thinking. May God forbid any agreement with the Missouri Synod under these conditions and build on such a weak foundation!

Our precious Savior tells us in Matthew 7:24-27 "Therefore whosoever heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them, I will liken him unto a wise man, which built his house upon a rock: And the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell not: for it was founded upon a rock. And every one that heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them not, shall be likened unto a foolish man, which built his house upon the sand: And the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell: and great was the fall of it." If any agreement that we may achieve with the Missouri Synod is built on "sand" rather than on "rock", surely great will be the fall of it also!

May the Lord grant your committee a proper understanding of my changed point of view in regard to Resolution No. 2!

RESOLUTION NO. 3

"RESOLVED, that we again declare our desire to maintain and establish fraternal relations with those synods, congregations, and individuals who are of one mind and spirit with us in matters of Christian doctrine and practice."

PART I: BACKGROUND

This resolution is a re-statement of a portion of our Synod's 1955 resolution which suspended fellowship relations with the Missouri Synod. Out of love for our Christian brothers and in compliance with God's Holy Word, the subject matter of this resolution should always be the goal of our Synod under the proper circumstances. It is in keeping with our purpose of laboring for a re-alignment of Lutherans faithful to the Lutheran Confessions. This resolution will be especially significant, fitting, and proper upon our Synod's withdrawal from the Synodical Conference.

PART II: PURPOSE

The three resolutions which are the subject of this entire presentation, and which have been referred to your committee for study, evaluation, and a report to the 1959 convention of our Synod; were intended to be a substitute proposal for the second resolution presented by Floor Committee No. 6 at our 1958 convention. At the time these resolutions were presented to the convention, our Synod had just adopted the first resolution introduced by the Floor Committee which states "RESOLVED, That our pastors and people heed the admonition of our president not to participate in meetings which might serve to involve our Synod and cause misunderstandings." To the layman the immediate implications of this resolution and Resolution No. 3 of the substitute proposal are that, taken together, they are contradictory and confusing. Unfortunately, although separated by a period of three years in their adoption, the subject matter of both resolutions now represent the officially expressed desires of our Synod.

It was a purpose of Resolution No. 3 to point out to our Synod this confusing and contradictory atmosphere. If our Synod had considered Resolution No 3 at its 1958 convention, it would seem that Resolution No. 3 would have had to been rejected in the interests of consistency since the first resolution presented by the Floor Committee had already been adopted. On the other hand, if Resolution No. 3 had been considered and adopted, it would seem that our Synod would have had to reconsider its action in connection with the first resolution presented by the Floor Committee. Because of their implications, it would seem that these two resolutions, as they are now written, cannot stand side by side as approved wills, desires, or actions of our Synod. In these troubled times it is imperative that our Synod express itself always in a clear, unequivocal, and non-contradictory manner!

CONCLUSION

A Synod, like a congregation or an individual, is worthy of its existence only so long as it adheres to God's Word. When a Synod departs from God's Word, it is doomed. It may continue to exist but only because of the patience and long-suffering of God. Church history shows us that God throughout all time has repeatedly purged His church so as to cast out the "old leaven" and "keep the feast" (1 Corinthians 5:7). Sad as it may seem to us, it is very possible that He is preparing to purge our own Synod too. We must all remember, however, that our Synod had its humble beginnings as a result of such a purge.

