



Meeting At
St. John's Ev. Lutheran Church
Okabena, Minnesota
September 25 and 26, 1951

"SANCTIFY THEM THROUGH THY TRUTH; THY WORD IS TRUTH."
John 17, 17

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I. HISTORICAL NOTE

Ever since the 1929 Convention of the Ev. Lutheran Synod of Missouri, Ohio and Other States (The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod), there has been agitation in that body, looking toward the union of the various “Lutheran” bodies of America, specifically the American Lutheran Church. The immediate result of this agitation was the drawing up of the **Brief Statement of the Doctrinal Position of the Missouri Synod**, adopted in 1932 and reaffirmed in 1947. The reply to this document was contained in the **Doctrinal Declaration** of the American Lutheran Church, which was submitted to the St. Louis Convention of the Missouri Synod in 1938.

The Convention resolved:

“That Synod declare that the Brief Statement of the Missouri Synod, together with the Declaration of the representatives of the American Lutheran Church and the provisions of this entire report of Committee No. 16 now being read and with Synod’s actions thereupon, be regarded as the doctrinal basis for **future church-fellowship** between the Missouri Synod and the American Lutheran Church.” (*Proceedings* of 1938, Page 231).

Subsequent Conventions showed conclusively that there actually was no full doctrinal agreement between the Missouri Synod and the American Lutheran Church, and, as a result, the Missouri Synod in 1947 declared:

“Resolved, that Synod declare that the 1938 resolutions shall no longer be considered as a basis for the purpose of establishing fellowship with the American Lutheran Church.” (See *Proceedings* of 1947, Page 510).

Meanwhile a group of men had met in Chicago during September, 1945, and had adopted a document known as **A Statement**. This **Statement** was sent out with a letter containing blasphemous accusations

against their brethren in the ministry. The document itself contained doctrinal and historical errors of which even the President of the Missouri Synod declared that they were “in themselves potentially divisive of fellowship” (See **Do You Know . . .?**, Page 1). These documents were never retracted by the Statementarians, but the officials of the Missouri Synod made an unscriptural agreement in January, 1947, permitting the Statementarians to “withdraw” the documents as a basis of discussion without retracting them, and promised that the “issues involved would not be glossed over or ignored,” but that they would become the “topics of special study,” by the members of the Missouri Synod. This action did not silence the Statementarians, but propaganda has been made for the documents up to the present time, contrary to the agreement made between them and the officials of the Missouri Synod.

The whole doctrinal controversy since 1938 reached its culmination in the 1950 Convention of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod, when this organization as a corporate body, by a mere majority voice vote, adopted the so-called “Common Confession”, over the conscientious protests of many members of the body. This action of the Missouri Synod was not only unconstitutional, but it was also definitely against Holy Scripture, which requires full unity of doctrine within a church body.

In October, 1949, several laymen formed a group, which grew into the St. Louis Study Club. They had been aroused to action by the publication of a false opinion of the faculty of Concordia Seminary in St. Louis, on the obligation of a Scriptural Engagement. This false opinion had been presented to and

discussed by a Western District Pastoral Conference in September, 1949. The laymen of the St. Louis Study Club subsequently investigated further aberrations in doctrine and practice found in the Missouri Synod. This laymen's movement spread over a large part of the United States, chiefly through the dissemination of the **Confession of Faith Professed and Practiced by All True Lutherans**, which was adopted by the St. Louis Study Club, meeting at Manchester, Missouri, on Sunday, November 19, 1950. This truly orthodox confession was sent out to all pastors of the Missouri Synod and to interested laymen throughout the United States and was immediately endorsed by 74 professors and pastors and by 45 laymen of the Missouri Synod. Later a number of pastors of the Norwegian and Wisconsin Synods signed this confession. Mr. H. A. Strumpler, who was the leader in this movement, felt that a consolidation of orthodox Lutherans was imperative and therefore took the necessary steps to hold a conference of those who had signed the Confession of Faith. St. John's Ev. Lutheran Church of Okabena, Minnesota, responded to the suggestion by offering its facilities to the group for its meeting.

The following invitation for the meeting was sent out to all signers of the Confession of Faith:

July 11, 1951

"To All Who Subscribed to the Confession of Faith

"Dear Brother _____:

"You are herewith heartily invited to attend a meeting for all who subscribed to the **Confession of Faith** published by the Lutheran Study Club of St. Louis. Please bring with you a layman of your congregation.

"Time of meeting: **September 25-26, 1951. Place: Okabena, Minn.** The location of Okabena is described on the reverse side of this page.

"**Purpose** of the meeting: **Jude 3.** 1. Organize a conservative group on the general basis of Part I of the **Confession of Faith.** 2. Arrange to use our mission moneys for the support of those only who by confession and conduct adhere to the Brief Statement position. 3. Provide for the publication of a general church periodical to serve the group in all ways. 4. Declare our willingness to dissolve the group whenever the present Missouri Synod organization returns to the Brief Statement position, especially when it rejects the 1945 Chicago Statement and the 1950 Common Confession and causes the individual adherents of these documents to reject them or expels such adherents from membership in Synod.

"The **Purposes** of the meeting as listed above will form the **Program** of the sessions to be held. If you cannot attend, we urgently request you to prepare writings on the four points given, which writings shall then be read and discussed at the sessions.

"Announcement of attendance should be in the hands of the undersigned by September 10.

"Further developments concerning the coming meeting will be sent to you during the week of August 20. Other information may be obtained from Mr. H. A. Strumpler, 3817 Hartford St., St. Louis 16, Mo.

Yours in Christ,
(Signed) **Geo. Schweikert**
Geo. Schweikert
Okabena, Minn."

"Ye should earnestly contend for the faith once delivered to the saints."

II. CONVENTION COMMITTEES

A. For the St. Louis Study Club:

H. A. Strumpler, Chairman
Rev. G. Schupmann, Advisor
Otto E. Reinnitz, Secretary
Fred J. Niebruegge, Treasurer
Warren Osterloh, Board Member
Louis Straub, Board Member
Leo Hoffmann, Board Member
William Koslowske, Board Member
Clarence Metzler, Board Member
Fred Mertz, Board Member

B. For the Okabena Congregation:

Housing Committee—John Hochstein, Clarence Morrison, Ed. Pomerenke

Food Committee—Quarterly Committee of St. John's Ladies Aid, Mrs. A. L. Weise, Chairman
Meals and lodging were furnished by the congregation.

- C. Registration:
O. E. Reimnitz
Warren H. Osterloh
William Koslowske
- D. Resolutions:
Pastor O. Schupmann
Mr. H. A. Strumpler
Pastor W. H. McLaughlin
Pastor Walter R. Buhl
- E. Convention Officers:
Dr. P. E. Kretzmann, Chairman
Pastor Walter R. Buhl, Secretary

III. ROSTER OF ATTENDANTS

The following subscribers to the **Confession of Faith** attended and registered:

- Dr. P. E. Kretzmann, Cuba, Missouri
Pastor H. D. Mensing, Tinley Park, Illinois
Pastor Wallace H. McLaughlin, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania
Pastor Walter R. Buhl, Springfield, Minnesota
Pastor George Schweikert, Okabena, Minnesota
Pastor Herbert F. Koehlinger, Detroit 5, Michigan
Pastor Melvin L. Natterer, Lansing, Illinois
Pastor F. J. Schleaf, Alta, Iowa
Pastor A. T. Kretzmann, Crete, Illinois
Pastor Gustav Schupmann, Chesterfield, Missouri
Pastor Otto G. Schupmann, Minneapolis, Minnesota
Pastor Francis Schupmann, Frazee, Minnesota
Pastor C. Bramscher, Alpha, Minnesota
Pastor Albert M. Schupmann, Plymouth, Nebraska
Pastor E. C. Hallstein, Corona, South Dakota
Pastor P. R. Bloedel, Wilmot, South Dakota
Mr. H. A. Strumpler, St. Louis, Mo.
Mr. Fred J. Niebruegge, Clayton, Missouri, RFD 1
Mr. William Koslowske, St. Louis, Missouri
Mr. Warren H. Osterloh, St. Louis, Missouri
Mr. O. E. Reimnitz, St. Louis, Missouri
Mr. Emil L. Weis, Winter Haven, Florida

This number was augmented by numerous guests in the persons of pastors from the Wisconsin and Norwegian Synods, in addition to various laymen and members of the Okabena congregation.

IV. OPENING SERVICE

After the initial registration of subscribers and guests, the Conference opened with a Divine Service in St. John's Lutheran Church at 9:30 A.M. on Tuesday, September 25, 1951. Pastor George Schweikert of Okabena served as Liturgist while Dr. P. E. Kretzmann of Cuba, Missouri, preached the Conference sermon.

Dr. Kretzmann's text was Ezekiel 13, 1-16, which we reproduce here as the background of the Conference—

"And the word of the Lord came unto me, saying Son of man, prophesy against the prophets of Israel that prophesy, and say unto them that prophesy out of their own hearts, Hear ye the word of the Lord:

"Thus saith the Lord God; Woe unto the foolish prophets, that follow their own spirit, and have seen nothing!

"O Israel, thy prophets are like the foxes in the deserts.

"Ye have not gone up into the gaps, neither made up the hedge for the house of Israel to stand in the battle in the day of the Lord.

"They have seen vanity and lying divination, saying, the Lord saith: and the Lord hath not sent them: and they have made others to hope that they would confirm the word.

"Have ye not seen a vain vision, and have ye not spoken a lying divination, whereas ye say, The Lord saith it; albeit I have not spoken?

"Therefore thus saith the Lord God; Because ye have spoken vanity, and seen lies, therefore, behold, I am against you, saith the Lord God.

"And mine hand shall be upon the prophets that see vanity, and that divine lies: They shall not be in the assembly of my people, neither shall they be written in the writing of the house of Israel,

neither shall they enter into the land of Israel; and ye shall know that I am the Lord God.

“Because, even because they have seduced my people, saying, Peace; and there was no peace; and one built up a wall, and, lo, others daubed it with untempered mortar:

“Say unto them which daub it with untempered mortar, that it shall fall; there shall be an overflowing shower; and ye, O great hailstones, shall fall; and a stormy wind shall rend it.

“Lo, when the wall is fallen, shall it not be said unto you, Where is the daubing wherewith ye have daubed it?”

“Therefore thus saith the Lord God; I will even rend it with a stormy wind in my fury; and there shall be an overflowing shower in mine anger, and great hailstones in my fury to consume it.

“So will I break down the wall that ye have daubed with untempered mortar, and bring it down to the ground, so that the foundation thereof shall be discovered, and it shall fall, and ye shall be consumed in the midst thereof: and ye shall know that I am the Lord.

“Thus will I accomplish my wrath upon the wall, and upon them that have daubed it with untempered mortar, and will say unto you, The wall is no more, neither they that daubed it;

“To wit, the prophets of Israel which prophesy concerning Jerusalem, and which see visions of peace for her, and there is no peace, saith the Lord God.”

On the basis of these weighty words of Holy Writ, Dr. Kretzmann elaborated the following thoughts in his sermon:

Dear companions in tribulation, and in the kingdom and patience of Jesus Christ:—

In the last chapter of the last epistle which the Apostle Paul wrote by inspiration of the Holy Ghost there is a passage which is of particular significance at this time. We may translate or paraphrase this passage directly from the original: “The time will come when they will not endure sound, healthy wholesome teaching, but, since they have itching ears, they will, after their own desires, load upon themselves teachers, and they

will turn away their ears from the truth and turn them to fables and their own inventions.” This word, I say, is of particular significance to us, who have met here as an act of criticism, yea, of open defiance, of false teaching and practice in The Lutheran Church — Missouri Synod. We feel compelled to turn to the Word of God for reassurance, comfort, and strength, and we find some very important truths in the text before us, which presents to us

Ezekiel’s Message for These Critical Times:

1. Concerning false teaching;
2. Concerning unscriptural appeasements.

1.

It is the Lord God Himself who is speaking in our text, as He bids the prophet to speak, to prophesy against the prophets of Israel out of their own hearts. The Lord addresses Himself directly to these false teachers: Woe unto the foolish prophets, that follow their own spirit, and have seen nothing! And the Lord describes their false teaching as vanity and lying divination, and He denounces the fact that they have made others to hope that they would confirm the word, thus supporting them in their unholy pursuits. And the Lord adds a threat of punishment upon the false teachers, saying that His hand would be upon the prophets that see vanity and that divine lies: They shall not be in the assembly of My people, neither shall they be written in the writing of the house of Israel. And to this condemnation we must add another, namely: Ye have not gone up into the gaps (or breaches), neither made up the hedge for the house of Israel to stand in the battle in the day of

the Lord. The complaint is very much like that of the prophet Amos, when he states that those who are named chief of the nations "are not grieved for the affliction (or breach) of Joseph."

There are thus chiefly three accusations which the Lord brings against the false teachers at the time of the Exile, namely that they followed their own spirit instead of teaching only the Word of the Lord; that they followed a vain vision and a lying divination; that they did not go up into the breaches, to strengthen the walls of Zion.

Now it is interesting to note that these men did not repudiate the Word of Jehovah in the fundamental ordinances given to their people by Moses and other men of God. They did not repudiate the Ten Commandments and the whole Law of God, as contained in the Sacred Books of their nation. But they added to the Word of God; they gave their own explanations of God's laws and ordinances; and they added their own ideas to the truths as transmitted to them. They insisted that they had visions of their own, which must be taught in addition to the written Word. And when they noted that certain sins were gaining headway among the people, such as idolatry, they did not try to stem the growing tide of liberal views and thus did nothing to heal the breaches.

The story of those terrible years was repeated frequently in the history of the Church. In the days of Luther, for example, his fine work was soon threatened by false teachers, even in the Wittenberg faculty, as when Carlstadt, who as late as 1518 had published theses in defense of the sound position held by Luther, joined the enthusiasts and fanatics. Other members

of the Wittenberg faculty likewise became guilty of false teaching, so that Luther was repeatedly compelled, for the sake of the truth, to oppose such men privately and publicly. Not a few of them were guilty of the same practices which are rejected by the Lord in our text, namely in teaching their own ideas, in following their own spirit, in proclaiming lying divinations, and in neglecting to step into the breaches when the walls of Zion were in danger of being undermined.

It is a matter of deep sadness that we must raise similar accusations against many of our former brethren at this time. But it is a fact that in the very midst of the bodies in America which call themselves Lutheran, which profess to the acceptance of an inspired Holy Writ, we find men, leading theologians and prominent clergymen, who have openly repudiated some of the very truths for which our fathers fought with such holy vehemence. We find among them men who are very dubious about accepting the full inspiration and inerrancy of the Bible, who declare certain doctrines of the Bible to be non-divisive of church fellowship, who deny the obvious teaching of Romans 16, 17, 18, as applying to errorists everywhere, whether members of the Lutheran Church or not, who deny the plain teaching of Scriptures and the Lutheran Confessions that the pope is "the very Antichrist," who accept the inadequate and partly unscriptural statements of the so-called "Common Confession," as accepted by The Lutheran Church — Missouri Synod in the convention of 1950, who ruthlessly ignore the conscientious objections made by their brethren against this document or try to comfort them with the bland

assurance that certain changes would be made in the document, so that errors would be eliminated. — But this thought leads us into the second part of our discussion, namely concerning unscriptural appeasements.

2.

In the second part of our text the Lord gives the reasons for His denunciation of the false teachers at the time of the Exile. The Lord says: “Because, even because they have seduced My people, saying, ‘Peace,’ and there is no peace; and one built up a wall, and lo, others daubed it with untempered mortar.” The Lord speaks with holy irony when He asks: “Lo, when the wall is fallen, shall it not be said to you, Where is the daubing wherewith ye have daubed it?” The following verses are full of holy indignation and with threats of punishment upon the unfaithful, the faithless teachers, the Lord stating that the foundations of the wall would be uncovered, and it shall fall, and ye shall be consumed in the midst thereof.

We find that we have chiefly two points in this text, which the Lord so sternly rebukes. The expression “daubing with untempered mortar” is particularly appropriate in characterizing the activity of false teachers and leaders. For, if a wall, which is or has become unsafe in itself, is then tempered or white-washed with untempered mortar, instead of being properly pointed up, it may have the appearance of a good, sound wall, but it will not be able to stand against the storms and the waters which will threaten its safety. And this activity of the false teachers is found in particular in the fact that they, as the Lord says, seduce His people, insisting that they see visions of

peace for Jerusalem and proclaiming over and over again, Peace, Peace! where there is no peace. Thus it was in the days of the prophet Ezekiel and of his contemporary prophet, Jeremiah. The false teachers constantly endeavored to discount the true teaching of the Lord by saying that there was nothing to fear, that the threats of punishment were not seriously meant, and that, if calamity should strike, it would soon be overcome. But history tells us what happened when the patience of the Lord was exhausted. It was then that the Lord came down in His fury.

