

DAVE MENSING

PROCEEDINGS
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of the
CONCORDIA LUTHERAN CONFERENCE
together with a
PASTORAL CONFERENCE

Held At

St. Stephen's Ev. Lutheran Church

Wilmot, South Dakota

Aug. 23-26, 1957

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REGISTER OF ATTENDANCE

PASTORAL

Bloedel, Gustav
 Bloedel, Paul R.
 Hallstein, E. C.
 Mehlberg, E. L.
 Mensing, H. D.
 Schaefer, O. W.
 Shufelt, J. E.

Absent and excused: M. L. Natterer

REGISTER OF LAY DELEGATES

<u>Congregation</u>	<u>Delegates</u>
Christ Lutheran Church Milwaukee, Wisconsin	Rev. G. Bloedel Elfred Bloedel
Trinity Lutheran Church Oskaloosa, Iowa	Robert Steinke Sr. Ernst Steinke
St. Paul's Lutheran Church Empire, Oregon	Ruben Kvalheim Second delegate excused
Peace Lutheran Church Tinley Park, Illinois	delegates excused
St. John's Lutheran Church Lebanon, Oregon	delegates excused

SERMON DELIVERED AT THE OPENING SERVICE AUGUST 24

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by President E.L.Möhlberg
on
Ephesians 4,1-6

Convention of the Concordia Lutheran Conference
Wilmot, South Dakota August 24-26, 1957

In Christ, beloved of the Lord:

By the Lord's rich grace and mercy we have been permitted once more to assemble for the convention of our beloved Conference.

We have come together for the purpose of strengthening each other in our Christian faith and life by means of God's Word in order that the name of our glorious Lord may be hallowed, His kingdom come to us and others everywhere, and that His good Will may be done among us on earth as it is done in heaven.

In order that these great spiritual blessings may flow down upon us and into our hearts and lives more freely and abundantly we have set aside this pre-convention service to give ourselves special opportunity to join our voices first in thanksgiving and praise to the Lord for all His benefits, to commit all our undertakings into His gracious hands, to join in prayer to Him for strength and success for the work of His Church, and to receive the life-giving exhortation of His Word.

Our text is such a word of exhortation which may the Lord use to draw us closer to Him and consequently to each other in the precious fellowship of the Gospel.

The apostle Paul had just finished reminding his Ephesian brethren and all Christian readers of the glorious Gospel of life into which possession they had come by faith in Jesus. Now he proceeds to impress upon all Christians the urgency of holding fast that Gospel. In doing this he becomes a bit personal in order to help his brethren to appreciate the seriousness and gravity of the situation.

He says, "I therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you." If anyone might have been inclined to take Paul's words a bit lightly, his reference to his being a prisoner of the Lord would bring such a one back to some very sober and wholesome reflections. Paul was not beseeching anyone on his own authority, but by the Lord's authority alone. And no one could justly doubt or underestimate Paul's words because it was his complete dedication to the Lord that had caused him to be taken as a prisoner of the state to Rome from which he then wrote this letter. In chains, as the Lord's prisoner, as one who is a very special servant of God, having a very special message from the Lord, Paul beseeches, earnestly pleads that every sober-minded Christian should take his words to heart. The exhortation of our text which was so important for the Ephesians and for the Christians of those days and which is also so very important for us, too, in this age of unionism and disunity, is this:

ENDEAVOR TO KEEP THE UNITY OF THE SPIRIT IN THE BOND OF PEACE!

I.

What is the unity of the Spirit which the Lord through the mouth of his prisoner so beseechingly urges us to keep? The unity of the Spirit is the oneness of faith whereby we are joined to Christ

through His Word by the Holy Spirit into one spiritual body of 3 believers. That is established by our text: "There is one body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling; One Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all."

By means of His Holy Spirit God has through the written Word revealed Himself to us as our Father. In that Word God has revealed to all men that they are by birth sinners under the control of Satan, enemies of God, and doomed to eternal damnation. In that Word He has also revealed that in His fatherly pity and love for us lost sinners He sent His Son, our Lord and Savior, Jesus, into the world to redeem the world from sin, death, and hell in order that through His blood shed for all men on the cross forgiveness of sins, life, and salvation might be secured.