Our precious Savior tells us in Matthew 6:24, "No man can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon." He further tells us in Matthew 10:37-38, "He that loveth father or mother more than me is not worthy of me: he that loveth son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me. And he that taketh not his cross, and followeth after me, is not worthy of me." It is true that God commands us to restore an erring brother in the spirit of meekness. It is true that God requires us to be patient and long suffering in dealing with an erring brother so as to endeavor to keep the unity of spirit in the bond of peace. It is also true that God commands us to "mark" an ~~erring brother~~ when he causes offense and persistently refuses to heed our testimony, admonitions, and protests. It is also true, however, that once having "marked" an erring brother, God commands us to "avoid" him -- at all times and in all places as long as he remains heedless. The responsibility for restoring him as he persists in his heedless ways is then no longer in our hands but is in God's hands. If our repeated and patient attempts to restore a heedless erring brother go beyond the requirements of God, we then have become blinded by our goal. We then lose sight of the fact that we are actually placing our goal above God. This is idolatry! This is a sin against the First Commandment. If the pleasures of this world and the inconveniences involved in exactly following God's Word cause us to neglect or put-off doing God's Will, we also sin against the First Commandment. Can it be possible that our Synod's present dilemma has been caused by a subconscious worship of the Missouri Synod -- of the Wisconsin Synod -- of the Synodical Conference -- of our own Synod? Let us now heed Christ's warning! Our Synod cannot serve two masters! We cannot serve God and mammon! If we, as a Synod, are to be worthy of Him, we must take up the Cross and follow after Him!

Mere ignorance of the Law and Gospel will not be a "saving" factor on Judgment Day. Mere ignorance of civil law, although possibly a mitigating circumstance in assessing punishment, is not a factor in determining the guilt of an accused who has transgressed the law. Mere ignorance of error does not justify continuation in error, adherence to error, nor endorsement of error. Ignorance of the errors by our Synod, and the other Synods as well, does not remove from us God's command to do His Will. Ignorance of the errors of the Missouri Synod by the lay people, and pastors too, of our Synod does not justify lack of obedience or even partial obedience to God's Holy Word in dealing with the Missouri Synod and the Synodical Conference. May the Lord open the eyes of all of us so that we as individuals, as congregations, and as a Synod will see our errors and those of the other Synods as well!

It may seem after reviewing the foregoing presentation that Resolution No. 1, which calls for our Synod to withdraw its membership from the Synodical Conference, will not, if adopted and standing alone, completely clarify our Synod's position. Perhaps to that extent Resolution No. 1 is incomplete. If our Synod determines to withdraw from the Synodical Conference, it may deem it advisable and necessary to adopt a more detailed series of resolutions which would serve to clarify its position more completely and remove confusion. Such a detailed series of resolutions might include the following necessary items: An emphatic reaffirmation of our Synod's desire to remain true and fully obedient to the Word of God and the Lutheran Confessions; changing the present status of our fellowship relations with the Missouri Synod from that of being in suspension to that of being terminated; termination of our membership in the Synodical Conference and all joint endeavors associated with it; rejection of that portion of our 1955 resolution which permitted "selective fellowship"; a declaration that continued fellowship relations by our Synod with those synods, congregations, and individuals who officially stand and testify with us but who also officially continue fellowship with, affiliation with, or membership in the Missouri Synod, is impossible as long as they retain their ties with the Missouri Synod; a reaffirmation of our Synod's purpose to labor for a realignment of Lutherans faithful to the Lutheran Confessions along more realistic lines than those which prevail under the present chaotic conditions in the Synodical Conference and elsewhere; a declaration of our Synod's desire to establish and then maintain fraternal relations with those synods, congregations, and individuals who are of one mind and spirit with us in matters of Christian doctrine and practice; and a request to our member congregations so concerned that they proceed with all deliberate haste to terminate, in a God-pleasing way, all joint endeavors that they may be engaged in with other congregations or groups on a Synodical Conference basis.

There is no doubt that the Evangelical Lutheran Synod faces a momentous decision at its 1959 convention. Our Synod will have to declare itself one way or another as concerns our future relations with the Missouri Synod and the Synodical Conference. Our Synod will have to take note especially that our fellowship relations with the Missouri Synod have, since 1955, been in a "suspended" status which, by definition, is temporary and implies a more permanent action is to be forthcoming. Our Synod will have to recognize that the present status cannot, in accordance with Holy Writ and for our own good, be continued. Our Synod will have to review again the MEMORIAL presented in 1957 by Rev. Arthur Schulz. Our Synod will have to recognize that, once having "marked" a church body as having caused divisions and offenses, it is not within the sphere of human judgment and reason to determine when to "avoid", whom to "avoid", and whether there be any hope that the church body will ever turn away from its errors. Our Synod will have to seriously review and recognize the urgent admonition contained in 1 Corinthians 5:6-8. We will have to take note that "our glorying is not good". We will have to recognize and heed that Scriptural precept, "Know ye not that a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump?" Our Synod will have to recognize the present total chaotic synodical conditions and, using the Sacred Scriptures as a basis, face them squarely!