Similar conditions existed at the time of the Reformation and in the century following the death of Luther. No sooner had the followers of the great Reformer declared their uncompromising adherence to the full truth of Holy Writ, than the enemies tried to meet the challenge with “deep guile and great might.” Their answer to the Augsburg Confession was so weak that it could easily be refuted. But then they did much damage by the two so-called “Interim” documents, statements of compromise and appeasement, by which the evangelical, that is, the Lutheran Christians were to be lulled into security by certain apparent concessions, in return for which they were to permit papistical teachings and practices to be reintroduced. In all too many cases the fiendish scheme resulted in losses for the truth. Again and again weak men, like Melancthon, sounded the cry: Peace! Peace! No one has as yet fully appraised the damage which was done by such appeasements during the era of the Reformation. And it may be said with emphasis that the terrible Thirty Years War was one of the ways in which the Lord showed His wrath over the

manner in which men dealt with the eternal verities of His Word.

And now we face similar conditions with regard to appeasements in the church. Even the so-called Intersynodical Theses of 1929 showed whither the wind was blowing, and it was only by the grace of God that the Missouri Synod at that time did not accept (that is, in effect, it rejected) these theses. The synodical resolutions of 1938 were likewise based on a false conception of the foundation of truth. But in the so-called Chicago Statement of September, 1945, false teaching and practice showed itself in its true colors. The clear teaching of Romans 16, 17, 18 was set aside, prayer fellowship without doctrinal unity was advocated, while the brethren in the Missouri Synod were attacked and maligned in a heretofore unheard-of manner. This document, although "withdrawn" in January, 1947, at the instigation of synodical officials, as a "basis of discussion," has wrought untold havoc in the entire Lutheran Church of America and is being upheld and defended by a growing number of liberal pastors. For this we have unmistakable proof. However, the most damaging defeat of the full truth of God's Word came at the Convention of The Lutheran Church — Missouri Synod at Milwaukee in 1950, when that organization, as a corporate body, contrary to Scripture and its own constitution, accepted the so-called "Common Confession!" In spite of the fact that numerous members of Synod had voiced their conscientious objections to this document, bringing ample proof for its inadequacy and unscriptural nature, the document was adopted by a majority voice vote. It was then submitted to the convention of the American Luth-

eran Church at Columbus, Ohio, and there promptly accepted. And thereby the iron-clad orthodoxy of The Lutheran Church — Missouri Synod has come to an end.

We shall not here discuss the glaring inadequacies and errors of the "Common Confession," since this has been taken care of in memorials addressed to the Synod and in many releases issued by us. We have pointed out that the walls of the spiritual Zion are being daubed with untempered mortar, that appeasement has been proclaimed by the very officials of the synod; that there have been cries of Peace! Peace! where there was no peace, since the new document does not resolve the differences existing for three-quarters of a century. Among the statements of our blessed Lord we find the following: "I have not come to bring peace, but the sword." And again: "Beware of false prophets!" And again: "Beware of the leaven of the Pharisees, which is their false teaching!" And St. Paul writes: "Though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed!" And again: "A little leaven leaveneth the whole lump."

The situation as it now obtains may be illustrated by a parable which is not a fable. A man has a neighbor who has for many years been drinking a liquid which contains some poison, apparently not enough to kill him outright, but still poison. So he says to that neighbor: It is too bad that you insist upon drinking that drink. Let me add a little sugar, and then we both may drink it. Enough said!

We hereby give the assurance that there is no animosity, no personal spite in our utterances, but

only the deepest pity for those who have left the full truth. However, we shall continue in our unequivocal condemnation of all errors in doctrine and practice, as Romans 16, 17, 18 teaches us. There the Lord says: "Avoid them!" He does not say: Mark them, and then wait until they put you out. The initiative rests with those who recognize the defection, the denial of the full truth of Holy Writ. Those who waver, those who condone falsehood, thereby become guilty of other men's sins.

May God give us strength and wisdom to confess the full truth of the Word, since we can do nothing against the truth, but for the truth. Amen.

V. THE CONFERENCE ESSAYS

We herewith present the essays of the Conference, arranged according to, and treating of, the four points contained in the Letter of Invitation for the meeting.

ESSAY NUMBER ONE

On purpose of the meeting. 1. Organize a conservative group on the general basis of Part I of the "Confession of Faith."

Dear Brethren, "perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment"! The one object which has brought us together here is the need and desire clearly to confess our faith in the full truth of God's Word, with united heart and voice, in positive accord and fellowship with all to whom God has joined us in bonds of true doctrinal and confessional unity, and, on the other hand, clearly to renounce all false and unionistic fellowship with such as do not share, or have in fact abandoned, this

doctrinal and confessional unity. The issue with which we are faced is perfectly clear-cut, since we are confronted not with possible future dangers but with accomplished facts. The factors involved in this issue are not hopes and fears but existing situations and documentary evidence. We must go forward in steadfast fear and love of our God, with sincere and unfeigned love for our brethren, on the firm basis of God's holy Word, without fear of man, and free from all self-seeking. We shall, by the Holy Spirit's gracious guidance, avoid all personal animus, all ambitious self-seeking, all self-consciousness and self-righteousness, and endeavor by His continual aid to shun both the quagmire of sentimental emotionalism and the pitfall of cold intellectualism.

The alternative which confronts us involves either, on the one hand, the renunciation of a corporate body, which has been very dear to us because of its clear confession of the entire doctrine of the Word of God and its Scriptural practice in agreement with that confession, but with whose new doctrinal basis we cannot agree because it is irreconcilable with the pure confession upon which our loyalty to that corporate body was based; or else, on the other hand, an abandonment of the pure confession and of our true brethren in the faith in order to "change with our Synod", as it was put by a prominent advocate of that course, and remain in affiliation with a corporate body whose organizational fellowship is no longer based upon unity in doctrine. The former of these alternatives must be chosen by every conscience which is bound in the Word of God, and the latter must be rejected by every

conscience instructed unto the obedience of faith. Being agreed upon this confessional principle, and having resolved by God's grace to avoid becoming partakers of other men's sins, it should not be difficult for us to agree upon certain simple practical measures for organizing a conservative confessional group, especially in view of the fact that we are met as a group of those who have already subscribed to an adequate confessional basis for such organization, the "Confession of Faith Professed and Practiced by all True Lutherans". The essay assigned me upon the first point of the fourfold purpose which forms the program of our sessions will be developed in four parts:— I. The Confessional Principle established by Holy Scripture: 1. Positive, Ephesians 4, 1-3; 2. Negative, Romans 16, 17. 18. II. The principle of not being partaker of other men's sins inculcated by Holy Scripture, I Timothy 5, 22. III. Practical measures for organizing a conservative confessional group in affiliation with the Synodical Conference. IV. The basis for such organization, Part I of the "Confession of Faith."

I. The Confessional Principle established by Holy Scripture in Ephesians 4, 1-3 and Romans 16, 17. 18. — The confessional principle established by Holy Scripture is by no means only or chiefly a negative principle, requiring the renunciation of false doctrine by avoiding or separating from those who teach otherwise than God's Word teaches and thus profane the name of God among us. It does indeed require this, but really only as a means to an end, namely, the preservation of the pure doctrine and the true unity of the Church, thus hallowing God's name. To attain this end Holy Scripture re-

quires, first and foremost, that God's Word be taught in its truth and purity, and that we, as the children of God, also lead a holy life according to it, or that our practice conform to our doctrine, that is, that we confess the truth in a positive way, and that we do so in fellowship with those whom the Holy Spirit has united with us in the unity of the same pure faith, and thus endeavor to keep and maintain this unity which the Spirit has established in the bond of peace. Various considerations may be adduced for the exercise of patience and forbearance in carrying out the negative requirement of Scripture with regard to church fellowship. But when it is evident, as it is in the situation now confronting us, that such patience and forbearance is abused by aggressive tactics which are actually (not merely potentially) causing divisions and offenses contrary to the doctrine which we have learned and alienating our true brethren in the faith, thus destroying the unity of the Church, then further procrastination becomes a sinful temporizing and trifling with God's truth. The positive command to keep the unity of the Spirit brooks no delay. We cannot say: "I will try to patch up the rift which has been rent between me and my faithful brethren in the Faith, as soon as I finish the more important job of trying gently to persuade my recalcitrant brethren in the Synod to stop widening the cleavage". No! We must **now**, and from now on, permanently, "endeavor to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace", and to that end "avoid them which cause divisions and offenses contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned". Then we may later, if opportunity offers, endeavor to reclaim those

from among a corporate body gone bad who may still be willing to listen to our admonition after we have proved that we are in earnest by our actions. Therefore we shall observe the correct order of priority both in logic and in urgency when we treat the **positive** side of the confessional principle first and most fully.

1. The positive confessional principle established by Scripture, Ephesians 4, 1-3 (and 1 Corinthians 1, 10). — With the virtues of lowliness, meekness, longsuffering, forbearance, as a basis, Ephesians 4, 1-3 goes on to lay down the principles of that church-fellowship which is here and elsewhere in the Word of God enjoined upon us.

We note in the first place that such fellowship is not of human creation. It consists in a unity in all doctrines of God's Word which has been produced by the Holy Spirit, and is to be expressed by a unified confession of these truths by those upon whom the Holy Spirit has conferred His gift of doctrinal unity. While not to be established by us, but existing by the grace of the Holy Spirit, such unity is, according to the admonition of Ephesians 4, 1-3, to be solicitously guarded and cherished by us. That we can do the guarding here enjoined only by the Spirit's help, needs no saying. The means of preserving this divinely bestowed spiritual peace, of keeping this bond intact, is pointed out in 1 Corinthians 1, 10: "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". Notice that this confessional fellowship is not optional, but is demanded by God's

Word. If any go about, by introduction of new and strange doctrines, to disturb the confessional fellowship which has existed for more than three quarters of a century with sister synods in the Synodical Conference, we cannot go along with this disruptive move, but must by God's grace guard and cherish our confessional fellowship with those with whom the Holy Spirit has given and preserved to us doctrinal unity.

We dare not regard the unanimous resolutions of the Norwegian Synod in its convention at Mankato, June 13 to 19, and of the Wisconsin Synod in its convention at New Ulm, August 8 to 15, rejecting the so-called "Common Confession", which Part I of our own group's "Confession of Faith" likewise rejects, as of little or no concern to us as members of the Missouri Synod, but must now and in future declare publicly, and especially over against the officials of the Missouri Synod, our concurrence with this action of our brethren in the Norwegian and Wisconsin Synods, and our unalterable determination to maintain our fellowship with that part, and that part only, of the Synodical Conference which takes this position. This we must do **now**, and this we must do **permanently**. Thus shall we endeavor to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.

2. The negative confessional principle established by Scripture, Romans 16, 17. 18. — The negative aspect of the Scriptural doctrine of church-fellowship is expressed most clearly and decisively in Romans 16, 17. 18, the chief seat of doctrine for this teaching of God's Word. Scripture here forbids all church-fellowship which is not based upon true unity in all points

of revealed doctrine. When those who hold to the true doctrine firmly reject those who refuse to hold it, or some part of it, they cause no division, but prevent division by not giving way to those who do divide and disunite. On the other hand, by its very nature every false doctrine divides. Divisiveness is inherent in all falsehood, due to its infinite multiformity and variety. Truth alone unites, for truth is one. Where there is religious controversy, not on indifferent matters of rites and ceremonies, but on the doctrines of God's Word, there the inherent potential divisiveness of false doctrine is actually in operation. In every such case there is of course the hypothetical possibility that both parties to the controversy may be wrong. But there is no possibility of both being right. If the one confesses the pure doctrine of God's Word, then the other must necessarily be causing divisions and offenses contrary to God's Word, and the adherents of the pure Word are enjoined to avoid church-fellowship with their opponents. This injunction of God's Word does not imply that the faithful confessor is to keep away only from total rejecters of the Gospel. What Christian ever needed such a warning? This injunction requires the faithful to keep away from believers who are errorists and teach falsely. It requires rejection of every false and ambiguous confession and separation from the adherents of such a confession.

II. The principle of not being partaker of other men's sins inculcated by Holy Scripture, 1 Timothy 5, 22. — In commencing this second section of my essay let me refer to the excellent release by Dr. P. E. Kretzmann, entitled "Are you guilty of other men's sins?" and dated from Cuba, Missouri,

May, 1951, of which I shall make use. The danger of becoming partaker of other men's sins is particularly imminent at the present time because of a peculiar unhealthy development in our Synod's polity during recent years. It used to be a recognized and carefully observed principle in the relation of the Missouri Synod to its constituent congregations that no resolution of Synod was binding upon the local congregation until the latter had expressly ratified and adopted it, and, since decisions affecting doctrine and conscience could rightfully be nothing else than a recognition and confession of Scripture truth, the opportunity to review and test the formulation of such decisions on the basis of God's Word was afforded by submitting them to the congregations in ample time before presenting them for adoption by a Synodical Convention. So, for instance, in the case of our first, and still only adequate, "union document", "A Brief Statement of the Doctrinal Position of the Evangelical Lutheran Synod of Missouri, Ohio, and Other States", unanimously adopted in 1932 after a committee had "thoroughly examined the 'Brief Statement' in the light of the memorials presented to Synod in the matter". That the time allowed for examination of the so-called "Common Confession" before the Synod convened at Milwaukee in June of 1950 was not in most cases adequate for thorough congregational study, even though a few congregations and a larger number of pastors did study it intensively and submit well considered objections, is generally acknowledged. In recognition of this fact and of the opposition expressed on the floor of the convention, a vice-president of the Missouri Synod pleaded that no final action

be taken at Milwaukee, but that the document be submitted to the members of Synod for thorough consideration "so that we can come back three years from now and adopt it without misgivings" (I quote from memory). This plea, however, was not heeded, and the "Common Confession" was adopted, not by unanimous vote even of the voting delegates present, but by a majority voice vote, overriding objections which had been expressed on the basis of conscience bound in God's Word. This action was a sin against God's truth and a sin against Christian brethren, of which the Missouri Synod as a corporate body made itself guilty.

This being a meeting of those who over their signature have opposed and rejected the "Common Confession", it will not be necessary exhaustively to enter into the question of what is wrong with that document, but rather to inquire what we must do to clear ourselves of participation in the sin of the corporate body which accepted it. That continued protest and efforts to bring about corrections through the "regular channels" are not sufficient is evidenced by a little incident which took place during the debate on the "Common Confession" at Milwaukee, and which has gotten itself recorded in a "Note" printed in diminutive type near the top of page 586 in the official Proceedings, as follows: "An amendment was offered, reading: 'That it be understood that the acceptance of this document does not in any way affect our position as expressed in the **Brief Statement**'. The amendment was rejected. The Chair then put the question: 'Does anyone by his vote in favor of rejecting the amendment repudiate the **Brief**

Statement?' No one arose in answer." As a matter of fact, one of our faithful laymen, who may perhaps be present at this meeting, did arise to express the opinion that the rejection of the amendment implied just such a repudiation of the "Brief Statement". Obviously he himself was not among those voting in favor of rejecting the amendment, but favored the amendment as necessary to safeguard the "Brief Statement" position. When the Chair made it clear to him that the opportunity to speak on this question was restricted to those who opposed the amendment he hastily took his seat, not wishing to be made to appear as one who repudiated the "Brief Statement". Moral: The time is past when those who hold to the "Brief Statement", unmodified by the "Common Confession", can testify effectively within the corporate body of the Missouri Synod.

Such testimony is nullified by our continued membership in that body, or, to put it simply and Scripturally, by our being partakers of that body's sin. But the question may still be asked: How can we be held responsible for an action to which we never gave consent, and which we have even repudiated? The answer is that because of the more recent polity of Synod, which tends toward a hierarchical domination over its congregations, it is generally assumed both by those within the Missouri Synod and those outside of it, and especially by its officials, that our Synod acted for its entire membership in accepting the "Common Confession", and that the continuance in its membership is sufficient evidence of concurrence in this action. Hear the triumphant words

of President Behnken in his closing address at the Fiscal Conference, September 14, 1950: "The Lord God granted unto us this great blessing that seemingly irreconcilable groups, small as they were, were still kept with our Synod and under the banner of sound Biblical doctrine", remembering that "sound Biblical doctrine", to him, means that of the "Common Confession": "The delegates were firmly convinced when they voted on the resolution pertaining to the "Common Confession". They showed it by voting almost unanimously. There were only about five or six dissenting votes. Thank God, brethren, for that type of preacher- and lay-delegate!" Justly or unjustly, our staying in Synod is considered factual evidence that we are under the banner of the "Common Confession", and that factual evidence counts for more than anything we can say to the contrary. When we complain we are told: "If you do not share Synod's present position, you are free to leave the Missouri Synod. Why don't you show your sincerity and consistency by doing so?"