It is through the operation of the Holy Spirit that God by His Word creates new life in the hearts of sinners. Through the Sacrament of Baptism He bestows forgiveness of sins, delivers from death and the devil, and gives eternal salvation to all who believe, as the words and promises of God declare.

Yes, the Spirit of God by the water and the Word bestows upon sinners saving faith in Jesus, rescuing them from eternal death and translating them into the Kingdom of grace. It is there in the Kingdom of grace that they now know God as their Father, their loving Creator and Preserver, Jesus as their blessed Savior and Redeemer, and the Holy Ghost as their Comforter and Sanctifier.

Such reborn Christians also learn through the enlightening power of the Holy Spirit by the Word that this salvation which they have obtained is a free gift of God's love. For the apostle tells the Ephesians in this letter: "By grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: not of works, lest any man should boast." They learn the comforting fact that God's love already had sought them out for salvation even before they were born; yes, even before the foundations of the world were laid. The apostle directs the attention of his readers to that blessed fact in the beginning of this letter when he exclaims to the brethren with grateful heart to the Lord: "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ; according as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love."

And so it was through faith in Jesus that these reborn sinners in the Ephesian congregation found themselves united into one spiritual body by the one Holy Spirit; that they had one hope for salvation, namely, Jesus' blood and righteousness. They recognized one Lord whom they now loved and obeyed. One faith they confessed, one baptism of life which they administered. Yes, they worshipped one God and Father of all who is above all, who is in all Christian hearts with His saving grace, and who works through them so that the precious Gospel of life is shared with the brethren to the edification and strengthening of their own faith and to the salvation of other souls who yet are to be added to God's flock by the testimony and operation of the Spirit.

In that blessed unity of the Spirit the Ephesians were living when Paul addressed these words to them. And in that same blessed unity of the Spirit we here find ourselves as a result of the selfsame work of the same Spirit.

Now it is God's earnest desire that we truly appreciate and keep that blessing of the unity of the Spirit. For that reason the

apostle pleads: "I therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech ⁴
you that ye walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called...
endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace."

II.

How can we keep this most precious possession, the unity of the Spirit? Paul explains: "With all lowliness and meekness, with long-suffering, forbearing one another in love; endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace."

What has lowliness and meekness to do with keeping the unity of the Spirit? A sinner becomes humble and meek through faith in Jesus. He now sees his sins in their true light and that humbles him. He realizes that he deserves nothing but shame, disgrace, death and hell. He recognizes that God in mercy has redeemed him by the blood of Jesus and has forgiven him all his sins, freely giving him heavenly honor, life, and eternal salvation. The more a poor sinner thinks about this wonderful gift of God's free grace, the more lowly and meek he becomes: that is the way the Spirit of God works in his heart, making him ever more thankful to the Lord for having redeemed his soul from Satan and hell and for having led him into precious communion with his God and Savior. Such a Christian wants to hold on to the Word of the Lord in its truth and purity at all costs because it is his life, his joy, his peace, and salvation.

There is danger ever present that the Christian stops being meek and lowly because the devil of pride continues to dwell in his wicked flesh. The flesh does not like to hear the humbling message of the Gospel. It prompts the Christian constantly to contradict the Word of God. How quickly we may fall into the sin of pride! How often has not the sin of pride created dissension and disruption among brethren and Christian congregations! We know this from bitter experience and God's Word leaves no doubt about that in our minds. "God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace unto the humble." Let that humble us and help us meekly to endeavor to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace!

Yes, lowliness and meekness is an important part of our Christian character. It is not something we are born with; it is a gift of God's Spirit. By daily fighting against our sinful pride and by prayerfully cultivating the spirit of lowliness and meekness among the brethren and in all our other relationships, we are endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.

The apostle mentions additional qualities which are essential to our Christian character if we are to have an attitude which endeavors to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace: "With longsuffering, forbearing one another in love."