It is my fervent prayer that each pastor and delegate at the 1959 convention will, with the guidance of the Holy Spirit and with God's Holy Word before him,

judge the evidence properly and vote his convictions in determining our Synod's decision without concern for the things of this world. It would be regrettable if our Synod's decision was attained as a result of political compromise in a "fence-mending" gesture rather than by conviction. Such a decision would not be God-pleasing. Such a decision would only lead to future controversies within our midst. It may be far better that our Synod disintegrate now rather than remain, embarked on a course of action determined by political compromise in a "fence-mending" gesture dictated by "Synod love" over and against fear and love of God. All in all, there is only one course of action which our Synod can take in regard to synodical matters --- that which is in keeping with the Sacred Scriptures. If that course is taken, there need be no thought of compromise and "fence-mending" in our Synod. God will then do the "fence-mending", if any is needed!

May God grant our pastors and delegates at the 1959 convention of our Synod the wisdom, the strength, and the courage to vote their convictions in determining our Synod's momentous decision! With Christ as our light, may God grant that our Synod will so shine as to be a light unto the world in these troubled times!

Respectfully submitted,

Loren C. Borgwardt

LOREN C. BORGWARDT
1404 Hogeboom Ave.
Eau Claire, Wisconsin
Member of Ascension Ev. Lutheran Church

LCB:jmb

Copy to:

Rev. M. E. Tweit, President
Evangelical Lutheran Synod

Rev. J. G. Anderson, Vice-President
Evangelical Lutheran Synod

Prof. N. A. Madson

Rev. Keith Olmanson

All Pastors

Evangelical Lutheran Synod

(Mimeographed copy on or about March 1, 1959)

A SUPPLEMENT TO MY LETTER OF NOVEMBER 28, 1958!

Eau Claire, Wisconsin
March 10, 1959

The Members of the Union Committee
Evangelical Lutheran Synod
Bethany Lutheran College
Mankato, Minnesota

Dear Committee Members:

Prof. G. O. Lillegard, Chairman
Prof. M. H. Otto
Rev. T. Aaberg
Dr. Paul Randolph
Mr. Stanley Ingebrétson

This represents a supplement to my Statement of Reasons for Introducing the Substitute Resolutions on Doctrinal Matters to our Synod's 1958 Convention, which I presented to your Committee on November 28, 1958. It is based on information and material that has been made available since my November presentation was written. I request that you also consider this supplement in your deliberations concerning the Substitute Resolutions. It is my intention to distribute a mimeographed copy of this supplement to each pastor of our Synod as an attachment to the mimeographed copy of my November presentation.

On February 3, 1959, information was received that the Lutheran Church - Missouri Synod had declined to undertake exploratory talks at this time leading to possible affiliation with the National Lutheran Council. In the ASSOCIATED PRESS release concerning this matter, it was stated that Dr. Behnken had notified the 41st annual convention of the National Lutheran Council that the Missouri Synod "respectfully declined" the invitation at this time. He was quoted as saying that the Missouri Synod is working toward greater Scriptural harmony in doctrine and practice with the Wisconsin, Norwegian, and Slovak Synods and is awaiting the outcome of several mergers now in the process of negotiation (emphasis mine). On the surface this is a gratifying gesture by the Missouri Synod in that they have, for the time being at least, officially declined these talks with the National Lutheran Council. However, let us not be deceived (Romans 16:18)! It would be interesting to find out what Dr. Behnken had in mind when he said that the Missouri Synod is awaiting the outcome of several mergers now in the process of negotiation. Perhaps a recent issue of the Missouri Synod's LUTHERAN WITNESS sheds some light on this matter.