I submit that the logic of the situation stands on the side of this suggestion of our opponents. Not that I agree that the Missouri Synod has the right to commit me or my congregation to a change in doctrinal position without our consent. But I hold that the Missouri Synod by its high-handed action at Milwaukee has ceased to be an orthodox Synod and has become a unionistic fellowship, and that I can avoid partaking in the sin of such unionistic fellowship only by renouncing not merely the action of the corporate body but the corporate body itself. That this is the Biblical position of the old Mis-

souri Synod, which held, in accordance with 1 Corinthians 1, 10, that complete unity in doctrine is requisite for church fellowship, I should like to demonstrate by an extended quotation from Dr. Franz Pieper, in *Lehre und Wehre*, August, 1890 (Jahrgang 36, No. 8, Seite 262): "We Missourians only then hold a churchbody as such to be orthodox when the true doctrine sounds forth from all its pulpits and professors' chairs and in all writings which are published *within the church-body, and every* false doctrine, on the contrary, as soon as it makes its appearance, is eliminated in the way which God directs. According to this standard we judge others; according to this standard we also submit to be judged ourselves. We Missourians must and will be content to be judged according to the doctrine which is taught by our individual pastors, whether in San Francisco or New York, St. Paul or New Orleans, or which is taught by our periodicals, whether they be published officially or unofficially. If anyone should prove against us that even one pastor preached false doctrine or even one periodical stood in the service of false doctrine, and we did not eliminate this false doctrine, we would thereby have ceased to be an orthodox Synod and would have become a unionistic fellowship. In short, **the mark of an orthodox fellowship (or church-body) is that in it only the true doctrine alone has not only official standing, but is also actually in effect. . . .** The unhesitating release of members to other congregations of our fellowship would, however, be an unscrupulous practice, if we could not assume that the pure doctrine sounds forth from all pulpits within the Synodical Conference. If we would de-

fine an orthodox fellowship in any other way, if we would say: it depends not on the doctrine which actually sounds forth, but only on the officially recognized doctrine; if we supposed it would be enough if, let us say, a majority of the pastors taught the right doctrine, we should then already have given up the distinction between an orthodox church and a unionistic fellowship, and we would then be deceiving orthodox Christians when we urge them to join **any one** of our congregations without misgivings”.

Holy Scripture never admonishes us to remain in a fellowship in which error is taught and bear testimony from within; but it does clearly command: “From such withdraw thyself” (1 Timothy 6, 5); “Avoid them” (Romans 16, 17). Only by obedience to this command can we obey the principle of not being partaker of other men’s sins inculcated by Holy Scripture, 1 Timothy 5, 22, and brought out with particular emphasis in the short word found in 2 John, v. 11: “He that biddeth him Godspeed is partaker of his evil deeds”. To show one who abides not in the doctrine of Christ, who departs from any part of the revealed truth, such tokens of church-fellowship without full doctrinal unity, would render us guilty of indifference to God’s truth. Nor dare we procrastinate. We dare not consent to be partakers of other men’s sins for a while, but must escape such involvement as soon as we are aware of being implicated in it.

We are faced today with accomplished facts which involve the corporate body of the Missouri Synod in disunity within itself and in the acceptance of a false confessional platform with the Amer-

ican Lutheran Church. These matters are no longer under discussion, but have become the subject of corporate action. While the theoretical possibility of reversal of this corporate action exists, church history teaches us that a church organization which abandons or begins to abandon the truth which it has possessed never as an organization returns and regains what it has lost. Two examples quoted to disprove this axiom only prove it up to the hilt. I allude to the history of the Pelagian controversy, 411 to 431 A.D., and to the history of the St. Louis Resolutions, specifically of the Declaration of the A.L.C. Commissioners, 1938 to 1947 A.D. We are told that although the Synod of Diospolis or Lydda in the east in 415 acknowledged the orthodoxy of the heretic Pelagius, this was reversed by the western synods of Mileve and Carthage in Africa the following year (under the leadership of St. Augustine), and that finally East and West were united in condemning Pelagianism together with Nestorianism, with which it had become involved, in the Ecumenical Council at Ephesus in 431. The fact is that all the most prominent theologians of the eastern church in the succeeding ages have held to the Pelagian doctrines which found such an early foothold in that region, and that the Roman Catholic Church of the West (together with most Protestants of our day), though it canonized St. Augustine, completely abandoned his Scriptural teachings, and though it anathematized Pelagius, has followed his teachings of work-righteousness and embodied them as the very foundation of its anti-christian theology in the Decrees and Canons of the Council of Trent. As for the Declaration of the A.L.C. Com-

missioners, which was adopted with qualifications in the St. Louis Resolutions of 1938, which resolutions were rescinded (**but not as containing false doctrine**) at the Chicago Centennial Convention of 1947, its essential positions are back with us again in the "Common Confession", accepted at Milwaukee in 1950 with the unqualified statements that it "shows that agreement has been achieved in the doctrines treated by the two committees" and that it is "a statement of these doctrines in harmony with Scriptures". Moreover, these developments in our Synod are the culmination of a long course of events, tending invariably in the same direction, and gaining momentum with the passing years. With the background of these facts and experiences, it would require an unusual degree of blind optimism to believe that even the reversal of this acceptance would set things right again in the corporate body of the Missouri Synod. These accomplished facts we cannot alter. We can only disassociate ourselves from them by renouncing the corporate body which perpetrated them. And here stands the Word of God: "Be not partaker of other men's sins."

III. Practical measures for organizing a conservative confessional group in affiliation with the Synodical Conference. — It should be evident that our purpose of organizing a conservative group, not for study and discussion only, but on the basis of a personally adopted and subscribed confession of faith, and for the suggestion of confessional action to congregations, as well as for directing contributions toward selected mission projects, and for publishing a general church paper for congregational use, must necessarily involve us

in conflict with the church organization in which most of us still hold membership. It is this consideration which has restrained such groups as the Chicago Study Club from formal organization with definite membership lists and qualifications, and confined them to the status, ostensibly at least, of free conferences for study and discussion, unable to initiate effective action or to make their influence felt in the congregations except in so far as the pastors and laymen who attended cared to inform their congregations of what had been learned at such meetings. The calling of a meeting on the basis of a previous subscription to a confession of faith and under the name of a "Church Convention" is a new departure. It cannot be fitted into the framework of an existing Synodical organization, as the Walther League, or the L.L.L., or the Doctrinal Unity Committee of the South Dakota District are fitted in; nor can it exist independently but without conflict, as the Study Clubs, and various associations for the promotion of particular local or general projects, such as societies for the promotion of orphanages, old folks' homes, city missions, Charities Conferences, Valparaiso University Association, etc., exist. The fact is that our organization wishes to serve the purposes which a well-constituted Synod should serve, but which the Missouri Synod is failing to serve, owing to the default of doctrinal discipline and the shifting of confessional basis. Such duplication involves conflict, and we should realize this and be prepared for it. We are a dissenting group, objecting to the currently dominant trend in the Missouri Synod's confession and practice, and our membership is open only to such as share our dis-

sent and are willing to stand up and be counted. We cannot, without violation of our consciences, cooperate with the corporate activities of a body whose altered confessional platform we do not share. It is only honest that we formally notify the Missouri Synod through its officials that we are no longer one with it, since not we, but the synodical organization, has departed from the "Brief Statement of the Doctrinal Position of the Missouri Synod" by accepting a new confessional platform and by sanctioning practices which are irreconcilable with the aforementioned Brief Statement, to which we still adhere and shall, God helping us, continue to adhere as expressing the full truth of God's Word over against current aberrations from it both within and outside of the Missouri Synod. Upon acceptance of this position, we should pledge ourselves to inform the congregations to which we belong and which we serve that such is our conscientious conviction, formed upon the basis of God's Word as applied to the facts of the situation as we see them, and urge them to join us in informing the officials of the Missouri Synod of our position. All Scriptural and evangelical pleading of this case should be brought to bear upon our brethren in the congregations, and patience should be exercised until they can reach a decision based upon knowledge and conviction. But long and dangerous delays should be avoided. An adverse decision would necessitate the resignation of a pastor or the disaffiliation of a member from a congregation which insists on retaining its allegiance to the corporate body in preference to obedience to the Word of God in Romans 16, 17, 18. The above

practical suggestions are not intended by your essayist as a formulation of resolutions to be adopted by this group or to be proposed to our congregations, a task which he prefers to leave to brethren better gifted in the concise wording of resolutions, but are humbly offered as guiding principles for what I believe to be a Scripturally correct course of procedure under the circumstances which confront us.

The form of provisional organization which should be adopted by us until such time as a group of duly accredited congregational representatives can agree upon a constitution may, I think, be extremely simple, providing, however, for definite membership qualifications, and the most necessary officers, such as a president (or permanent chairman), a secretary (or two secretaries, recording and corresponding), and a treasurer, needed for carrying out points 2 and 3 of our purposes, whose duties should be briefly defined. The most explicit part of our organizational set-up must, of course, be our confessional basis, which will be briefly treated in the fourth section of this essay.

One more matter, however, I feel is essential in connection with the third part of my paper. While we are a dissenting group, in conflict with the Missouri Synod organization, we are not and should never become a separatistic group. We should be ever aware of our affiliation and fellowship of faith with the Synodical Conference or that part of it which holds to its historical doctrinal position and rejects the Common Confession. I hold that a most essential resolution of this group should declare that we share the position of the Norwe-

gian Synod and the Wisconsin Synod in their resolutions rejecting the Common Confession, and that we will permanently adhere to the fellowship of that part of the Synodical Conference that takes this position. That we may intelligently consider and adopt such a resolution, I shall present these resolutions to your attention, quoting the former as contained in the *Lutheran Sentinel* of June 27, page 184, and the July *Quartalschrift*, pages 203-204, the latter as contained in a letter of Prof. Edmund C. Reim addressed to me under date of August 21, 1951.

NORWEGIAN ACTION ON "COMMON CONFESSION"

"WHEREAS the matter of the Common Confession has been placed before our Synod by our sister synod, the Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod, for our consent to the course of action outlined in the resolutions of the Missouri Synod,

"BE IT RESOLVED that we cannot give our consent to the Common Confession as a settlement of doctrinal differences between the Synodical Conference and the American Lutheran Church, for the following reasons:

The Common Confession does not reject the errors of the American Lutheran Church. The document does not reject the false doctrine which has been expressed in the American Lutheran Church, that some parts of Scripture are not divinely inspired. John 10, 35; II Timothy 3, 16. On the contrary, when describing the origin of Scripture, the Common Confession uses the expression 'content and fitting word', which is acceptable to many of those who also accept the false doctrine aforementioned.

Secondly, although the justification of all mankind in Christ (objective justification, Rom. 4, 5; Rom. 5, 18) has been

openly denied within the American Lutheran Church, yet the Common Confession does not definitely state that God has declared all mankind to be righteous in Christ.

Thirdly, the error of the American Lutheran Church, that some people are converted to Christ, while others are not, because the converted offer only a natural resistance, while others offer willful resistance—this error is not rejected in the Common Confession. Rom. 3, 22-23.

Fourthly, the Common Confession does not reject the error taught in the American Lutheran Church that God elected His people to eternal life in view of their foreseen faith. (Acts 13, 48.)

Fifthly, the Common Confession does not reject the error taught in the American Lutheran Church, that the Means of Grace belong to the essence of the Holy Christian Church. Eph. 2, 19; Acts 2, 38; Matt. 26, 28. (The saints in heaven do not need the remission of sins.)

Sixthly, the Common Confession does not wholly reject such errors in the doctrine of the Last Things as the American Lutheran Church is tolerating, as, for example, that the Papacy may not be the Anti-christ until the last day (II Thess. 2, 8); that an unusually large number of Jews will be converted to Christ in the future (Acts 7, 51; Rom. 8, 7; that there will be some kind of millennial reign of Christ (II Tim. 3, 1). These are examples, sufficient to show that the Common Confession is not a settlement of the differences.

"We therefore earnestly entreat our sister synod, the Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod, to reconsider its adoption of the Common Confession and to reject it as a settlement of its doctrinal differences with the American Lutheran Church.

"We further entreat the Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod to discontinue negotiations with the American Lutheran Church except on the basis of a full acceptance of the 'Brief Statement'. (Titus 3, 10.)

"Concern for the truth and for the continuation of our fellowship with the Missouri Synod on the

doctrinal basis which we have enjoyed in the Synodical Conference through these many years moves us to draw up these resolutions. We desire our fellowship on the basis of right doctrine and practice to continue. God grant that the unity which once prevailed in the Synodical Conference may be restored by a steadfast adherence to the Scriptural principles that have united us.”

WISCONSIN SYNOD ACTION ON “COMMON CONFSSION”

“The Common Confession has been submitted by the Lutheran Church – Missouri Synod to us as a statement of the agreement which has been achieved in the doctrines treated by the two committees (Mo.-A.L.C.) to secure our consent to it. We ask our sister Synod to weigh carefully the following statements and resolutions:

I. Statements

A. We have given the Common Confession prayerful and thorough study in our congregations, in all our conferences, in all our districts, and in our Convention.

B. We have assured ourselves through an official and written statement, given by your Committee on Doctrinal Unity to our standing Committee on Church Union, that the Common Confession is to be regarded, not as defining an area of doctrinal agreement, but as furnishing ‘a settlement of those doctrinal controversies that were before the Church up to the time of the adoption of the C. C.’ (Minutes of the Com. on Doctr. Unity, Apr. 10, 1951).

C. We gladly acknowledge that the Common Confession contains many fine statements of Scriptural truth.

D. We consider it to be no mere repetition, but a necessary emphasis to state here to you our motivation for our action on the Common Confession. It is a loving concern for the heart of the Gospel, the Sola Gratia (By Grace Alone), as already set forth in the preamble to the

Review of the Common Confession. We are confident—and we have been so assured—that this is your concern, likewise. We, therefore, entertain the hope that you will see with us that only with the full Scriptural doctrine of Saving Grace Alone does God receive His full glory and the sinner his full security in Christ. We trust that you will also see that the changes called for in our criticisms, especially regarding the lack of formal antitheses, is demanded for a full confession of the truth, so that neither God’s glory nor the sinner’s comfort shall be abridged.

II. Resolutions.

1. Be It Resolved:

That we concur in the findings of the Standing Committee on Church Union as found in the document ‘Review of the Common Confession,’ and herewith make them our own.

2. Be It Further Resolved:

That we inform the Lutheran Church – Missouri Synod that we not only find The Common Confession to be inadequate in the points noted (cf. Review of The Common Confession), but we also hold that the adoption of the C.C. by the Lutheran Church – Missouri Synod involves an untruth and creates a basically untruthful situation, since this action has been officially interpreted as a settlement of past differences which are in fact not settled.

3. And Be It Further Resolved:

That we ask the Lutheran Church – Missouri Synod to repudiate its stand that the Common Confession is a settlement of the doctrines treated by the two committees. (Mo.-A.L.C.).

4. And Be It Further Resolved:

a. That we direct the attention of our sister synod of Missouri to the position which the American Lutheran Church has taken in the *Friendly Invitation* of March 4, 1947, with the remark contending for ‘an area where there exists an allowable and wholesome latitude of theological opinion on the basis of the teachings of the Word of God’, and that we indicate to the Lutheran Church – Missouri Synod that this position of the American Lutheran Church challenges the clarity and therefore the authority of the Scriptures (Psalm 119, 105). This can only cause confusion and disturbance in the Church. Therefore negotiations should be suspended.

b. That we further indicate to the sister Synod of Missouri that not until the American Lutheran Church recognizes this as the basic problem which must first be considered and settled, will the obstacle to a renewal of doctrinal discussions have been removed. (cf. Convention Proceedings of Wisconsin Synod 1939, page 61, 2 b. and c.)”

While both of the Synods whose strong and Scripturally correct action is quoted above, to which action I propose that we pass a resolution of assent, will undoubtedly remain in fellowship with the Missouri Synod until the Synodical Conference Convention next year, I submit that we, by our membership in the Missouri Synod, and not merely in the Synodical Conference, are placed in a more critical position than that in which these sister Synods find themselves. They cannot be faulted with a failure to dissolve their fellowship relations with Missouri in the Synodical Conference until that body meets, and are not either participating in other men's sins, nor appearing to do so, nor chargeable with doing so. They do not need the organization which we are here forming, since their own synodical organization is intact and unified in the acceptance of the orthodox doctrine and the rejection of the innovations introduced by the Missouri Synod. We, on the other hand, as members of the Missouri Synod, must renounce not only the deeds of that organization, but the organization itself, in order not to be partakers of other men's sins. And we need the new organization we are forming in order to encourage each other and the congregations to which we belong to take this God-pleasing action jointly. On the other hand, it cannot be argued that by breaking with the Missouri Synod, with which these sister Synods still remain in fellow-

ship, we are thereby breaking also the tie that binds us to them, since that which divides us from the Missouri Synod is our agreement with them.