We Christians all have our weaknesses, our failings, and shortcomings. Yes, we daily sin much and indeed deserve nothing but punishment. Brethren have to be patient and longsuffering with each other for that reason. They must bear with the weak and overlook and forgive much in each other. When a brother slips into a sin, the brethren should not cast him off immediately as a heretic and a heathen, but seek in the spirit of love to rescue the erring brother from his error. When a brother falls into sin, let us reflect in our own mind and remember that it could just as well have been our own self but by the grace of God which preserved us. Then let us in gratitude to the Lord for having spared us seek with love and genuine sympathy to bring the erring brother back to the path of life. Paul directs us to the right attitude in his letter to the Galatians: "Brethren, if a man be

overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual, restore such an one in the spirit of meekness; considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted. Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ. For if a man think himself to be something when he is nothing, he deceiveth himself." And in this present letter the apostle exhorts: "Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger and clamour, and evil speaking be put away from you, with all malice. And be kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you." 5

On the other hand, if a brother after Christian admonition stubbornly refuses to give up his false doctrine or ungodly life, it will not do to be patient and longsuffering with him. By defending and refusing to give up his error he has broken the unity of the Spirit. He has separated himself from the fellowship of the Holy Spirit and consequently also from the spiritual fellowship of his brethren in the faith. The only way that the precious unity of the Spirit can be restored is by repentantly forsaking his sin, so that the Spirit will come back into his heart again. So long as such a brother continues in his sin, we are to have no church fellowship with him because he has broken the unity of the Spirit, he has severed the spiritual tie which bound him to Christ and to us his brethren in the faith. The Holy Spirit directs us in passages like Matthew 18, 15-17 and Romans 16, 17, how to deal with such errorists.

If we would continue to fellowship with such a persistent errorist, we would thereby show that we are more concerned about keeping the external unity of congregational membership than we are about keeping the unity of the Spirit. In that case we would be more concerned about keeping external peace in the congregation than about keeping the bond of peace which is based on the unity of the Spirit.

The same applies to fellowship in a conference with other congregations and synods. If after repeated admonition an erring sister synod persists in its errors, we must separate from the offender according to God's command. If we do not, we thereby indicate that we actually love and respect and prize more highly the external unity of the synodical organization than the unity of the Spirit.

Christians who out of love to Christ faithfully act according to God's Word in all the situations of their life, they are the true members, the true builders, the true defenders of Zion. Their chief concern is to endeavor to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. For that reason they strive daily to conduct themselves with all lowliness and meekness, and exercise longsuffering, forbearing one another in love. That kind of conduct among brethren makes for peace. Yes, in that manner alone, by heeding the Word of God, we make the way clear for the Holy Ghost to work repentance in the hearts of those who have gone astray and to increase and strengthen our own faith so that we are welded more firmly to Christ our Redeemer and to each other in the unity of the Spirit.

Accordingly, since the unity of the Spirit is our most prized possession here on earth, and by the unmerited grace of God it has been bestowed upon us by faith, let us cherish it and with grateful hearts to the Lord follow His blessed exhortation to endeavor to keep it. We will therefore through the Spirit put off concerning the former conversation the old man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts; and be renewed in the spirit of our mind, so that we do not grieve the Holy Spirit whereby we are sealed unto the day of redemption. We will daily put on the new man which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness. We will have no fellowship with the

unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them. We will walk 6
circumspectly, not as fools, but as wise, redeeming the time because
the days are evil; understanding what the will of the Lord is, filled
with the Spirit, speaking to ourselves with psalms and hymns and
spiritual songs, singing and making melody in our hearts to the Lord;
giving thanks always for all things unto God and the Father in the
name of our Lord Jesus Christ; submitting ourselves one to another in
the fear of God. With the Spirit's help we will henceforth be no more
children, tossed to and fro and carried about with every wind of doc-
trine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie
in wait to deceive; but speaking the truth in love, we will grow up
into Him in all things, which is the Head, even Christ.

All this blessedness which the apostle describes for us in
this Epistle is ours through our possession of the unity of the Spirit,
brethren! Let us endeavor to keep it! May the Lord grant this our
humble petition upon us all! "Now unto him that is able to do exceeding
abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that
worketh in us, unto Him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus through-
out all ages, world without end. Amen."