In an article entitled "What Happened at Oslo?" on page 21 of the February 10, 1959, issue of the LUTHERAN WITNESS we are informed that officials of the Lutheran World Federation met with officials of the Lutheran Church - Missouri Synod at St. Louis on January 12, 1959 to discuss procedures for future talks between the LWF and the Missouri Synod. The article states that this meeting was a sequel to the meeting between LWF and Missouri Synod representatives in Oslo, Norway, held August 11 to 13, 1958. The article then tells how the Oslo meeting came about and what

took place at that meeting. The reader is reminded that "At its convention in St. Paul in 1956 the Missouri Synod, though it declined membership in the LWF, nevertheless expressed 'its willingness to meet with official representatives of the LWF to discuss all points in question' " --- to quote the article directly. We are then informed that the Missouri Synod, upon having received an invitation from the Commission on Theology of the LWF to meet at Oslo, appointed President Alfred O. Fuerbringer and Professor Paul M. Bretscher of Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, to represent the Missouri Synod at this meeting. It is stated that the discussions at this meeting in Oslo were carried on in a friendly and fraternal but utterly forthright manner with each group presenting its position. It is also stated that no efforts were made at any point to minimize existing differences. On the other hand, we are also told that at the close of the sessions the Missouri Synod representatives were asked to have their Synod declare the preconditions under which it would be minded to affiliate with the LWF. The keynote of the entire article, moreover, is contained in the last paragraph which is quoted as follows:

"In their report on the meeting in Oslo to the Committee on Doctrinal Unity of our Synod (Missouri Synod), the undersigned concluded their findings in substance as follows:

"1. The LWF cannot be dealt with apart from the entire ecumenical movement. This means that in its further study of the LWF the Missouri Synod must examine also the history, purposes, character, and activities of the ecumenical movement.

"2. The Missouri Synod needs to consider the concern raised at Oslo that our Synod is following a policy of isolationism.

"3. The Missouri Synod ought seriously to consider the request of members of the Commission on Theology and of the president of the LWF that the Missouri Synod formulate what it believes ought to be the doctrinal position, purposes, and character of the LWF.

"4. If invited by the executive authorities of the LWF to participate in further discussions of our Synod's concerns regarding the LWF, our Synod should accept the invitation.

Paul M. Bretscher
Alfred O. Fuerbringer"

It is true that the Missouri Synod has declined discussions with the National Lutheran Council at this time. Yet, they have been holding discussions and seem to want to continue holding discussions with the Lutheran World Federation --- a much larger and even more heterodox church body than the National Lutheran Council. Aren't these discussions by the Missouri Synod with the LWF actually "exploratory talks", in fact? Aren't they strikingly similar to the initial discussions that the Missouri Synod had with the American Lutheran Church back in the early 1930's? Yes, let us not be deceived! Let us not be deceived by the attempts of the Missouri Synod in recent years to occasionally show a so-called "newly-found orthodoxy". On

the one hand, we have a statement by Dr. Behnken to the effect that the Missouri Synod is working toward greater Scriptural harmony in doctrine and practice with the Wisconsin, Norwegian, and Slovak Synods. On the other hand, we have these discussions by the Missouri Synod with the LWF. Aren't these meetings and discussions by the Missouri Synod with the errorists and false teachers in the LWF a direct affront to the Holy Scriptures? If the Missouri Synod is really and truly an orthodox church body, are Pres. Fuerbringer and Prof. Bretscher showing this orthodoxy in their recommendations to their synod concerning the Oslo meeting? Or in proclaiming this orthodoxy, would it not have been more in order for these Missouri Synod representatives to recommend that, in the interests of preserving purity of doctrine and practice among us, all discussions by the Missouri Synod with the LWF should be discontinued?

The Missouri Synod in the old days, as an orthodox church body, emphatically proclaimed the exclusiveness of Scripture and all its teachings. By this article in the LUTHERAN WITNESS we now behold the Missouri Synod suddenly showing concern about the isolation which such exclusivism necessarily creates in these days when the cry of the world is "deeds, not creeds". And this concern is being voiced officially and publically by two prominent members of their Concordia Seminary faculty. What a pathetic situation! Aren't the very policies and practices which our adversaries brand as "isolationism" the actual clear teachings of Scripture concerning church fellowship? Was Christ, when He was yet visibly present here on earth, concerned about the isolation from the hardened Pharisees caused by His teachings?