IV. The basis for such organization, Part I of the “Confession of Faith”. — But little needs to be said on this point to a gathering of those who have signed the “Confession of Faith Professed and Practiced by All True Lutherans”. This confessional basis must be the most explicit, as it is the most important, element in our organizational setup; and agreement to it should continue to be, as it already is in practice, an indispensable qualification for the membership of individuals or congregations in our group.

The question may arise, however, why Part I is specified, rather than simply naming the “Confession of Faith” in its entirety as the basis of our association. You and I have subscribed to the entire “Confession of Faith”, including Part II, the “Twelve Points”, because we agree with it in its entirety. My voters' assembly, which some months ago expressed general approval of the “Confession of Faith”, stating “that we find no fault with the document”, has recently officially and unanimously adopted Part I. While I personally am in no way responsible for the specification of Part I in the first of the four objectives stated in our program and assigned to me as the topic of this essay, and have not even had any correspondence with anyone regarding this specification, it immediately won my complete approval as a wise provision, the reasons for which appear to me entirely obvious.

As suggested above, I cherish

the hope that the provisional organization as a dissenting group, exercising some of the functions of a synod, which may be effected during our present sessions, will eventuate in the formation of a new Confessional Lutheran Synod in fellowship with the Synodical Conference. As such it will be constituted by congregations previously affiliated with the Missouri Synod. Such congregations, in stating their adherence to our fellowship, should be asked officially to adopt no new formulation, but only those pure standards of faith to which they have previously adhered as conservative Missouri Synod congregations, **unmodified, however, by any of the later compromising formulations whereby the corporate body of the Missouri Synod has confused and invalidated its professed doctrinal position and shifted its confessional basis,** for which reason certain documents are specifically rejected in the Antithesis contained in Part I of the "Confession of Faith".

Individuals desiring to join our tentative organization, prior to its assumption of the status of a corporate body under a Synodical Constitution, should continue to state their adherence to the "Confession of Faith" in its entirety, while congregations desiring to be affiliated with our tentative organization and to join us in confessional action over against the Missouri Synod should be asked to adopt only that which may fittingly be incorporated into a Synodical Constitution, namely Part I. It is obvious that the Twelve Points were not drawn up to form the permanent confessional basis of a church body, but to serve as a rallying point for likeminded individuals and groups in the present distress, and to form a touch-stone of whole-

hearted allegiance to orthodox doctrine and correct practice in a time when many who formally profess adherence to the "Brief Statement" contradict it in many points by their actual pulpit pronouncements and pastoral practice. Some of the points included, and those too some of the most important of them, *would be mere duplications in the permanent confessional basis of a church body that faithfully adheres to the unmodified "Brief Statement" and uses our present "Synodical Catechism" without criticism and equivocation, such as Point 1, which is contained with equal clarity in our Catechism, Point 2, which is as clearly confessed in our "Brief Statement", and used in the same sense in our Catechism, and Point 5, on which both the Catechism, as here quoted, and the "Brief Statement" in its even more explicit exposition of verbal inspiration, fully cover this very fundamental doctrine. Others, as correct expressions of Scripturally based judgments on certain phenomena of current church history, such as Points 3, 4, 11, and 12, will become antiquated with the passing of time and the changing forms of error, and hence superfluous in the permanent confessional basis of an orthodox church body. Points 6, 7, 8, and 10 are of predominantly didactic rather than confessional character. The principle enunciated in Point 9 will assuredly be embodied in an article of the Constitution of a rightly constituted synod. On the other hand, certain points of doctrine and practice on which a Confessional Lutheran Synod in our times may find it necessary to make official pronouncements, such as the discussions taking place in our Synodical Conference on the doctrine of the*

church and ministry, chaplaincy, lodges, Scoutism, commercialism in the church, and others, are not included among these Twelve Points.

While agreeing and subscribing to each one of the Twelve Points, therefore, I nevertheless agree also to the wisdom and propriety of basing our organization specifically upon Part I of the "Confession of Faith" as our doctrinal platform.—Presented by Pastor Wallace H. McLaughlin of Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania.

ESSAY NO. TWO

OUR DUTY WITH REGARD TO MISSIONS, presented by Pastor Gustav Schupmann of Chesterfield, Missouri, and read by Pastor Albert Schupmann of Plymouth, Nebraska.

It has been said that a church which does no mission work is dead. It is inconceivable that there should be Christians who are not interested in the spreading of the saving Gospel of Jesus Christ. And it is inconceivable that a Christian pastor should speak to his flock Sunday after Sunday and not show them their mission duty and encourage them to bear witness of Christ and His salvation to others. A believer in Christ does not merely profess to believe and go to church and read his Bible and sing and pray with his fellow Christians and lead a godly life, but his heart is filled with the glorious Gospel; he rejoices in the salvation of God; he meditates on it by day and by night; he counts it his greatest treasure, his richest find, and in sickness and health, in fortune and adversity, this Gospel remains uppermost in his heart. He counts all things but loss and dung

for the excellency of the knowledge of Jesus Christ, his Lord. Therefore he just cannot do otherwise than speak of those things of which his heart is filled. Jesus Himself says that "out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh" and again, through St. Paul, "If thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised Him from the dead, thou shalt be saved." Thus it is inconceivable that a true Christian should fail to speak to other men about Jesus and His salvation.

A Christian is a regenerated, a new man, and his heart has a new attitude toward God and his fellow men. He loves God who has made him and saved him. He loves the Father for having sent His only-begotten Son out of pure love and grace to be the propitiation for the sins of the whole world, and, for His sake, having forgiven all sins of the world. He loves the Son, Jesus Christ, for having substituted for him and all men under the Law, having fulfilled it perfectly for him and all men, and having suffered the punishment for his and all men's transgressions. He loves the Holy Ghost for having called him by the Gospel and enlightened him with His gifts and for keeping him steadfast in the one true faith. And, out of love to God, who would have all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth, and whose will it is that His children should preach the Gospel to every creature, the Christian conscientiously and gladly endeavors to fulfill this desire and will of God, his Savior. He keeps his eyes open for opportunities to speak to others about that which fills his own heart, Jesus and His salvation. But believers also love all men. They know the sad plight

and condition of those who are without God and Christ, without the Gospel and faith. They know what will be the fate of their unbelieving spouse, or children, or parents, or relatives and friends, or those in deepest degradation, and their love to them impels them to speak the saving Word to them, to show them their need of the Savior and what the Savior has done for them and to urge them to believe in Him, to take the full and free salvation, and live and not perish.

Christians in a congregation are encouraged not only by their pastor to do mission work, but they are also encouraged by one another. They speak among themselves of what they have been doing in this respect and of what success they have had. They also speak of the problems they have had in dealing with sinners, and they learn from one another. We note in this connection that, when Andrew believed on Jesus as the Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world, he thought of his brother Peter and searched for him and, when he found him, said unto him, "We have found the Messiah;" and he brought him to Jesus. We note, too, in the same first chapter of John, that, when Philip had come to Jesus, his joy in Christ drove him to seek Nathanael and say to him, "We have found Him of Whom Moses in the Law and the prophets did write, Jesus of Nazareth, the Son of Joseph." And of the first Christians in Jerusalem we read in Acts 8, 4 that "when they were persecuted and scattered abroad, they went everywhere preaching the Word." They did not and could not keep their light under a bushel, even when their lives were in danger, but boldly spoke the Word to save as many as they

could and to glorify Him and show forth the praises of Him who died for them and rose again.

Personal mission work is the mission work. There is no substitute for that. Mission work by called missionaries alone would not accomplish much. *Every Christian* must be a missionary and try to be a better missionary right along. If it were not for this chain reaction, the Gospel would not run *swiftly*. It is by this personal mission work that the local congregation must grow; and it will grow.

Perhaps many that are here today have been somewhat remiss in personal mission-work. Confess that to the God of all grace and ask His pardon for Jesus' sake, and firmly believe that He has pardoned you according to that Gospel, and let that full and free pardon make you resolve in your heart and ask God to help you to be a more zealous worker for Christ *Jesus in the future*.

But there are men who are without the Gospel in places where we cannot ourselves work; and since God would have all men to be saved and come to the knowledge *of the truth, we ought to do something* about it besides pray, which of course, according to Scripture, availeth much. But you cannot pray much and do nothing about what you are praying for. That would be a denial of an earnest desire if you did not try to do something to accomplish what you desire. But what to do about it? Send someone to take your place and work for you, and support those whom you have sent.

Now this is nothing new to us. In our congregations we have had mission festivals and we have had envelopes for missions, and we

have collected and given monies for missions, which were to spread the TRUTH, and not merely some of the truth. We want our mission monies to spread the full truth, the whole counsel of God for our salvation. We were joined with congregations and pastors with whom we were supposed to be in doctrinal fellowship, whom we supposed to be of the same mind and the same judgment. We have been sadly disappointed. The true fellowship has ceased and we can no longer walk arm in arm with the former brethren and be joined in mission work with them. They operate on a different standard than we. Our consciences are bound to the Word of God. Therefore we, who are of the same mind and the same judgment, must join together and spread the Gospel and the Kingdom of Christ and God according to our ability.

The Synod to which we have belonged has an extensive mission field, and we have become accustomed to think of doing mission work through our contributions in a great many parts of the world. It was not always thus in the Missouri Synod. The present situation has come gradually. There was a time when there was only one mission in the Missouri Synod, and that was the gathering of Lutherans who had emigrated from Germany. Even the personal mission work of the individual was to contact Germans and bring them to the Lutheran Church where they heard the Word of Truth. Our new group will be in a similar situation. We will have to start from scratch, as it were. While we keep in mind the many in heathen lands who are walking in darkness, whom the Lord would have in His kingdom of grace and glory, we must con-

tent ourselves with the mission problem closest to us.

It would not be possible today to outline a definite mission program, because we must first know the situation in which our group finds itself. A survey must first be made. One does not know at this moment what developments will be in the various congregations. In some the full membership, or the full membership minus a few individuals, will be with us.

It may be that in some congregations a goodly number will not go along with us and will leave for a nearby Mo. Synod church. In some congregations the orthodox pastor will have to leave, after a futile attempt to convince his flock, with a minority of his flock, and found a new congregation, and try, with the Word of Truth and the Spirit of God, to build up a new Zion. And just such congregations will need help from the sister congregations. These would be our first mission obligation. And these might be, for the first, our sole mission obligation and effort. It will require quite a sum of money to take care of a pastor and the place of worship in such a situation. We should right from the beginning collect and hold mission monies, so that we are able to give helpful assistance to such mission stations.

Some may think that we should support the missions of the Norwegian and Wisconsin Synods, which are protesting members of the Synodical Conference, attacking the same errors and unscriptural practices which we attack, and having rejected the Common Confession on the same grounds. In our opinion that would not be as profitable to our cause and to our membership as having our own missions.

We would like to grow and expand. That makes for strength and stability and efficiency, humanly speaking. Common work cements the congregations together. They feel their relationship and fellowship when they work together on a common project, for a common cause. We want to grow not merely by getting more pastors and congregations to join us, but by getting men from the outside, who are living without God and without hope. It will be a joy and comfort to us when we see that the Lord is blessing the labors of our hands, and that our labor in the Lord is not in vain.

We will want to prepare men for the ministry, men to be pastors and missionaries. That is a branch of mission work. And we will have to collect monies for this purpose. Until we are able to train our own men we will have ample opportunity to engage in missions, and therefore will have to gather offerings for this purpose, even more than before. May the Lord of the Church kindle great zeal in our hearts for the work of missions!—Pastor Gustav Schupmann, Chesterfield, Missouri.

ESSAY NO. THREE

SUGGESTIONS FOR A CHURCH PAPER, presented by Pastor O. G. Schupmann of Minneapolis, Minn.

“If it is wise and manly and patriotic for us to establish a free government, it is equally incumbent to attend to the necessary means of its preservation.”

Thus did James Monroe state his convictions about national affairs. There is a parallel for us in his words. If we are to formulate a new church body at this conference of orthodox Christians, then we must immediately take steps to

propagate correct attitudes and convictions. We must then also do everything possible to preserve the true faith among ourselves and like-minded believers. We must encourage one another in the blessed cause of continually fighting to uphold true Biblical doctrine and practice.

This paper assumes that an organized group **NEEDS** an official organ to represent it before its own constituency and the world. Various suggestions therefore are hereby presented for your consideration.

At the outset it may be profitable to state the reasons which impelled Dr. C. F. W. Walther to publish the LUTHERANER and to present to you the sainted Pastor's own list of the purposes which that periodical was to serve. In Volume I, Number 1, we read of the definite needs in Walther's day: 1. to **encourage** true Lutherans to **be true** to their faith; 2. to **warn** them against falling away (apostasy) and joining some other church; 3. to **furnish doctrinal** weapons and (spiritual) ammunition for **fighting** against those who attack their true Lutheranism; 4. to **give them** the **comfort** that the true Lutheran Church has not disappeared from the earth, thus (also) encouraging them not to join another fellowship. (NOTE: Here the essayist made reference to periodicals and magazines now in 1951 being circulated in our midst and their failure to fill these needs at present.)

The purposes of the LUTHERANER, which you will remember was so extraordinarily instrumental in the gathering of like-minded believers into one fold, were given by Dr. Walther about as follows:

1. To **make known** the teachings, treas-

- ures, and history of the true Lutheran Church;
2. To **offer evidences** that the Lutheran Church is **Not** a sect, and **Not A New church**, but rather a continuation of the Church of Jesus, our Lord and Savior;
 3. To show what **True Lutherans Must** believe, how they are to **Live** a Christian life, suffer in patience, and die in peace; and
 4. To **Uncover** the current false doctrines, to **Oppose** them, and to **Warn** against them, especially to unmask **False Lutherans** and their **Aberrations** from Scriptures and/or the Lutheran Confessions.

This is a duty which we have been doing individually and collectively in various ways against the wholly untenable, consistently prevailing departures and aberrations.

These purposes listed by Walthers seem valid also for our church paper. May the editors then, if these principles be adopted, as I feel they should, diligently keep them in mind. And we will keep them in mind now, as we pursue our objective in presenting this paper of suggestions for a new and efficient periodical for our needs. Certainly one of our **foremost** aims is to inform such as are yet in The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod, from which we have the duty of withdrawing, of the prevailing ills within that church body. We must faithfully spread the leaven of truth and offer Biblical criticism where it can serve to assist those who now or in the future are “in the state of confession.” We must offer light to such as are in ignorance of the true facts as they woe-folly exist, and lead those who seek guidance and assistance on the right way to confess Christ in truth and purity, bearing in mind the injunctions of Holy Writ. It says: “Cursed is he that doeth the

Lord’s work deceitfully,” Jer. 48, 10; cp. Rev. 22, 18-19; cp. the admonitions directed to the angel of the church of the Laodiceans, Rev. 3. And let us re-read the entire eighth chapter of the Gospel of St. John.

The first issue should **state clearly the reasons for our positive separation and give our declaration of independence**, i. e., state the fact that we insist upon standing fast in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free. (Cp. the recent change in the matter of dropping the former motto or standard on the LUTHERAN WITNESS. For what reason?).

Our church paper will be a source of information on the following:

1. Organizational problems, questions, means and methods;
2. Addresses and articles of members;
3. The welfare and fortune of members;
4. New pastors, teachers, laymen, congregations which are gained as members;
5. Presentation of the needs of such as require help, be they persons, families, or entire congregations that may be suffering because of their confession; and
6. Matters of interest and direct value to our affiliation with brethren and sisters the world over, particularly at this time concerning the activities and dealings of the Wisconsin and Norwegian Synods, specifically noting the progress of their negotiations with Missouri on disputed issues.

This paper shall **offer encouragement** to men and congregations to

keep their enthusiasm and loyalty to the cause as warm as possible. It shall, therefore, regularly and officially announce meetings and programs which may lead to more knowledge and conviction through Christian fellowship and discussion. This is important because of the difficulties that will arise when old ties are broken. Such difficulties will bring heart-aches which will, in turn, dampen or threaten to disrupt or prevent enthusiasm and proper action. (We think of the requirements of God regarding altar-, prayer-, and pulpit-fellowship.)