SERMON DELIVERED AT THE SUNDAY SERVICE

7

by Rev. Paul Bloedel
 Empire, Oregon
 on
 1 Cor.15, 58

Convention of the Concordia Lutheran Conference
 Wilmot, South Dakota Aug. 24-26, 1957

Beloved friends in Christ,

The devil, the world, and our sinful flesh would like nothing better than to discourage us in our work for Christ and in our stand for the pure teachings of His Word. And, humanly speaking, we would indeed have much to be discouraged about. 7 years have passed since we were forced to break away from the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod because of that body's persistent toleration of error in doctrine and practice and to form our own orthodox Lutheran Conference. But even in that newly formed group we encountered one discouragement after another both in our respective congregations as the result of unfaithful members and also in our Conference at the hands of false brethren.

During the past 2 years an entire faction within our Conference began to uphold and defend the president of our seminary who had defected from the Truth by insisting on being able to fellowship with a member of the Wisconsin Synod who for non-scriptural reasons refused to acknowledge us publicly as brethren and publicly to defend our Scriptural position. While insisting on a false fellowship with this particular member of the Wisconsin Synod the president of our seminary at the same time severed his fellowship with one of our brethren who challenged the veracity of his stand and also terminated his fellowship with all others who questioned his position. Consequently we have been forced to re-align ourselves under the banner of the Truth which "cannot be broken" and which is "a Lamp unto our feet and a Light unto our path." But even since our former brethren in Minneapolis have terminated their fellowship with us, our work has not been without disappointment and disheartening experiences. For this reason I have chosen as our text for this morning's meditation a portion of God's Word which leads us to consider as our theme the question: --

WHAT SHOULD ENCOURAGE US TO REMAIN FAITHFUL IN THE WORK WHICH WE
 HAVE BEEN PURSUING?

In answer to this question, our text reminds us:

1. that our work is the work of the Lord.
2. that our labor is not in vain in the Lord.

May God the Holy Ghost bless the consideration of His Word . . .

I.

In this day of fast living, change, and what the world calls "progress", many so-called Christians, pastors, congregations, and entire church bodies have become infected with the idea of change and departure from the old paths of the Scriptures. They actually set forth a changing Christ for a changing world, a more attractive

message for a more progressive humanity. But morally and spir- 8
itually humanity as such since the fall always remains the same,
for "they are all gone aside, they are altogether become filthy:
there is none that doeth good, no, not one." (Ps.14:3) "There is not
a just man upon earth, that doeth good, and sinneth not." (Eccl.7:20).
It must be said of all men that they are conceived in iniquity and born
in sin.

But natural man does not realize this! It is the religion of natur-
al man, the religion of our sinful flesh, that every person as he is
born into this world has some good in him and that, although no one is
perfect, yet as long as one tries to do what he thinks is good and
right, God will overlook his bad qualities and will surely take him to
heaven. Such is the religion of all heathen from the most ignorant
pagan to the most learned and versatile member of the Masonic lodge.
And even many so-called Christian churches mix Law and Gospel to such
an extent that their members actually are made to believe that they can
save themselves by striving to keep the Law of God or that they can at
least help along toward their salvation by their good works. Many think
that by living an outwardly moral and decent life they are sure to gain
the favor of God. But how contrary such notions are to what is plainly
taught in the Holy Scriptures.

In the holy Scriptures we are told that the "imagination of man's
heart is evil from his youth", that "out of the heart proceed evil
thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness,
blasphemies", that if it were even possible for man to keep the whole
law and yet if he were to disobey the law in only one point, in his
thoughts, words or deeds, God's judgment upon such a person is that
"he is guilty of all". And the Scriptures make it clear that all who
are guilty of breaking God's Law are condemned to eternal punishment
in the flames of hell, "for the wages of sin is death" and "the soul
that sinneth it shall die."