Although the Missouri Synod has declined to participate in discussions concerning affiliation with the National Lutheran Council at this time, the fruits of its past dealings with that unionistic church body are still very much with us. On February 7, 1959, less than a week after Dr. Behnken's statement to the National Lutheran Council was made public, the Ascension congregation here in Eau Claire received a letter from a local Missouri Synod pastor, formerly considered to be conservative. Both the Concordia and Pinehurst congregations also received identical letters from this Missouri Synod pastor. The letter as received is copied in full as follows:

EPIPHANY

Roland A. Hopmann, Pastor
Office Phone TE 5-9155
Res. Phone TE 2-0357

LUTHERAN CHURCH

The Lutheran Church - Missouri
Synod, 117 Bellinger St.
Eau Claire, Wisconsin

February 6, 1959

The Rev. Keith Olmanson
R. R. 1
Eau Claire, Wisconsin

Dear Brother,

As you may have heard, either directly or indirectly, the Synodical Conference

Lutheran Churches of Eau Claire and Chippewa Falls are cooperating with the National Lutheran Council churches of the same cities in sponsoring a showing of the "Martin Luther" film on WEAU-TV on Sunday, February 15, from 2 to 4 P.M. Although the showing is being arranged at the urging of Lutheran Church Productions (the producer of the film), I am sure that we will agree that the showing will be good for our churches in the area.

Naturally, a venture such as this requires financing. Although a standard fee must be paid for the film, and some money is being allocated for paid newspaper advertising in the Eau Claire and Chippewa Falls papers, the total cost of the showing will be approximately \$600 by virtue of the fact that WEAU-TV is granting a rate of less than 50% of the cost for time on a Sunday afternoon. With more than 14,000 communicant members of Synodical Conference and National Lutheran Council churches in Eau Claire and Chippewa Falls, this cost will amount to only about 4 1/3 cents per communicant.

Would you please, at the earliest possible opportunity, gain the consent of your church officers to permit your congregation to bear its proportionate share of the cost of this showing? I am sure that your experience will be like mine: the officers were more than eager to underwrite the rather small cost of participating in this worthwhile venture. After you have gained consent for financial participation in the project, please notify me and I will in due time offer you the exact amount which your congregation should pay.

Yours in Christ,

(signed)