Thus also the paper or periodical must offer the sweet comforts of the Gospel to the hearts made heavy by trying experiences, or by the spite, hatred, malice, interference, and persecution that will be the lot of those who join this movement. **Comfort must be given** to those whose hearts are weighed down with fears and doubts. Thoughts of distress will come in many forms and lead people to wonder, as the Saxons did, whether they did a God-pleasing thing in separating from Missouri. In distress they may think that they are being punished by the Lord for an unjust separation. Such fears and doubts must be expelled first of all by showing that such separation is most emphatically demanded by our Lord God Jehovah (Matt. 7, 15; Rom. 16, 17-18). It must be done also by showing, on the basis of Scriptural examples, as well as by examples from church history, that those who follow Christ must expect to suffer for His Name's sake. "He that loveth son or daughter more than Me is not worthy of Me," our Savior said. And again, "He that confesseth Me before men, him will

I confess before My Father which is in heaven."

Passages like Matthew 6, 25-34, Matt. 10, 32-39, and the Fourth Petition should be emphasized to **offer instruction, comfort, and encouragement** to men within and without our group, as they face doubts and many unpleasant prospects, even that of losing their positions. (Note: Here the essayist enlarged upon this thought with reference to past events.) We must face the fact that entire families, friendships, and even congregations will be disrupted when Scripture is correctly applied, as Romans 16, 17-18 must be applied to ALL errorists, even to other "Lutherans", wherever they may be, alone or in affiliation still with others. A pastor may be forced to leave a parish because of absolute refusal, on the part of his members, to leave a heterodox church body, to join another church body or even support it. He may be forced to leave because the members of his parish refuse to receive sufficient instruction to be able to act according to facts. Then he will be amazed that his flock could act thus. And it has often happened that the delay in giving proper information has been too long. After the pastor is gone, then the congregation desires instruction and gets the wrong kind of information, a garbled assortment of statements that mean little or nothing and add confusion and perplexity.

Or a pastor may be forced to resign and find himself face to face with great emotional conflicts, knowing not whither to turn next, and perhaps facing financial straits until conditions improve, especially if there is a large family. And well do we know that few pastors are able to save anything

at all. And what about the younger men, newly married, with little children – shall they face and be overcome by temptation to serve their own belly against their own conscience?

Furthermore, our readers should be **consistently informed of conditions** as they continue to obtain and develop within Missouri and as they have connections with and may affect our separation. Since we hope that our paper will be read by interested people within the Missouri Synod, our reports, with proper comments as to true Lutheran reaction and action, should, by all means, convince them as to their personal or united action against doctrinal aberrations and un-Scriptural practices.

Our present relationship with the Wisconsin and Norwegian Synods must be duly clarified for our readers. Statements should be issued clarifying our hopes and endeavors for the future. Sound warnings should be directed against any false kind of selective fellowship.

The principles of fellowship with one *in statu confessionis* with a heterodox church body must be made clear. Where doctrinal differences exist or develop between us and those of our former affiliation, widening the cleavage, or whenever these things in new affiliations threaten disruption of fellowship, these must be discussed most seriously, earnestly, and in a detailed manner, until settled according to Scriptures.

In any articles concerning doctrine and practice the first consideration will, of course, be to demonstrate that OUR position is the Scriptural position. Therefore, we have no choice in judging or

acting. Therefore, we must speak where the Bible speaks and keep silence where the Bible has not spoken. And, lest we forget, let us show that, when we are holding to a sound Scriptural position, we are following the faith of the founders and builders of sound Lutheranism, beginning with Dr. Martin Luther. Let us show that it is definitely OUR position which follows the old paths and not the position of our adversaries who have departed from the right moorings. Hence quotations from Luther, from the Lutheran Confessions, from the orthodox writers of the past century should be used generously. (Cf. LUTHERANER, early editions.) So also the subscribers to the **Book of Concord** in their Preface (Trigl. P. 19f.) state that they desired to show nothing new, but merely are teaching the old Scriptural doctrines, the tenets of the Ecumenical Creeds and of the Unaltered Augsburg Confession.

To be sure, the range of articles will be wide, as wide as faith and life. Let it be clear at the beginning that the authority of the articles will not be the piety or the experience of the writers, but always the authority of the Scriptures, of the Confessions, in complete harmony with all the Confessions upheld by our Orthodox Lutheran Conference.

The tone and language of the paper should be employed in such a Christian manner that no doubt or criticism is directed against the presentation of its Christian polemics. May the paper **express the power of God-given convictions in every article** of a critical nature. No pussy-footing, no washing of hands, no beating around the bush, no compromising, but hitting the nail straight on the head, so

that there can be no misunderstanding as to what is God-pleasing or not. Harsh phrases or words should yield to more gentle ones, though plainness of speech and harshness should not be confused. It cannot always be avoided that the reader will, in spite of every effort of love, still feel offended. If so, let it be remembered that there is also a sin of taking offense. The criticism of our adversaries or of tender-hearted men should not be the chief guide in this matter. The trumpet must give a certain sound.

Reviews of theological materials should find some space, at least occasionally, though there may be other avenues open for development to serve this purpose in the near future. Especially such publications ought to be reviewed as will be recommended for reading among our people, particularly such as are useful for our welfare and growth. Articles of special interest to the lay people may require more space than matters of purely professional value at this time. But hardly will we need to give space to foolish things when money is always at a premium in church work.

In agreement with others of you, perhaps all of you, it would indeed be most profitable to see about one page in each issue devoted to a systematic serialized translation of early orthodox essays that would give valuable instruction on doctrines that need to be emphasized among us. Thinking has gotten quite muddled along certain lines in spite of former good understanding. We want no spiritual vacuums among us. Such articles would remove many doubts as to who is actually holding to the old positions of sound Lutheranism in this country, that

the modern Missouri Synod is not rightly able to boast today of "still having the Word in all its truth and purity." Missouri has cast away the God-given heritage upon which a large church body was built and instead has chosen to move along the path of least resistance, swiftly running down the path of liberalism. The prospect of losing divine grace and favor, caused by casting away the God-given heritage, should make us shudder and tremble.

As soon as possible and as much as possible something must be offered for the little ones, for the simple ones, for the youth of our group. — God help us, for Jesus' sake. — Pastor O. G. Schupmann, Minneapolis, Minn.

ESSAY NO. FOUR

Our willingness to dissolve the group, whenever the present Missouri Synod organization returns to the Brief Statement Position, especially when it rejects the 1945 Chicago Statement and the 1950 Common Confession and causes the individual adherents of these documents to reject them or expels such adherents from membership in Synod, presented by Pastor Herbert F. Koehlinger of Detroit, Michigan.

To all lovers of the **Full Truth of God's Word**, assembled at the historic Church Convention at Okabena, Minnesota, beloved of God, called saints: Grace to you and peace from God our Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ.

First, I thank my God through Jesus Christ for you all, that your faith is founded upon the whole counsel and will of God the Father, God the Son, and God the

Holy Ghost, in His verbally and fully inspired Word of the Old and New Testaments.

Secondly, I thank my God through Jesus Christ for you all, that you have subscribed to and accepted "The Confession of Faith Professed and Practiced by all True Lutherans."

Thirdly, God is our Witness, that all that we resolve and act upon is solely and alone His will through Christ Jesus and thus redounds to His praise and glory, world without end. Amen.

Fourthly, we must indeed, one and all, be truly zealous without ceasing in prayer to God, that Christ, our Good Shepherd, always supports and directs us with the full truth of God's Word.

In the fifth place, we all have had a prosperous journey by the will of God to come together to do work for the Lord Jesus while it is day, "for the end of all things is at hand."

In the sixth place, let us, in the fear of the Lord, boldly attack the stronghold of Satan; equipped with all God's spiritual armor, according to Ephesians 6, 10-17, we will gain the victory over the scoffers of the Word of God, over all perverters of His Word, over all unionists, over all Statementarians, over all adherents of the 1950 Common Confession, over all errorists and false prophets of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod.

Seventhly, on fire of the Holy Gospel, let us impart unto one another some spiritual gift, to the end we may be established; that is, that we may be comforted together with one another by the mutual faith of all of us.

Eighthly, we all have desired to come together on this historic occasion! Praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, we are here!

Ninthly, now we all are ready to preach the Gospel, the Full Truth, no matter where Jesus directs us to go and be. Perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, we all speak the same thing, without divisions among us; namely, "For I am not ashamed of the Gospel of Christ; for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek."

A. False doctrine has reared its ugly head within The Lutheran Church — Missouri Synod, but a large number of pastors take the easy way out. Those pastors say nothing, write nothing about the false doctrines; they do nothing; they sit back, they wait, they want someone else to be the goat for them, they are belly servers.

Many pastors do not want to hear talk about the liberal trend in The Lutheran Church — Missouri Synod, and one even says he never heard of liberalism in the Missouri Synod. For them everything is going smoothly; they say we should speak the truth in greater love, get our best salesmanship to work, win souls, **each one reach one**, but all the while the Foundation is crumbling away, while the fabric of pure doctrine is being eaten away by perverters of Scripture, while Matthew 28, 20 is being thrown away.

Is it true that many pastors are dumb dog preachers simply because they want to keep their preaching jobs, because they fear losing their salaries, their nice, new

swank parsonages, their new cars, their perquisites, their prestige in Synod and community and in local, State, and National governments, because they fear losing their honor, comfortable living; yes, they will not take a stand because the relatives do not like it. Relatives say, "You'll never get another call. Who are you to try to reform Synod? I wouldn't go to Okabena. How many ministers will be there? Not more than ten. What? My advice to you is, don't go."

Many pastors fear losing their congregation, fear splitting up the congregation. That wouldn't be love. An official advises, "Don't quit; instruct your members first for two or three years, five or six years." But, where are the watchmen? Ezek. 3, 17ff.

B. But on the matter of what is to be taught in Christ's Church, regardless of person, cost and effort, the Word of our God is altogether plain. The **Full Truth** of God's Word must be preached and taught. Matt. 28, 20: "Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you." Acts 20, 27: "For I have not shunned to declare unto you all the counsel of God." Prov. 30, 5-6: "Every word of God is pure: He is a shield unto them that put their trust in Him. Add thou not unto His words, lest He reprove thee, and thou be found a liar." Rev. 22, 18-19: "For I testify unto every man that heareth the words of the prophecy of this book, If any man shall add unto these things, God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book: And if any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part out of the book of life, and out of the holy city, and from the things

which are written in this book."

C. On the matter of what to do with false doctrine and false prophets, the Word of our God is as well perfectly plain. Matthew 7, 15: "Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves." Romans 16, 17-18: "Now I beseech you, brethren, mark them which cause divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned; and avoid them. For they that are such serve not our Lord Jesus Christ, but their own belly; and by good words and fair speeches deceive the hearts of the simple." Titus 3, 10: "A man that is an heretick after the first and second admonition reject; knowing that he that is such is subverted, and sinneth, being condemned of himself." Titus 1, 13: "Wherefore rebuke them sharply, that they may be sound in the faith." 2 John 9-10: "Whosoever transgresseth, and abideth not in the doctrine of Christ, hath not God. He that abideth in the doctrine of Christ, he hath both the Father and the Son. If there come any unto you, and bring not this doctrine, receive him not into your house, neither bid him God speed."

D. Now here is the blessing of the Lord Jesus Christ. Up until a number of years ago, the Lord of the Church blessed The Lutheran Church – Missouri Synod in a highly-favored manner with the **Full Truth** of God's Word. But in recent years – oh, how terrible, oh, how deplorable. – The Lutheran Church – Missouri Synod, as a corporate body, has sold her birthright for a mess of false doctrine. False prophets rule over and run that once soundly orthodox body. Armed with God's Sword, His unbreakable, everlasting Word,

we pronounce this ultimatum, Rev. 22, 18-19: "For I testify unto every man that heareth the words of the prophecy of this book, If any man shall add unto these things, God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book: and if any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part out of the book of life, and out of the holy city, and from the things which are written in this book." Also, Heb. 6, 4-8: "For it is impossible for those who were once enlightened, and have tasted of the heavenly gift, and were made partakers of the Holy Ghost, and have tasted the good Word of God, and the powers of the world to come, if they shall fall away, to renew them again unto repentance; seeing they crucify to themselves the Son of God afresh, and put Him to an open shame. For the earth which drinketh in the rain that cometh oft upon it, and bringeth forth herbs meet for them by whom it is dressed, receiveth blessing from God: but that which beareth thorns and briars is rejected, and is nigh unto cursing; whose end is to be burned." Also, Heb. 10, 26-31: "For if we sin willfully after that we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins, but a certain fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation, which shall devour the adversaries. He that despised Moses' law died without mercy under two or three witnesses: of how much sorer punishment, suppose ye, shall he be thought worthy, who hath trodden under foot the Son of God, and hath counted the blood of the covenant, wherewith he was sanctified, an unholy thing, and hath done despite unto the Spirit of

grace? For we know him that hath said, Vengeance belongeth unto Me, I will recompense, saith the Lord. And again, The Lord shall judge His people. It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God." Also, I Peter 4, 17: "For the time is come that judgment must begin at the house of God, and if it first begin at us, what shall the end be of them that obey not the Gospel of God?"

E. The Proof for Missouri's Defection:

1. In September, 1945, 44 clergymen of The Lutheran Church — Missouri Synod (including a number of faculty members at the Concordia Theological Seminary, St. Louis, Missouri), which number since has been augmented by several hundred, accepted the so-called **Chicago Statement**. The **Chicago Statement** is a statement of false doctrine. Proof: a. Thesis 11 of **A Statement**: "We **Affirm** our conviction that, in keeping with historic Lutheran tradition and in harmony with the synodical resolution adopted in 1938 regarding church fellowship, such fellowship is possible without complete agreement in details of doctrine and practice which have never been considered divisive in the Lutheran Church."

That is rank false doctrine. 1 Cor. 1, 10 declares over against such false doctrine: "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."

b. Thesis 9 of **A Statement**: "We **believe** that the term 'unionism' should be applied only to acts in

which a clear and unmistakable denial of Scriptural truth or approval of error is involved. We therefore **deplore** the tendency to apply this non-Biblical term to any and every contact between Christians of different denominations." That is rank false doctrine. See Rom. 16, 17-18; Gal. 5, 9.

c. Thesis 8 of A Statement: "We **affirm** our conviction that any two or more Christians may pray together to the Triune God in the name of Jesus Christ, if the purpose for which they meet and pray is right according to the Word of God. This obviously includes meetings of groups called for the purpose of discussing doctrinal differences. We therefore **deplore** the tendency to decide the question of prayer fellowship on any other basis beyond the clear words of Scripture." That is rank false doctrine. Acts 2, 42 answers: "And they continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers." Amos 3, 3: "Can two walk together, except they be agreed?" Rom. 16, 17: "Now I beseech you, brethren, mark them which cause divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned; and avoid them." 1 Tim. 5, 22: "Neither be partaker of other men's sins." 2 John 10: "For he that biddeth him (the false teacher) God speed is partaker of his evil deeds." Matt. 10, 32-33: "Whosoever therefore shall confess Me before men, him will I confess also before My Father which is in heaven. But whosoever shall deny Me before men, him will I also deny before My Father which is in heaven." John 8, 31, 32: "If ye continue in My Word, then are ye My disciples indeed, and ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free." This

thesis opens the door to **unionism** and we **reject it altogether**.

d. Thesis 5 of A Statement: "We **affirm** our conviction that sound exegetical procedure is the basis for sound Lutheran theology. We therefore **deplore** the fact that Romans 16, 17-18 has been applied to all Christians who differ from us in certain points of doctrine. It is our conviction, based on sound exegetical and hermeneutical principles, that this text does not apply to the present situation in the Lutheran Church of America." But the Word of God answers, Psalm 119, 105: "Thy Word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path." Secondly, regarding Rom. 16, 17-18, Dr. George Stoeckhardt, eminent, sound Lutheran theologian of St. Louis Seminary in days past, gives these comments: "Paul admonishes his brethren to beware of those who teach a doctrine opposed to the Christian doctrine, which they had received, and thereby cause dissensions and give offense and occasion apostasy. Since this warning is so brief and supplementary, it shows that false teachers had as yet not entered the Roman congregation. Their description is so general that one must not think exclusively of the apostle's Judaistic adversaries. Paul thinks of such adversaries who had already opposed his Gospel, as the false teachers and apostle of the circumcision who had troubled the congregations of Galatia and Achaia, or as the deniers of the resurrection whom he attacks in First Corinthians, whose error was undoubtedly of heathen origin. Even though the Roman Christians were not immediately threatened, these false teachers could very easily direct their attention upon the Christian congregation of the metropolis, which was everywhere

talked about, and also there disseminate their teachings. In this case the Roman Christians should examine and be on their guard against these teachers of new doctrines, avoid them, not listen to and have fellowship with them. It is God's command that Christians avoid not only false doctrines, but also false teachers, and remain separate from such denominations that tolerate false doctrines and teachers. All unionism, which unites truth and error into the same ecclesiastical organization, is condemned by this word of the apostle, which is God's Word. Similar warnings are found in 2 Thessalonians 3, 6; Titus 3, 10; 1 Corinthians 5, 11; 2 John 1f. One should avoid such false teachers. They are not concerned about winning souls for the Lord Christ, but they pursue their own interests and desires, seek only to acquire a great following in order to have a pleasant and luxurious life. And they deceive the hearts of the simple, who see no evil in them, through hypocritical words and fine-spoken oratory. They can speak very piously so that simple Christians will not see through their self-interested design and error, and be easily misled. The only safe way of guarding oneself against their harmful influence is to avoid and shun them completely." (**Romans**, Geo. Stoeckhardt, Tr., Vol. II, pages 207-208.)