It is, therefore, the work of the Lord through His Law to bring
man to the realization of his utter sinfulness and damnableness in
God's sight, to cause man to know himself as he really is, namely,
without true fear and love and trust in God, without the minutest
portion of righteousness, with only a strong inclination, yes, with
only the ability to do that which is evil and wicked, with a mind which
does not have the slightest will to do that which is pleasing to God
or to accept His Word. Thus God describes man as being spiritually
dead, spiritually blind and an enemy of God, and that all his best
works are as filthy rags. It is, therefore, the work of the Lord through
His Law to cause a person to be stricken with terror on account of his
sins and to cry out in despair as did Luther in his monkhood days:
"My sins, my sins, my sins!" It is God's purpose through the law to
bring mankind to the brink of despair. Like the blows of a crushing
hammer, the Law destroys the pride and self-righteousness in man and
causes him to see at every turn his worthlessness, his wretchedness,
his hopelessness, his spiritual poverty, his deserving of nothing but
temporal death and eternal damnation from God, that there is nothing
he can do to earn God's favor, that he cannot even possibly begin to
earn salvation for himself. That is the WORK OF THE LORD through His
Law! But the work of the Lord does not stop there, for "the Lord is
not willing that any should perish," He does not take pleasure in the
death of the wicked, but wants all men to be saved. He has therefore
provided a way of full and free salvation for all men in the Gospel.

Through the Gospel it is the work of the Lord to declare to 9
those who, through the Law, have become terrified in their hearts
and minds because of their sins: "Son, be of good cheer, thy sins
be forgiven thee." But does not such a pronouncement of forgiveness
contradict the Law with its pronouncement of condemnation? Not at all!
God does not and has never regarded sin as a light matter. He never
overlooks sin, its guilt, or its punishment, for He is a righteous,
just and holy God, and if He should mark our sins against us, all of
us would be condemned. But God, in His tender and abundant grace and
mercy, prepared a plan of salvation for man even before He laid the
foundations of this world and universe. He put this wondrous plan into
effect when, after the fall of man into sin, He promised to our first
parents a SAVIOR! and "when the fulness of the time was come, God sent
forth His Son, made of a woman ..." Yes, our Jesus placed Himself under
the Law and in our stead He fulfilled that Law of God perfectly in
thought, word, and deed, for in Him there was no sin neither was any
guile found in His mouth. Our Jesus also suffered the eternal condemna-
tion in hell which we deserved by our sins, for all our sins have been
marked against Him. Yes, the "Lord hath laid on Him the iniquity of us
all"; God has "made Him who knew no sin to be sin for us, that we might
be made the righteousness of God in Him." "Christ hath redeemed us from
the curse of the Law, being made a curse for us." Thus, in Christ "we
have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins according
to the riches of His grace." It is therefore the work of the Lord
through the Gospel to point men to Jesus, "the Lamb of God that taketh
away the sin of the world."

Now it is the will of God that His work, through the proper preach-
ing of the Law and of the Gospel, be carried on by the believers in
Christ, yes, by us Christians. This is our all-important duty and our
greatest privilege as children of God, namely, that we as individual
Christians, as pastors, as congregations, and as a conference show men
their sins and the wrath of God through the Law and, through the Gospel,
show them their Savior and the grace of God and, to this end, declare
unto men the whole counsel of God, adhere to the Word of God in its
full Truth and purity, and contend for the faith once delivered to the
saints that the Law may not lose its fury and its terrors and that the
Gospel may not lose its sweetness and its comfort. Yes, this is our
work and it is the work of the Lord! It is therefore the work of the
Lord when individual Christians abide by the pure teachings of God's
Word in doctrine and life, for thus Jesus calls them the "light of the
world" and the "salt of the earth." It is the work of the Lord when a
group of Christians in a locality establish for themselves the office
of the ministry for the public proclamation of the Word of God and for
the public administration of the Sacraments. It is the work of the Lord
when Christian pastors fulfil the duties of their office to the best of
their ability and in accordance with God's Word, rightly dividing the
Word of Truth and making full proof of their ministry. It is the work
of the Lord when congregations who are faithful to the pure teachings
of God's Word group themselves together in a conference such as ours
for the purpose of better fulfilling the command of the Lord: "Go ye
into all the world ..." "Go ye, therefore, and teach all nations ..."
"Ye shall be witnesses unto Me ...unto the uttermost parts of the
earth." And so, our work is indeed the work of the Lord, and because
it is the work of the Lord, and not merely our work, we should never be
discouraged, but should rather be encouraged to be more and more faith-
ful in the performance of this work even as St. Paul writes in our

text: "Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye steadfast, unmoveable, lo always abounding in the work of the Lord." And he continues in the second part of our text: "Forasmuch as ye know that your labor is not in vain in the Lord."