Roland A. Hopmann, Pastor

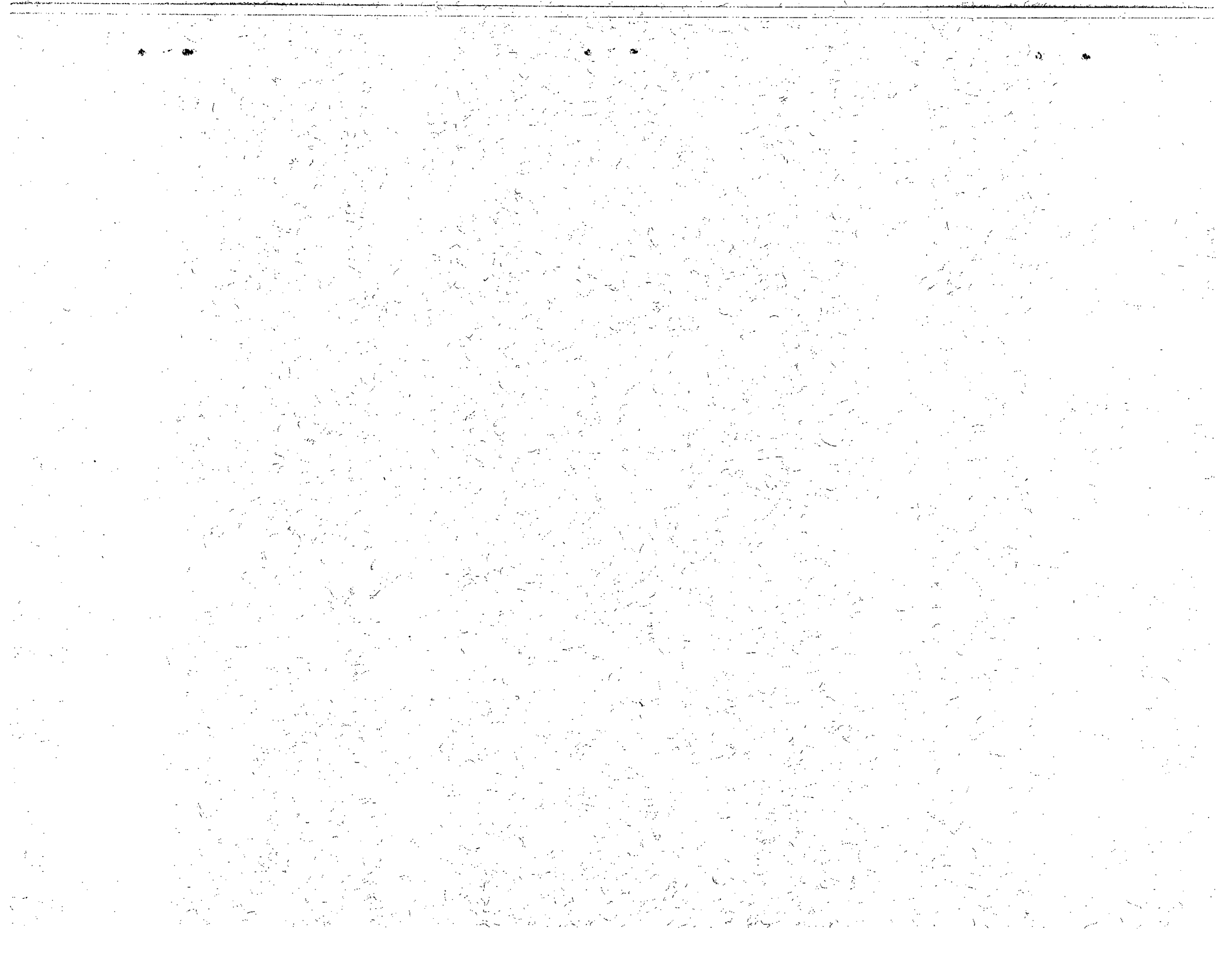
RAH:aam

This is yet another curse brought upon us by our Synod's continued membership in the Synodical Conference! For purposes of the record, it must be stated that there are no Synodical Conference churches in the immediate Eau Claire - Chippewa Falls area other than Missouri Synod congregations and our Synod's three congregations. Also, for purposes of the record, it must be stated that our Synod's three congregations had no opportunity to voice their objections to this joint endeavor using the name of the Synodical Conference with the National Lutheran Council churches as co-sponsors when this religious project was planned. Finally, it must also be stated that all three of our Synod's congregations promptly refused to participate when informed of the project by means of the letter quoted above. This left only the Missouri Synod congregations in this area who actually participated with the National Lutheran Council congregations to co-sponsor the project. Yet, over our protests, this project was announced to the hundreds of thousands of viewers on February 15, 1959, as being co-sponsored by the National Lutheran Council and Synodical Conference churches in the Eau Claire - Chippewa Falls area --- not as being co-sponsored by the National Lutheran Council and Missouri Synod churches, which was actually the

case. The probable implications of this joint project are obvious. From this telecast it would not be difficult at all for the uninformed viewer to reason or infer that "there is little difference between those church groups and it doesn't make much difference as to which one you belong --- after all, they are working together now and it won't be long before they will be joining forces".