Note the accompanying letter of "A Statement" with the vicious charges: "a strange and pernicious spirit, ugly head, wrong approach to the Holy Scriptures, in a tragic misconception of the very essence of the Gospel and the nature, functions and mission of the Church, barren, negative attitudes, unevangelical techniques, unsympathetic legalistic practices, a self-

complacent and separatistic narrowness, an utter disregard for the fundamental law of Christian love, this unevangelical and intolerant spirit, this alarming phenomenon."

Note: This is what President John W. Behnken of The Lutheran Church — Missouri Synod has to say about the "A Statement" in a letter to the clergy, April 30, 1946, pp. 9-10: "But there are some points (in 'A Statement') with which we were not then and are not now in agreement. This holds true also of the 'deplorations' and also of the accompanying letter . . . we voiced our disagreement with some of the points in 'A Statement' as well as with the accompanying letter and insisted that these be corrected or withdrawn."

Note also: The "Agreement" reached by the Presidency and signers of "A Statement" at Ft. Wayne, Indiana, in January, 1947, provided that "A Statement" and its accompanying letter are withdrawn by representatives of the signers only "as a basis of discussion" and that this "shall not be interpreted as a retraction."

Note also, that the signers of "A Statement" continued after January, 1947, to make propaganda for "Speaking the Truth in Love", a booklet containing "A Statement" and essays defending it. It was sold on the campus of Concordia Theological Seminary as late as December, 1948. In the 1949-1950 course sheets provided for our students at Concordia Theological Seminary, St. Louis, Missouri, "Speaking the Truth in Love" is listed for collateral reading (Orientation II, 4). Then, too, signers of "A Statement" have publicly declared, after the issuance of the "Agreement", that they fully support "A Statement". Further, in the

three years and two months since the "Agreement" was announced, the four sets of "Theses", sponsored and prepared by President J. W. Behnken, have not covered the issues raised by "A Statement", and it is manifest that the issues involved have not been resolved by the "Theses" provided. (Cf. Reports and Memorials, Twenty-Sixth Delegate Synod, Assembled at Milwaukee, Wisconsin, June 21-30, 1950, Forty-First Regular Convention, page 467.)

Therefore we must reject all of the Chicago "A Statement" and denounce it altogether. We pronounce the verdict of the Holy Spirit through the servant of the Lord, St. Paul, in Gal. 5, 9: "A little leaven leaveneth the whole lump."

2. We declare that we reject the "Common Confession", purported to be a confession of doctrinal agreement in the doctrines treated between The Lutheran Church — Missouri Synod and The American Lutheran Church. The "Common Confession" was declared adopted by President J. W. Behnken, but it was adopted by only a majority vote — which action was contrary to Scripture and to Synod's Constitution.

We declare that we cannot accept, but must reject the "Common Confession" because of the following reasons which are overwhelming proof:

1. The "Common Confession" does not confess the foundation-doctrine of Plenary Verbal Inspiration of the Bible. But we confess that "Every Word of the Bible is God's Word, and therefore the Bible is without error." (Cf. Qu. 11 of Luther's Small Catechism, Missouri Synod edition of 1943).

2. The "Common Confession" does not confess the Scriptural doctrine of an objective justification. The C.C. states that "Forgiveness of sin has been secured and provided for all men." But the Lord wills that we confess: "God has already in Christ **absolved** all the world of its sins." The statement of the C.C. opens the door to work-righteousness, but God wants the door closed to work-righteousness.

3. The "Common Confession" does not rule out the false and unscriptural distinction between a "natural" and a "willful" resistance as a factor in man's conversion.

4. The "Common Confession" does not confess the Scriptural doctrine of election. The "Common Confession" reads: "God from eternity, solely because of His grace in Christ and without any cause whatever in man, elected as His own all those whom He makes and keeps members of His kingdom and heirs of eternal life." (Par. IV.) But our **Brief Statement** rejects this as a doctrine of election. "By election of grace, Scripture does not mean that one part of God's counsel of salvation according to which He will receive into heaven those who persevere in faith unto the end" (or as the C.C. puts it: "Whom He makes and keeps members of His kingdom and heirs of eternal life"). Our **Brief Statement** confesses: "But, on the contrary, Scripture means this, that God, before the foundation of the world, from pure grace, because of the redemption of Christ, has chosen for His own a definite number of persons out of the corrupt mass and has determined to bring them, through Word and Sacrament, to faith and salvation." (Par. 39)

5. The "Common Confession" does not confess the invisibility of the one holy Christian Church. Both Luke 17, 20-21: "The kingdom of God cometh not with observation: Neither shall they say, Lo here! or Lo there! for, behold, the kingdom of God is within you," and 2 Tim. 2, 19: "The Lord knoweth them that are His," are conspicuous by their absence. The "Common Confession" employs ambiguous language.

6. The "Common Confession" does not include "prayer fellowship" in the forbidden church fellowship. This is in conformity with Paragraph 8 of the Chicago "A Statement", of which the chairman of the Committee on Doctrinal Unity of The Lutheran Church — Missouri Synod, Dr. Wm. Arndt, is a signer. On this matter, the Chicago "A Statement" reads: "We affirm our conviction that any two or more Christians may pray together to the Triune God in the name of Jesus Christ, if the purpose for which they meet and pray is right according to the Word of God."

Note, in the second place, that "altar and pulpit fellowship" dare not be practiced only with such erring individuals, church bodies, or church groups "that refuse to be corrected." Which errorist does not say that he sincerely believes that he is teaching according to God's Word? And which errorist is so base as to declare that he is not willing to be corrected?

Scripture, on the other hand, commands us: "Now I beseech you, brethren, mark them which cause divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned; and avoid them. For they that are such serve not our Lord Jesus Christ, but their own belly;

and by good words and fair speeches deceive the hearts of the simple. Romans 16, 17-18.

The "Common Confession" does not confess the Scriptural doctrine of church fellowship.

7. The "Common Confession" does not confess that millennialism is an error because of which it is necessary to sever church fellowship if persistently advocated. (Reports and Memorials of the 1950 Convention, pages 442-446).

8. The "Common Confession" uses the words "Scriptures in their entirety." Of this Pastor S. C. Ylvisaker, of the Norwegian Synod of the Synodical Conference, writes in THE LUTHERAN SENTINEL, Vol. 34, No. 3, Feb. 12, 1951, page 37: "The bare inclusion of these characteristic words, 'in their entirety', without further explanation, lends a false note. We owe our people, our church, our gracious God, a clearer confession than this."

9. In the doctrine of the Antichrist, the "Common Confession" does not come forth boldly and confess with Scripture authority what our Lutheran Confession declare, namely, that "the pope is the very Antichrist." The "Common Confession" uses the word "still" in the treatment of the doctrine of the Antichrist and thus the "Common Confession" gives expression to uncertainty regarding the doctrine of the Antichrist and it is therefore unacceptable.

10. The "Common Confession" does not contain the proper antitheses, which would thus reject the false doctrines of the American Lutheran Church, which false doctrines have separated the American Lutheran Church and The

Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod for some 75 years.

F. Now what do all these rejections of the Chicago “A Statement” and of the “Common Confession” add up to? Answer: At this historic meeting of conservatives of The Lutheran Church — Missouri Synod, at Okabena, Minnesota, Sept. 25 to 26, 1951, we declare our willingness to dissolve our group which is in protesting membership in The Lutheran Church — Missouri Synod, whenever the present Missouri Synod organization returns to the **Brief Statement** position, adopted by Synod in 1932, reaffirmed by Synod at Chicago as recently as 1947, adopted by the entire Synodical Conference. But the Missouri Synod must employ drastic, necessary Scriptural measures and cause the individual adherents to the 1945 Chicago “A Statement” and the 1950 “Common Confession” to reject them or expel such adherents from membership in the Missouri Synod. Rom. 16, 17-18; Titus 3, 10; Jer. 15, 19-21.

G. Now follows what a number of pastors — of the Missouri, Norwegian and Wisconsin Synods — and two Missouri Synod laymen have written me on what should be done according to “Purpose, Point 4” of the Invitation to this Okabena Church Convention:

1. Aug. 28, 1951 — Missouri Synod pastor, signer of the “Confession of Faith”:

“Generally speaking, I am in agreement with this point. But can we rightly put the 1945 Chicago Statement and the 1950 Common Confession in the same category in all respects? I do want Synod to reject both of these documents. Also, I do insist that Synod must

expel from its membership all those who are *consistent and incorrigible* adherents of the Chicago Statement. But I think we should modify our demand with regard to the Common Confession. What I have in mind is that at the present time it would be premature and altogether unwise and unnecessary to speak of expulsion of adherents to the Common Confession. That may be necessary later, but not yet.”

2. Sept. 3, 1951 — a Wisconsin Synod pastor:

“I personally believe that Point 4 is a vain gesture. You men still hope that the Missouri Synod will return to its former position. Luther hoped likewise in his day. It would be an outstanding exception to history were the Missouri Synod to return. In regard to the question: ‘Can we put the Chicago 1945 Statement and the 1950 Common Confession in the same category in all respects?’ the simple answer is ‘no’ but they have sufficient in common to be classed together.

“In regard to the ‘written view’— ‘at the present time it would be premature and altogether unwise and unnecessary to speak of expulsion of adherents to the Common Confession. That may be necessary later but not yet.’ Is that ‘written view’ tenable; does it hold water? It is not tenable nor does it hold water. When anyone holds doctrines and practice contrary to Scripture and I hold doctrine and practice in accord with Scripture, that person has already separated himself from me and is heretic in the moment that he reveals his anti-Scriptural position. Where in Scripture do we find a different time limit? My only duty to him

henceforth is to testify and try to win him back, and, surely, the strongest testimony is my declaration of separation from him. The longer a faithful confessor is aligned with one who deviates from the Truth, the weaker his testimony becomes and the more damage is suffered by the Truth, and the more offense is given. The present situation will hardly permit anyone to argue that the cases are cases of ignorance or weakness. The Truth has been balanced against the errors for about 20 years and the errorists have become very arrogant and hurl defiance at anyone who will dare to point them to the Truth. How much further can anyone proceed? They have already gone much further than Scripture would sanction."

3. Sept. 4, 1951 — pastor of Norwegian Synod: "I think that you have a point in the question you have asked. While both matters, the Chicago Statement and the Common Confession, are of a very serious nature, yet the time element enters in and also the matter of the necessary instruction. While the Chicago Statement was the result of what the signers call 'mature deliberation', I believe that many voted on the Common Confession without having studied the matter thoroughly and also there has been some difference of interpretation of the Resolutions, although the official interpretation is quite clear, namely that the Document represents a full agreement between Missouri and the A.L.C. on the doctrines treated."

4. Sept. 4, 1951 — a pastor of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod writes:

"If I would say that the adher-

ents of the Common Confession must be rejected, I would mean anyone who adheres to it as a settlement of the differences between the two church bodies. The Norwegian Synod and the Wisconsin Synod have already said as much also. And what Missourian today would claim for the CC what was claimed for it by the 1950 Convention? Only rank liberals.

"No, we cannot place the CC in all respects with the Chicago Statement. But there are many angles to this whole business. What appears most important to me is that Missourians have no business even trying to write a common confession with the A.L.C. True Missourians do not agree with the A.L.C. as a church body. Next, we are going through confusion now about the CC just as we had it about the '38 St. Louis Resolutions. Of that '38 document one man said this, another that, and another something that was neither this nor that; and finally the '38 document was set aside. The only way I see to handle the CC is to reject it, as the sister synods have done, and as all **Confession of Faith** Subscribers have done and also others.

"Your main question, I believe, is whether or not we can expel people who adhere to the 1950 Common Confession. Yes, says the Wisconsin Synod, because it is untruthful. It's really a swindle. But for all that, we cannot treat it in all respects as we do the Chicago Statement. — I would say that you should treat the Common Confession according to the way it was adopted in 1950 by the A.L.C. and by Missouri. You should not treat it as something that is in the process of change. If it is rejected even by Missouri or if it is amend-

ed as we are told, we'll cross those bridges when we get there. Right now, I suggest, you should treat the Common Confession as a standing document which the 1950 resolutions on it claim to be a settlement of the doctrinal differences in respect to those doctrines which it treats. This resolution is **not** true. And so you should treat the matter. Such a treatment of the matter will greatly help all concerned either to reject it or to change it. It cannot be left standing as it is, and anyone who holds to it as it is must be counted as a liberal."

5. Sept. 4, 1951 — a Norwegian Synod professor replies:

"The important thing is, of course, that the Missouri Synod returns to the full contents of its own **Brief Statement** and adheres to it in spirit and in truth. That is, no doubt, the intent and meaning of the 'Confession of Faith'. But when the authors of this latter 'Confession' add to it references to the 'Statement of the 44', the 'Common Confession', etc., demanding that something must be done by way of disciplining the erring, I understand that to mean nothing more than an attempt at defining what such acceptance of the Brief Statement would imply, if those who subscribe to it are in dead earnest about it. The definitions really are not necessary, since the **Brief Statement** itself takes care of those very things. What we must make certain of is this: That they who confess the **Brief Statement** as their convictions on the points there set forth are not going to compromise it in any way. Perhaps many a soul who imagines that the Common Confession is satisfactory would be grieved to find that 'content and fitting word'

no longer assures him of an inspiration which is 'verbally inspired'.

"Even the looking forward to the matter of disciplining non-conforming spirits may be a sort of 'anticipating command,' as we termed it in the army. Also that is taken care of in the principles laid down in the **Scripturally true Brief Statement**. Let us return to the **Brief Statement** without any reservations, and then earnestly seek to live according to our doctrine. That is my conviction."

6. Sept. 6, 1951 — a Missouri Synod layman:

"According to point 4 as written at the very outset, this should be a dissenting group. The Convention may call for secession.

"Inasmuch as the 'Common Confession' contains portions, especially point 5 of 'A Statement', those who would adhere to the 'Common Confession' must reject it and, if they refuse, must be expelled. The view generally taken by Liberals and Adherents is, 'Don't act so fast.' They definitely lose sight of Gal. 5, 9. They likewise will follow man's reasoning and stubbornly ignore Scripture, Rom. 16, 17-18. They even have the temerity of calling at my office and telling me that they would caution me because of weak brethren (*meaning* pastors). Weak brethren are not in the pulpits, but under the pulpit.

"So the reasoning is, we should wait until we are kicked out. Rom. 16, 17 says nothing about being kicked out, but 'Mark them and avoid them.' You say at this time it would be premature and unwise to speak of expulsion of adherents to the 'Common Confession'. This would be halting between two opinions. Either 'Jehovah is God'

or 'Baal is God'. And, if we have weak brethren in the pulpit, I think it is time that definite steps be taken to expose even these weak brethren. Their weakness is leaning toward the Liberal side or following great numbers.

"You stated further the view is, 'Don't be too radical and hasty in breaking away from the Missouri Synod.' I would say, 'Ask these men: What have you done toward preserving the Full Truth of God's Word?' You will find that they have locked their doors and have gone into the closets and testified boldly to the merchandise hanging in it. . . .

"When we are kicked out, the entire lump is leavened. I would ask you further, how can we with a clear conscience uphold a corporation and turn our back on God's Word? Trusting that this will clarify my position.

"The Norwegian Synod and the Wisconsin Synod have spoken very loud. We may have to find shelter and truth with men of Wisconsin."

7. Sept. 6, 1951—a former professor-pastor-member of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod:

"Replying to your letter of September 4, it seems to me, first of all, that some brother who believes in appeasement has been trying to influence you. But the arguments are specious.

"The purpose of the Okabena meeting is the consolidation of the conservative forces of men who are still in membership in the Missouri Synod, but oppose both the Chicago Statement and the Common Confession for reasons of conscience. The group will very likely take the form of a brotherhood, disregarding the common distinction between clergy and laity. I

suppose that whole congregations will be invited to join the movement.