II.

This also should encourage us in the work which we have been pursuing, namely, that our labor is not wasted, that our work is not in vain in the Lord.

It is indeed a sad thing when a person labors in vain. Think of the great disappointment of a gardener or of a farmer who, after carefully working up his ground, fertilizing it, planting the seed, cultivating the tender plants, finds in the end a failure of harvest and that all his labor has been in vain. And so also in other vocations and professions --- oftentimes much work is spent in vain. But there is one profession in which our labor is never in vain, and that is in the work of the Lord.

Certainly there are times when we may feel that our work for the Lord is in vain, that nothing is being accomplished, that the church is not growing. Yes, there are times when God does not permit us to recognize the fruits of our labor in His vineyard. So also it was with Elijah, in the Old Testament, who requested the Lord to let him die because his preaching seemed to him to be in vain. The Lord, however, revealed to him that his work was not wasted and that there were 7,000 people in Israel who had not followed the gods of the heathen. And so also our text assures us: "Forasmuch as ye know that your labor is not in vain in the Lord."

God's Word is never professed or preached in vain. An individual Christian, a pastor, a congregation, or a conference working with this Word is not working in vain. Our official periodical, the Concordia Lutheran, inasmuch as it sets forth the pure teachings of God's Word, is not being published in vain. Thus God declares concerning His Word: "As the rain cometh down and the snow from heaven, and returneth not thither, etc." Here God plainly states that His Word will accomplish just exactly what He wants it to accomplish; it will bring about that purpose for which He intended it and for which He had it sent among the children of men. It is simply our duty to perform the work of the Lord, to shout the glad tidings of salvation to a world lost in the darkness of sin and unbelief, to proclaim the Word of God in its full truth and purity -- and our God assures us that this, our work, is not in vain but that it will accomplish His purpose in the hearts of men. He it is who adds to the church daily such as should be saved. And even though we may not be so fortunate as to see the abundant fruit of our labor here in this world, yet, on the last day we will see what God, through our work, has accomplished, "forasmuch as we know that our labor is not in vain in the Lord." This also then should encourage us greatly to be faithful in the work which we have been pursuing!

Now, as we approach the Lord's table this morning, let us search our hearts on the basis of the Word of God which we have heard. How often have we not murmured or complained, if not openly, at least in our hearts, about the hardships, the trials, the disappointments, the afflictions and the persecutions which have come upon us as the result of the work which we have been pursuing! How often have we not felt discouraged because of the slow amount of outward growth which our

congregations have experienced! How often have we not felt that we ll have worked so hard for the Lord and that God has not blessed our labors! When such thoughts fill our hearts and minds, let us go to the way of sorrows in Jerusalem and there see Jesus, wearing a crown of thorns and bearing a heavy cross, laden also with the burden of our sins. He is not complaining or murmuring, although His closest disciples have forsaken Him. He does not say: "The way is too long; the burden is too heavy." Nothing could discourage Him in the work which He did for us. Should anything discourage us in the work which we would do for Him? Looking upon Jesus and the work which He did for us, must we not confess that we are indeed unprofitable servants?

May we, therefore, with the help of Him who worketh in us both to will and to do of His good pleasure, earnestly resolve to heed more fervently the words of our text: "Be ye steadfast, unmoveable, ever abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labor is not in vain in the Lord." And to this end may this Holy Sacrament of Christ's true body and blood strengthen and uphold us in our faith and preserve in us the necessary courage to remain faithful in the work which we have been pursuing!

Amen.

THE NATURE OF A TRUE STATE OF CONFESSION, ESPECIALLY 12
ON THE PART OF A CHURCH BODY

Essay presented by Rev. P. Bloedel

to the Convention, Aug.25, 1957

"Whosoever therefore shall confess me before men, him will I confess also before my Father which is in heaven." Matt.10:32. On the basis of this passage every Christian is constantly in a state of confession over against all error in doctrine and practice. Such a state of confession includes all forthright testimony by word and by deed in favor of the truth and against all error and false doctrine. A state of confession in this sense (the wider sense) is simply the true Christian's personal witness bearing for Christ in accordance with the Savior's injunction: "Ye shall be witnesses unto Me...unto the uttermost parts of the earth." Acts 1:8.