Since our Synod has steadfastly proclaimed its membership in the Synodical Conference, even after suspending fellowship relations with the Missouri Synod, this incident here in Eau Claire brings forth several questions which need to be answered. Does our Synod now intend for its congregations to participate in joint religious projects with Missouri Synod congregations in the name of the Synodical Conference along with National Lutheran Council churches? If so, does our Synod intend for its congregations to justify such joint ventures on the same basis that our Synod has seemingly justified continued fellowship (not necessarily prayer fellowship) with the Missouri Synod at the Synodical Conference level? Does the Union Committee on behalf of our Synod concur in and subscribe to these joint ventures by the Synodical Conference and the National Lutheran Council on the congregational level? If not, then how can your committee continue to recommend that our Synod maintain its membership in the Synodical Conference? It must be remembered that in any matter like this given the so-called "Synodical Conference approach" we face the certainty of being voted-down every time by the Missouri Synod!

For the past twenty years our Synod has been dealing with the Missouri Synod concerning the errors and false teachings and practices which it has permitted or subscribed to. Your committee is now negotiating with the Missouri Synod concerning the more notable errors which occurred prior to 1950 and which remain today. Your committee has expressed the hope and has given our Synod the impression that agreement will be reached between the constituent Synods of the Synodical Conference concerning those more notable errors. When pressed at the 1958 convention of our Synod to explain the basis for your hope, your committee, through its Chairman, stated that the spirit of these present negotiations was changed and differed from the spirit that had prevailed at all previous negotiations. In short, your committee stated that the basis for this hope was that the Missouri Synod was now listening to us and that some progress, although small, had been made. Does your committee honestly believe that this alone is a proper basis for such hope? Was it not the experience of the fathers of our Synod that any number of "false teachers in the ELC would "listen" to them indefinitely? Aren't the unionists, who breathe the very air of compromise, always willing to lend an ear, so to speak, to what they term "another point of view"? Satan does not demand that truth be silenced; he is quite satisfied to have a partial voice in the matter, for well he knows that even a little lie mingled with the truth, destroys the truth (Galatians 5:9). Was it not the experience of your committee during a recent negotiating session that the Missouri Synod representatives accepted the Statement on the Anti-Christ only at the so-called "last minute" and then literally "with their backs to the wall"? Or, in this modern era when the cry of the day is "deeds, not creeds", does our Synod now advocate the false proposition that we should not completely terminate fellowship with the Missouri Synod until it refuses to listen to us and our admonitions? But while your committee is negotiating with the Missouri Synod concerning its errors prior to 1950, what about the new errors that have crept into the



Missouri Synod since that time?

The CONFESSIOAL LUTHERAN, a monthly periodical published by a number of conservative Missouri Synod pastors in the Chicago area, has been noting for some time the false teachings and practices which have crept into their Synod. The December 1958 issue of CONFESSIOAL LUTHERAN lists the following points of doctrine that are contrary to the Holy Scriptures, but which are actually taught at Concordia Seminary in St. Louis: (1) Mary is preserved free from the taint of sin from the first moment of her existence as a human being; (2) Mary ascended bodily into heaven; (3) Pray for the souls of the dead; (4) Adoration of the host; and (5) A sacramental priestly order to which one is admitted by an Ordination. The November 1958 issue of that periodical listed the following false doctrines which are taught at Concordia: (1) There is no resurrection of the flesh; and (2) There is no immortality of the soul. Another former issue listed these errors which are taught at Concordia: (1) Christ's descent into hell is denied; (2) Churching of women is advocated; and (3) Celibacy for the clergy is advocated. WHAT NEXT?? Yes, this list of ten points of doctrine contrary to Scripture, but which are actually taught at Concordia Seminary, was compiled by Missouri Synod pastors themselves. Is there anyone in our Synod who would deny that this list represents false doctrine?

While enplaned for San Francisco, California, this last January 17, I made the acquaintance of an official of the Missouri Synod's Walther League. He was a very liberal-minded individual who stated that we cannot have a "horse and buggy" religion in a guided missile age and that there should be room for many points of view concerning doctrinal matters in the Missouri Synod. He also informed me that the Missouri Synod had recently accepted into membership a theologian from the Church of Sweden who not only advocates celibacy for the clergy, but also the construction of Lutheran (?) monasteries. This gentleman offered the opinion that the Missouri Synod will become much more liberal after President Behnken retires and that the Missouri Synod will eventually become affiliated with the Lutheran World Federation. It is submitted that this was only his opinion; yet, considering his position in the Missouri Synod, it certainly fits into the general scheme of things!