"As for the alleged distinction between the two documents mentioned, the difference is in degree, not in essence. The Chicago Statement implicated only a group of men, but the Common Confession is a document accepted by a corporate body, a fact which makes it very dangerous indeed. Consider that both the Norwegian Synod and the Wisconsin Synod have rejected the document. It is a heterodox confession and labels the body which adopted it as heterodox. Not only Rom. 16, 17f., but a dozen other passages give us directions as to our conduct under such circumstances. Condoning the errors of the document makes a person guilty of the sins of others. The gravity of the situation is increased by the fact that the document was accepted in spite of the conscientious objections voiced by a number of brethren; in fact, the convention trampled on the opposition in a manner which defied Christian love. These are some of the points which will be discussed at Okabena."

8. A letter from a retired pastor of the Missouri Synod (extract translated from the German):

"If we want to be sure of being God's servants for the welfare of His Church, let us be very careful of the steps which we take. Our present Synodical situation is very similar to the situation of the Church when Pelagius was sorely disturbing the peace of the Church. In the west Pelagius had but little success with his false doctrine; in the east, however, he was successful. At two Palestinian synods, the one at Diospolis, in 414, his doctrine was declared to be orthodox. But already in the next year at the

synods at Carthage and Mileve the Pelagian heresy was condemned, and finally at the general synod at Carthage, 418. The parallel is easily deduced. Among the Wisconsin and Norwegian brethren New-Missouri finds no favor, as is also the case with many in the Missouri Synod, not only among the older ones, but also with many of the younger generation. Ambitious spirits are arising in force within the Missouri Synod. They seek to satisfy their thirst for full knowledge by their own peculiar projects in the realm of exegesis (durch selbsteigene Versuche der Schriftauslegung). Under the fair slogan of 'restudying' they hold it to be their vocation to cultivate and propagate the newer knowledge. They do not seek to establish and confirm what Missouri has long possessed, but seek the acknowledgment of their own scientific and independent achievements. . . . One finds them ceaselessly striving before the whole church to corrupt the good heritage of Missouri, to mingle light and darkness, truth and error, which God's servants, by His grace, and in the service of His Church of all times down to the present, have carefully kept separate, in order to build their own peculiar structure of Christian doctrine (Common Confession) which should be worthy to perpetuate their own name. The old errors in new and specious form are admitted without misgiving by the Christians (Synod, 1950), in consequence of superficial knowledge or insufficient consideration, as though they were serving progress in the truth."

9. Sept. 7, 1951—pastor-official of Wisconsin Synod:

"Offhand, I would say that I do

not believe that the two documents belong 'in the same category in all respects', but I really do not care to express myself on a matter that is still *the affair of a sister synod*.

"As a synod we have always dealt solely with the duly appointed representatives of the Missouri Synod, carefully avoiding any action that might be considered as unbrotherly.

"The 'Common Confession' was submitted to us in the regular manner; we have studied it (and the answers to our questions) in the light of the Word of God, and we will address our reply stating our findings to President Behnken.

"What will happen then, is for the first not our concern, but we are hoping and praying that a disruption of the Synodical Conference will be avoided."

10. Sept. 7, 1951—pastor of Missouri Synod, subscriber to "Confession of Faith":

"To launch immediately into the midst of the inquiry which you make, I would answer that what you quote as a 'written view' — namely, that at the present time it would be premature, unwise, and unnecessary to speak of expulsion of adherents to the Common Confession — is not a tenable view, and does not hold water. The answer to the question, whether we can rightly put the 1945 Chicago Statement and the 1950 Common Confession in the same category in all respects, is that we must do so, since the latter is the inevitable result of the former and the more or less conscious purpose which the former aimed to achieve.

"Moreover, the Common Con-

cession is a long step in advance of the *Chicago Statement in the direction of wrecking the confessional position of the Missouri Synod, since A Statement was and is generally recognized as the standard only of a faction in Synod, a standard from which many even of those who are fundamentally in sympathy with it would like to dissociate themselves now that it has accomplished its purpose, whereas the Common Confession is regarded as the present official doctrinal position of the corporate body of the Missouri Synod — which indeed it is as far as the unscriptural and unconstitutional action of Synod in convention assembled can make it so. The unretracted A Statement still left the possibility that Synod, which never accepted it as such, might still by subsequent repudiation of it cleanse itself from the stigma of being a unionistic fellowship in which false doctrine is tolerated, but the acceptance of the Common Confession by the Missouri Synod has rendered the corporate body itself an unorthodox church body which has in effect repudiated its former orthodoxy. All church history indicates that a body which has thus possessed the truth and lost it never repents. Individuals may repent of their participation in such apostasy, but the corporate body will not do so. It is therefore to me self-evident that the objective announced under Point 4 will not be accomplished. Not the adherents of A Statement and the Common Confession, but the adherents of the Brief Statement will eventually be expelled from 'the present Missouri Synod organization'. But it is necessary that Point 4 be stated as it is, in order to justify our group in not dissolving but in*

rather becoming, under the Lord's guidance, no longer merely a protesting but a seceding group, and in order to show that not we but the Missouri Synod organization brought about the break in fellowship by departing from the doctrine which has hitherto been our bond of unity with it.

"It is also a fact—is it not?—that the false doctrine in the Common Confession is quantitatively greater than that in A Statement, that is to say, there are a larger number of doctrinal aberrations in the Common Confession, though they are certainly stated in much more careful and appealing language and are not so crassly obvious as the aberrations of A Statement. There are three reasons for this: 1) the Common Confession covers a great deal more ground. It errs with regard to verbal inspiration, objective justification, conversion, election, Atnichrist, none of which errors can be charged against A Statement, since it does not profess to cover this ground, but harps upon the one string of its false doctrine of church-fellowship (though in the so-called 'sola Scriptura' plank of the *Chicago Statement platform*, point No. 2, the omission of the doctrine of inspiration is, to say the least, rather striking, 'auffallend'). 2) The common Confession is positive, while A Statement is largely negative. Therefore it appears, especially to the superficial reader, that the Common Confession denies no Scriptural truth, and even when carefully analyzed, its denials will be found to consist mainly in default, in the lack of clear confession. A Statement, on the other hand, clearly and emphatically denies the Biblical doctrine of church fellowship and

assails the position of the Missouri Synod. 3) Closely allied to the foregoing is the fact that the Common Confession claims to be a settlement of former differences and is thus couched in ironical and inoffensive language. Its main fault is that it does not settle these controversies, but largely leaves them untouched or treats them in ambiguous language. A Statement, on the other hand, is frankly polemical and controversial. It claims to be a call to repentance, and frequently in its 'deplorations' especially (and in the accompanying letter), uses very offensive and provocative language. But it cannot be faulted with not settling controversies which it does not profess to deal with. Summa summarum: A Statement is a more provocative, but a much less dangerous document than the Common Confession. The former stands at the beginning of the road of doctrinal decadence, the latter at or near the end of the road. The latter has accomplished that which the former only aimed at."

11. Letter of Sept. 7, 1951 — a professor of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod:

"As to Point 4 of the Okabena invitation to an organizational meeting of conservatives, I would say: This point is worded too strongly. Even among honest subscribers to the Brief Statement opinions may be divided as to whether the Common Confession will do as the first step in the direction of doctrinal unity. We definitely distrust this document and regard it as a trap to ensnare the unwary because of its ambiguity, its lack of antitheses and its omissions. **Others** take an optimistic view, regard it as a step in the right direction, altering indeed, but

giving promise of the child, the A.L.C. soon becoming safe on its legs. Both parties can point to history in proof of the correctness of their conviction. We can point to the General Council which, after separating from the General Synod because of its laxity, deteriorated until it again merged with the General Synod as the U.L.C.A. The **optimists** can point to the Wisconsin Synod which gradually came around to a clear adoption of the Missouri Synod position. Now, I would not want to expel anyone from the Missouri Synod because he hopes for the best regarding this pitiable Common Confession. I rather feel that **time** will show him to have been wrong and me to have been right, and that then he will have to quietly consign the Common Confession to the waste basket, as he did with the 1938 resolutions and other documents eventually found to be unsatisfactory.

"It would be a miracle, however, if he publicly repudiated this wretched piece of work, the Common Confession. Frank retractions by clergymen are rare and a signal accomplishment of the Holy Spirit."

12. Sept. 7, 1951—from a pastor of the Norwegian Synod:

"I find your questions rather hard to answer. The Chicago Statement of 1945 and the Common Confession cannot of course be placed in exactly the same category, because the former is a statement of a group of individuals in the Missouri Synod, while the Common Confession belongs to the synod as a whole. However, it may be that at least the doctrinal views expressed in the Chicago Statement are becoming

those of the synod. It is rather hard to tell. . . . As to waiting until the liberals throw you out of **any** church body, I think that this is foolish. I don't believe that they will ever throw anyone out. And Rom. 16, 17-18 certainly makes it our duty, after necessary admonition (Titus 3, 10), to avoid those who cause divisions and offences contrary to Scripture. In this connection, I can mention that our union committee recommended to our recent convention that we declare ourselves **in statu confessionis** with the Missouri Synod My synod did not adopt this recommendation. I did not expect this; but I thought that our men should be thinking along these lines more strongly. And it is my opinion that the conservatives in Missouri should be doing the same thing. Some may think that I am being hasty. Perhaps I am. I am willing to be shown. But so far I have not been shown."

13. Sept. 12, 1951—from a layman of The Lutheran Church — Missouri Synod:

"I cannot from my point of view even consider dissolving this group. I truly believe this is a weak point. The opposition will also see this and use it very handily. I dare say also that clear-cut adherents to the 'Confession of Faith' also would not like the dissolving stipulation. I do not know Luther too well, but the little I do know of him is that he would not have considered that in his day. And, too, Reverend, does not Jer. 15, 19 also apply to our 'Confession of Faith?' I cannot bring myself to believe that dissolving as stated in No. 4 is God-pleasing. I'm afraid, Reverend, that even within this group you are going to find idolatry (Synoditis). An un-

clean cut encourages infection.

"As to your P.S. Question: Can we rightly put the 1945 Chicago Statement and the 1950 Common Confession in the same category in all respects? I would say why quibble over which is the lesser or greater of the two evils. 'A little leaven leaveneth the whole lump.'

"As to the written view: 'At the present time it would be premature and altogether unwise and unnecessary to speak of expulsion of adherents to the Common Confession. That may be necessary later, but not yet.' To me that statement is not tenable. That statement itself lacks meat. We must not forget that we are dealing with men. That statement also is a haven for on-the-fence people who have made no effort to get off the fence until they see how the tide turns. They're neither hot nor cold. They should be spit out.

"I have a strong feeling, Reverend, you are not in harmony with the views held on No. 4 by others. Do what you know is God-pleasing and right and I know you know what is right by Scripture. If we are for the Full Truth of God's Word, let's also not forget that word 'full!'"

14. Sept. 17, 1951—From a pastor of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod, a signer of the "Confession of Faith". (Note: 16 letters were sent out, to 14 of which I received answers in return. To date, a Missouri Synod layman and a professor of the Wisconsin Synod have not answered). And now the following reply:

"I do not believe that I shall be present at Okabena. If it were closer, I would be there. . . . It is

true that the Common Confession is a false confession. However, many sincere people have been deceived and others have emphasized the resolution of Committee 3 that attempted to safeguard our position in acceptance of the document. . . . Please do not interpret this attitude as a lack of courage or intestinal fortitude. Being sheep among wolves, we must be wise as serpents, though guileless as doves. We must ever keep in mind the net results of the effect of our words and deeds.”

H. Christ Jesus, the Good Shepherd, supporting and directing us by God's Holy Spirit, let us, being united according to Matthew 28, 20 and I Corinthians 1, 10, earnestly contend for the faith once delivered unto the Saints (Jude 3), and knowing that "A little leaven leaveneth the whole lump" (Galatians 5, 9), mark the individual adherents of the 1945 Chicago Statement and the 1950 Common Confession which cause divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine which we have learned; and avoid them. For they that are such serve not our Lord Jesus Christ, but their own belly; and by good words and fair speeches deceive the hearts of the simple (Romans 16, 17-18), and Titus 3, 10—"A man that is an heretic after the first and second admonition REJECT", and let Jeremiah 15, 19-21 take place with regard to those who profess false doctrine. God, the Father, God, the Son, and God, the Holy Ghost, judge in all this matter through the full truth of His Word.—Presented by Pastor Herbert F. Koehlinger of Detroit, Michigan

These four Conference essays were unanimously adopted with

appreciation to the essayists by the Conference.

VI. THE CONFERENCE MEETING RULES

At the start of the first session of the Conference, held on Tuesday morning, September 25th, Mr. H. A. Strumpler, Temporary Chairman of the Conference, outlined the rules by which attendance, discussion, and voting at the Conference would be regulated.

The meeting was described as a closed meeting for Scriptural reasons. All members of the host congregation were admitted because of the fact that, at the time, the congregation was in *statu confessionis* with The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod. In other cases the following principles were followed—

1. Because of the fact that there is not full unity among the pastors of the Missouri Synod, it was presumed necessary to give each of the Missouri Synod pastors attending the Conference a confessional test for their orthodoxy. Those who had signed the Confession of Faith were admitted and given full floor and suffrage privileges. (Rom. 16, 17, 18; 2 John 9, 10).
2. Because of the fact that many members of Missouri Synod churches are poorly or not at all informed in the matters of present day inter-synodical relations, all laymen of Missouri Synod congregations were admitted to the meeting as observers.
3. Because of the fact that the Norwegian Synod of the American Evangelical Lutheran Church and the Joint Synod of Wisconsin and Other States are orthodox communions, it was not presumed necessary to apply a confessional test to determine the orthodoxy of their pastors. All pastors of these two bodies were admitted to the sessions and given the privilege of the floor.

VII. RESOLUTIONS OF THE CONFERENCE

a. Equalization of Travel Expenses:

Whereas, some of the brethren attending this conference have come from great distance at great cost, and

Whereas, we do not desire that any of our brethren suffer any more than necessary financially, and

Whereas, we desire to encourage like-minded brethren, in addition to those present at the first Conference, faithfully to attend all future sessions of our Conference:

Therefore Be It Resolved, that those present prayerfully consider this matter and, in a spirit of charity, place a contribution into the hands of the Okabena pastor, leaving an equitable division of what comes in to his good judgment.

b. **Articles Of Agreement:** The "Articles of Agreement" which were read, amended, and unanimously adopted as amended are printed at the end of these Proceedings.

c. **On The Resolutions Of The Norwegian And Wisconsin Synods With Regard To The So-Called "Common Confession":**

Whereas, we have heard and given careful consideration to the official convention resolutions of the Norwegian Synod of the American Evangelical Lutheran Church and of the Ev. Lutheran Joint Synod of Wisconsin and Other States, rejecting the so-called "Common Confession", and

Whereas, we find the action of these two afore-mentioned bodies against the so-called "Common Confession" to be in accordance with the Word of God and expressive of our convictions in the matter, as expressed in Part I of our Confession Of Faith:

Therefore Be It Resolved,

1. That we, assembled as the Orthodox Lutheran Conference in Okabena, Minnesota, on September 25 and 26, 1951, hereby express our assent to the action of the aforementioned Norwegian

and Wisconsin Synods in this matter, and

2. That we inform the Presidents of the afore-mentioned bodies, as well as those of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod and of the Slovak Lutheran Church of this assent, and

3. That we consider this assent to be expressive of the continued unity of doctrine and practice between our Orthodox Lutheran Conference and the afore-mentioned Norwegian and Wisconsin Synods in the Evangelical Lutheran Synodical Conference of North America.

d. Official Publication:

Whereas, the need for an official organ, serving the congregations of our Orthodox Lutheran Conference and for publicising our position in doctrine and practice, has been shown in the essay entitled "Suggestions for a Church Paper" by Pastor O. G. Schupmann;

Therefore Be It Resolved

1. That we publish such a paper under the name **The Orthodox Lutheran**; and

2. That this paper be issued at least monthly; and

3. That the Orthodox Lutheran Conference proceed to elect an Editorial Committee of two, who shall be entrusted with working out the details of this publication, and

4. That the Editorial Committee be authorized to produce the first issues under the supervision of the Board of Directors and present complete plans for continuing the publication thereafter to the next meeting of our Conference.

e. Publication Of Proceedings:

Resolved, that the Proceedings of this Conference shall be printed in booklet form and shall include essays, resolutions, Articles of Agreement, and Conference Sermon.

f. Publicity:

Resolved, that The Vice President, together with Mr. H. A. Strumpler, take care of press releases for the Conference.

g. **Financing Conference Projects:**

Resolved, that all the members of this Conference be urged to finance all projects of the Orthodox Lutheran Conference by **Proportionate Giving**, according to the best of their financial ability.

h. **Thanks And Appreciation:**

Resolved, that we express our sincere gratitude and appreciation to the pastor and members of St. John's Ev. Lutheran Congregation of Okabena, Minnesota, for the splendid fellowship and hospitality, shown during the first meeting of the Orthodox Lutheran Conference, and that we show our appreciation by a rising vote.

i. **In The Matter Of The Coos Bay, Oregon, Congregation:**

Mr. Strumpler presented the matter of the Coos Bay, Oregon, congregation, explaining that a small group of Lutherans in that city had submitted their constitution to our Conference for approval. Pastor O. Schupmann read Article II on the Confession of Faith which the congregation wanted to adopt. This article was found satisfactory and the Conference approved of it unanimously. Several corrections were suggested in connection with other articles of the Constitution and Pastor O. Schupmann was instructed to answer the inquiry of the Congregation for the Conference.

VIII. MISCELLANEOUS

- a. Pastor George Schweikert of Okabena reported that the offering for Travel-aid amounted to \$80.50 and that 5 brethren had been helped. The balance would be placed into the Conference Treasury.
- b. Pastor G. Schupmann exhorted those attending the Conference to allot memorial wreaths to the Orthodox Lutheran Conference wherever possible.

IX. THE CONFERENCE OFFICERS

The result of the election of officers for the Orthodox Lutheran Conference was as follows—

President—Pastor Wallace H. McLaughlin

Vice President—Dr. P. E. Kretzmann

Secretary—Pastor Albert Schupmann

Treasurer—Fred J. Niebruegge

Editorial Committee—Pastors George Schweikert and Herbert F. Kochlinger

Member-At-Large, Board of Directors—H. A. Strumpler

The first meeting of the Orthodox Lutheran Conference adjourned at 4:15 P.M. on Wednesday, September 26, 1951 with the reading of Psalm 133 and the Lord's Prayer, spoken in unison.

X. CONFERENCE MOTTO

"We have no intention of yielding aught of the eternal, immutable truth of God for the sake of temporal peace, tranquillity, and unity (which, moreover, is not in our power to do). Nor would such peace and unity, since it is devised against the truth and for its suppression, have any permanency. Still less are we inclined to adorn and conceal a corruption of the pure doctrine and manifest, condemned errors. But we entertain heartfelt pleasure and love for, and are on our part sincerely inclined and anxious to advance, that unity according to our utmost power, by which His glory remains to God uninjured, nothing of the divine truth of the Holy Gospel is surrendered, no room is given to the least error, poor sinners are brought to true, genuine repentance, raised up by faith, confirmed in new obedience, and thus justified and eternally saved alone through the sole merit of Christ."

Closing Statement of the Formula of Concord (Trigl. Conc., Page 1095)

Articles of Agreement

Adopted by the Orthodox Lutheran Conference

At Okabena, Minnesota – September 26, 1951

Preamble:

Whereas, the theology of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod has shown a progressive deterioration and unscriptural character for the past two decades:

a. In many articles appearing in the “Lutheran Witness”, the “Concordia Theological Monthly”, the “American Lutheran”, and elsewhere, as well as in published pamphlets;

b. Specifically in the so-called “Chicago Statement” of 1945, with regard to which neither the responsible officials of Synod nor Synod itself ever took decisive Scriptural action, and that, in spite of obvious doctrinal errors; and in the “Common Confession” of the Milwaukee Convention as a corporate body, a document, which is definitely inadequate for the purpose of resolving differences of doctrine obtaining in the various Lutheran bodies of America, especially the American Lutheran Church, and is in part out of harmony with Holy Writ; and

Whereas, some of the Missouri Synod’s leading theologians and clergymen have repeatedly become guilty of flagrant unionistic practices (see Memorials 603 to 622, 625 to 630, submitted to the Milwaukee Convention of 1950);

Hence, we, under the compulsion of the Word of God, find it necessary to declare, that The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod has left its former orthodox position as a corporate body, destroying the former unity of doctrine and practice and separating itself from our fellowship. However, since we see no hope of cleansing the corporate body of the Missouri Synod from its leaven of false doctrine or ridding it of the presence of false teachers, and since Scripture commands us to “mark and avoid” (Romans 16, 17), we hereby withdraw from said Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod for reasons set forth in this Preamble and in our **Confession of Faith**, appended to this declaration.

Article I – Name:

The name of this body shall be the **Orthodox Lutheran Conference**.

Article II – Confession:

The confessional platform of this body is laid down in **The Confession Of Faith Professed And Practiced By All True Lutherans**, appended to this declaration.

Article III – Objectives:

The objectives of this Conference shall be:

1. To hold fast the full truth of God’s Word. 2 Timothy 3, 14-17; Psalm 119, 105; John 8, 31, 32; Matthew 28, 20.
2. To continue to voice its united opposition against errors in doctrine and practice, as indicated in the Preamble, Matthew 7, 15; Romans 16, 17, 18; 1 Timothy 6, 3-5; Titus 3, 10.
3. To offer encouragement and assistance to pastors, teachers, laymen and congregations, who are in the state of confession (in statu confessionis, that is, in protesting membership) in heterodox Lutheran bodies, and who share our Confession of Faith.
4. It shall be a basic objective of this Conference to use all the efforts and abilities possible to build the Kingdom of God by the initiation of new mission stations wherever possible. Matthew 28, 18-20.

Article IV – Membership:

1. Membership in this Conference may be acquired and held by individuals who subscribe to the **Confession of Faith**, and by congregations who subscribe to Part I of this **Confession of Faith** and do not dissent from Part II.
2. Interim membership may be acquired and held by such pastors as share our Confession, but are not yet in a position to have their congregations join them in full membership in the **Orthodox Lutheran Conference**.

Article V – Officers, their Rights and Duties:

The officers of this Conference shall be:

1. **A President**, who is ordinarily to act as chairman of all meetings and to perform the duties commonly associated with the office of presiding officer;
2. **A Vice-President**, who shall take over the functions of the President, whenever the latter is unable to serve;
3. **A Secretary**, who is to keep the minutes of the organization and be in charge of all the records, such as official documents, proceedings, essays, which have been adopted, and correspondence; to keep membership and attendance records; to send out necessary notifications; and to conduct the correspondence of the Conference.
4. **A Treasurer**, who is to have charge of all monies of the organization and report regularly to the Board of Directors and at the meetings of the Conference.

These four officers, together with one member-at-large are to constitute the Board of Directors of the organization, with meetings held at stated times, together with the Editor of the Conference's official organ, to be present in an advisory capacity.

Article VI – Meetings:

This Conference shall meet annually, and its Board of Directors shall meet quarterly. Special meetings may be called by the Board of Directors.

THE SIGNATORIES TO THE “ARTICLES OF AGREEMENT.”

Pastors:

P. R. Bloedel, Wilmot, South Dakota
 Herbert F. Koehlinger, Detroit, Mich.
 P. E. Kretzmann, Cuba, Missouri
 Wallace H. McLaughlin, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania
 H. David Mensing, Tinley Pary, Illinois
 Melvin L. Natterer, Lansing, Illinois
 Albert M. Schupmann, Plymouth, Nebraska
 Gustav G. Schupmann, Chesterfield, Missouri
 Otto G. Schupmann, Minneapolis, Minnesota
 George Schweikert, Okabena, Minnesota

Laymen:

Fred J. Niebruegge, Clayton, Missouri
 H. A. Strumpler, St. Louis, Missouri
 O. E. Reimnitz, St. Louis, Missouri
 Warren W. Osterloh, St. Louis, Missouri
 William Koslowske, St. Louis, Missouri
 Emil L. Weis, Winter Haven, Florida

CONFESSION OF FAITH PROFESSED AND PRACTICED BY ALL TRUE LUTHERANS

These articles of agreement have been adopted to show what we as orthodox Lutherans teach concerning certain controverted doctrines. And we invite others to join us in spreading these truths by confession and conduct.

I. IN GENERAL

The Bible

We recognize and accept, with our whole heart, and without any reservations of whatever kind, the canonical books of the Old and the New Testament as the Word given by inspiration of God.

The Symbols

We accept the Lutheran Confessions, as contained in the Book of Concord of 1580, as a correct exposition of the Word of God regarding all the doctrines discussed therein.

The Brief Statement

We accept the BRIEF STATEMENT of the Missouri Synod (adopted in 1932 and reaffirmed in 1947) as a correct presentation of the teaching of Holy Writ on all the questions therein discussed.

Antithesis

We do not accept the Doctrinal Declaration of the American Lutheran Church, as presented in 1938, nor the *Doctrinal Affirmation*, as presented in 1944, nor the so-called *Common Confession*, adopted by the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod by a majority vote in 1950. In all these cases, as in that of the Intersynodical *Chicago Theses*, submitted to the Missouri Synod convention in 1929 and not accepted, we find that there are clear reasons, found in and based on Scripture, which compel us to reject these documents as such and to adhere wholeheartedly to the confessions named in the three opening paragraphs.

With regard to the *Common Confession*, in particular, we declare that it has not accomplished its purpose of being clear, concise, and unequivocal in composing the differences which have separated the synods concerned for many decades. The *Common Confession* is incomplete, inadequate, and at times faulty in its teaching, and it lacks throughout the vigor of the BRIEF STATEMENT.

II. TWELVE POINTS

More specifically and offering the main reasons for forming a dissent-

ing group, we take the following stand with regard to the doctrinal controversies in the Lutheran church bodies of America, including the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod.

1.

That the validity of a Scriptural engagement is determined by clear texts of Holy Writ which do not pertain merely to the Ceremonial Law, but are in force at all times, e.g., Gen. 24:56-58; Gen. 29:21; Deut. 22:23-26; Matt. 1:20, etc., and that the teaching in the exposition of our Small Catechism is definitely Scriptural. A Scriptural engagement initiates holy marriage and is not a mere vestibule.

2.

That Romans 16:17-18 is, in both the original and in translations commonly in use, a clear passage, condemning all fraternizing in the religious field where there is no doctrinal unity. 1 Cor. 1:10; Gal. 5:9, without restriction or modification as to the degree of aberration in doctrine. The warning of the passage applies not only to non-Christians or to non-Lutherans, but to persistent adherents of aberrations within Lutheran bodies also.

3.

That "selective fellowship", as advocated and practiced in certain parts of Lutheran bodies in America, even if not intentionally unionistic, is bound to involve those who practice it in a relation that is contrary to the fellowship which, according to the will of God, is to obtain between those who wish to be regarded as brethren; it is thus contrary to the law of love, which requires primary allegiance to those with whom honest confessors of the full truth are united in doctrinal fellowship.

4.

That the National Lutheran Council and the National Council of Christian Churches are *essentially* unionistic church *bodies* with distinctive marks and functions of such organizations, also that the Lutheran World Federation and all other organizations of this type are contrary to Scripture, chiefly because of the unionistic nature of their Eucharistic services and other endeavors which are not in the field of externals.

5.

That the phrase of Holy Writ, "*All Scripture* is given by inspiration of God," 2 Tim. 3:16, and "*Whatsoever things* were written aforetime were

written for OUR learning,” Rom. 15:4, declare not only the doctrinal sections of Holy Writ (specifically those pertaining to the redemption wrought by Christ), but also *all other statements*, historical accounts, geographical references, and even incidental remarks, to be the inspired truth of God. We hold the definition of our Small Catechism to be correct:

“‘By inspiration of God’ means that God the Holy Ghost *moved* the holy men to *write*, and *put into their minds*, the very *thoughts* which they expressed and the very *words* which they wrote.” 2 Pet. 1:21.

6.

While Holy Writ itself distinguishes between more important and less important recorded facts (1 Cor. 3:3; Hebr. 5:12-6-2), the distinction between so-called fundamental and non-fundamental doctrines while in agreement with Scripture, has been introduced by Theologians, and its abuse has caused much confusion. We dare not give up one statement of the word. He who teaches that non-fundamental doctrines are not divisive of church fellowship thereby becomes guilty of separatistic teaching. We reject, in addition, the teaching that it is neither necessary nor possible to be agreed in all points of doctrine, or that complete agreement in details of doctrine and practice is not required.

7.

To this point we are bound to add another. Since Scripture itself claims the attribute of *clarity* in all matters pertaining to faith and life (Ps. 119:105; Ps. 19:7-8), it is dangerous and misleading to inject theories pertaining to so-called exegetical difficulties, theological problems and open questions into any discussion regarding the unassailable truth of the bible. Most of these difficulties are not within the scope of Holy Writ. On the part of God there is nothing dark in any part of the inspired Volume; it is merely the darkness of our minds, the difficulty of certain words and phrases in the original, and a few archeological references which give us trouble; all else pertains to man’s perversity. See 2 Pet. 3:16; 1 Cor. 13:9-12; 1 Cor. 2:13-16; Matt. 11:25; 2 Cor. 4:3. The regular study of Holy Writ by believing Christians will remove most difficulties.

8.

While Holy Writ warns against a subjective isolationism, that is, schisms and separations which are concerned with outward forms and customs that do not bear in themselves elements of confusion and disruption (1 Cor. 1:10-13; 14:33; 11:18-19), it does not sanction arbitrary

modes of behavior which are apt to give offense to brethren (Rom. 14:15; 1 Cor. 8:9); and the Formula of Concord is right (Art. X, especially Nos. 5.7.16.) when it tells Christians not to identify themselves, also in outward forms, with customs which are associated with the enemies of the truth, specifically also in the matter of vestments and characteristic services. Separation is *demande*d by God when church fellowship with others, also within the Lutheran group, is equivalent to the condoning of error and the supporting of erroneous teaching (1 Tim. 5:20-22; 2 John, 10-11). On such principles the Christian Church was founded and the Lutheran Church established, for the repudiation of error in doctrine and practice is an essential requirement in the case of all true members of the Christian Church.

9.

We regard a church organization, such as synod, a federation of congregations and certain individuals, as supreme and sovereign with reference to its own internal affairs, and its jurisdiction over its officials of every type. But the resolutions of a synod regarding doctrinal matters have validity in its constituent congregations and for its individual members only if such resolutions are in full agreement with the Word of God and do not infringe upon the sovereignty of the individual congregation. Any bureaucratic or hierarchical polity in which congregations or individuals are subjected to man-made rules or to government and direction of synodical officials cannot so function according to the Word of God. While a church body may, and should, publish its confessions and insist upon the use of orthodox textbooks by its constituents, it transgresses its functions, if it attempts to bind on the consciences of its members any resolutions that are not supported by Holy Writ.

10.

We recognize and honor the position of the parish pastors and other leaders who labor in Word and doctrine (Gal. 6:6-7; 1 Tim. 5:17-18; 1 Thess. 5:12-13; Hebr. 13:17), and we acknowledge the fact that the Lord has safeguarded their office (1 Cor. 4:1; 1 Tim. 5:19; Hebr. 13:7). At the same time we emphasize the position of all Christians as kings and priests before the Lord of the Church (1 Pet. 2:9; Rev. 1:6), and their right to judge all doctrine (John 10:5, 1 Cor. 2:15; 1 John 4:1), as stressed especially by Luther in various monographs and expository writings (also the matters of regulating Church Ceremonies, vestments, etc.). When believers form a congregation, they jointly exercise the Office of the Keys, forgiving and retaining sins and administering the Sacraments in the name of all, the *public* exercise of this power being in the hands of the pastor in his divinely instituted office.

11.

According to Scripture all officials and pastors, in fact all members of Synod who are aware of the implications of the *Chicago Statement* of 1945 and of its doctrinal aberrations, also of the false teaching which appeared in the columns of the LUTHERAN WITNESS and elsewhere, and did not state their objections or inform their congregations of the growing doctrinal discord in the Missouri Synod, are remiss in their duties and have become guilty of other men's sin's (Rom. 16:17-18; 1 Tim. 6:3-5; 1 Tim. 5:22).

12.

Without our solicitation we find ourselves supported in our objection to the *Common Confession* by the results of searching studies of brethren in our own country and in other countries, the general agreement in the criticism being that the Common Confession has weakened and even nullified many parts of the BRIEF STATEMENT. To try to uphold them both is equivalent to halting between two opinions. If the BRIEF STATEMENT, in all doctrinal teaching, is right, then the *Common Confession*, in the corresponding parts is wrong, because of its vagueness and omissions. And since repeated efforts to halt the progressive deterioration of the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod have brought no results, the time has come when, for the sake of hundreds of troubled consciences, the actual status of affairs must be proclaimed to the whole world, lest we be condemned by the Lord of Truth together with those who persistently teach falsehood.