The Chairman of your committee in the October 1958 issue of CLERGY BULLETIN advanced the proposition that it will be possible to come to agreement on the general points at issue with the Missouri Synod and the way will then be clear for the resumption of fellowship relations with that Synod again unless we go beyond the provisions of our Synod's 1954 resolutions. He also stated that the present negotiations are likely to break-down when it comes to evaluating the Boy Scout and Chaplaincy issues. Does this proposition or prediction by your committee intend that our Synod should disregard the newer errors and false teachings of the Missouri Synod related in the preceding paragraphs? Does our Synod consider fellowship with the Missouri Synod, Wisconsin Synod, and Slovak Synod so valuable, regardless of the cost?

In the language of an accountant, one's "net worth" is equal to his "assets" minus his "liabilities". What is the "net worth" of our Synod's present course

and policies --- its partial obedience to Holy Writ --- its dual relationship with the Missouri Synod --- its continued membership in the Synodical Conference --- its participation in the endless negotiations at the Synodical Conference level?? Assuming that these negotiations meet with some degree of success, what will be the "net worth" of any agreement which our Synod may reach with the Missouri Synod representatives? Can the "net worth" of any of these matters be measured in anything but lost souls, regardless of the number of visible fellowships here on earth that are zealously maintained by our Synod? For the sake of our own salvation, do we not yearn to be forever in fellowship with Christ rather than some worldly church body? Let us preserve the TRUTH! For the sake of our children, let us preserve the purity of doctrine and practice which our fathers passed on to us!

There are many exhortations in Scripture which tell us what our relationship with the errorist, false teacher, and false church must be. Among them are these: Beware of false prophets; from such withdraw thyself; come out from among them, and be ye separate; have no company with him; mark and avoid them; stand apart; reject; and receive him not into your house, neither bid him God speed! Does our Synod yet believe, teach, and confess that, on the basis of Holy Writ, all manifestations of church fellowship are forbidden with all who deviate in their teachings from the Word of God, and that existing fellowships are to be terminated when it is apparent that a person or group through a false position is causing divisions and offenses in the Church? Does our Synod reject and condemn any and all limitations on the extent of the application of the Scriptural injunctions to separate from errorists, false churches and teachers? Has our Synod placed limitations on the intensiveness of such divinely commanded separation and devised cloaks for fellowship with such errorists, false churches and teachers, while admitting that there are differences which are by their very nature divisive? It is written: THOU SHALT NOT TEMPT THE LORD THY GOD!!

Respectfully submitted,

Loren C. Borgwardt

LOREN C. BORGWARDT
1404 Hogeboom Ave.
Eau Claire, Wisconsin
Member of Ascension Lutheran Church

LCB:jmb

Copy to:

Rev. M. E. Twit, President
Evangelical Lutheran Synod

Rev. J. G. Anderson, Vice-President
Evangelical Lutheran Synod

Prof. N. A. Madson

(over)

Rev. Keith Olmanson

All Pastors

Evangelical Lutheran Synod

(Mimeographed copy on or about March 15, 1959)

P. S. FLASH! On the front page of tonight's (Tuesday, March 10th) Eau Claire newspaper, THE DAILY TELEGRAM, the following news item appeared:

"LUTHERAN BRANCH TO DISCUSS UNITY"

"New York (AP) -- The two-million-member Lutheran Church - Missouri Synod has indicated willingness to talk unity with other Lutherans.

"The Rev. Dr. John W. Behnken, president of the group, who earlier had rejected an invitation to consider unity, made the announcement in a letter Monday to Dr. Paul E. Empie, executive secretary of the National Lutheran Council, which includes eight Lutheran denominations with more than five million members.

"There are about eight million Lutherans in the United States, in 16 branches."

Need there be anything further said concerning the status and intentions of the Lutheran Church - Missouri Synod??

L. C. B.