This term, however, due to ecclesiastical usage, is used, theologically, to express a position which true Christians, orthodox congregations, or larger orthodox church bodies must take when they find themselves in a heterodox group or when error in doctrine or practice has gained a foothold in a former orthodox group in which they hold membership. The situation which therefore calls for such a state of confession may involve a member over against his congregation, a congregation over against a synod or conference, or an entire synod over against sister synods. In each of these several cases the same passages of Holy Writ apply. After a brief sketch of the historical background of "status confessionis" we will consider those portions of Scripture which are most pertinent to this subject and, on the basis of sound doctrine, make our practical applications and discuss cases of casuistry.

I.

The accessible historical material concerning "status confessionis" is so indefinite and vague as to the meaning of the term and its implications that one is not amazed at all the confusion which has centered itself around this term.

The essayist must declare at the very outset that he does not know where, when, or how this term, "status confessionis", originated. As far as his knowledge goes, on the basis of the information which he has at hand in his library, the first appearance which the ecclesiastical term, "status confessionis", made on the pages of Lutheran History seems to have been in the Proceedings of the Synodical Conference, 1875, pp.24-26, where we read: "The question is asked, May one practice church fellowship with a minister who is a member of a body which tolerates chiliasm, but who rejects this error and publicly testifies against it? The following answer was given: That would be unionism. Only then would such fellowship be permitted when such a member were found in the confessional state (in statu confessionis), that is, when he informs his synod openly - 'I reject this doctrine, but since I cannot in fairness demand that you share my conviction overnight, I will remain with you in the hope that this may finally come about.' Such a member must continue to testify in public convention and periodicals against such error and make no secret of his intention to have the synod finally join him in rejecting false

doctrine, the alternative being that he would leave the synodical union. Of course, there are such as declare that they would resign, but do not carry this out. In this way someone may be a member of such a synod under protests for a while, so long as his testimony is not prohibited and he may still hope that it will bear fruit. Just when the moment of resignation may have come must probably be left to the conscience of the individual... There is a great difference between entering a unionistic body and being forced to leave it. The first is not permissible under any circumstances; in the latter case it may be necessary to remain for a shorter or longer period of time for the purpose of testifying against error." 13

This statement from the Synodical Conference Proceedings is far from being unmistakably clear. Consequently it can be and has been grossly misused contrary to clear Biblical pronouncements. One of the greatest faults of this Synodical Conference statement is that it offers no Scriptural proof for its assertions and thus yields itself to ambiguity. It does not define "status confessionis" but cites an example of its practice. It speaks of the possibility that it "may be necessary to remain (in a unionistic body) for a shorter or a longer period of time for the purpose of testifying against error", but does not stipulate how one in such a position must act with regard to the practice of religious fellowship with the corporate body or with its adherents and constituents. Thus, in recent years, much confusion has resulted over the use of this term.

In 1889 in the convention discussion of a portion of Pieper's essay, "The Difference Between Orthodox and Heterodox Churches," which was delivered before the Southern District Convention of the Missouri Synod, the question was asked: "What about accepting the position of sponsor for a child in a heterodox church?" A portion of the answer, apparently given by the essayist, includes the following: "Accepting the position of a sponsor is a church matter. A Christian should not permit himself to be induced to become a sponsor for a child in a heterodox church. If a Christian accepts the position of sponsor in a Reformed church, for example, he therewith sanctions its false doctrine of Baptism. The question whether this also applies to accepting the position of sponsor in the (Lutheran) Texas Synod was answered in the affirmative because the Texas Synod continues in fellowship with errorists. As long as it does not quit such fellowship, it must be dealt with as a heterodox body. An exception would of course be made if a man were indeed outwardly a member of this body, but also was in the state of confession, testifying against the false doctrine which that body tolerates." Here, too, Pieper merely mentions a "state of confession" but goes into very meager detail as to what such a state of confession involves.

At Okabena, on Sept. 26, 1951, when the OLC had its beginning, the phrase, "in statu confessionis", was used in point 3 article II of our Articles of Agreement. There we read, as one of the objectives of the Conference: "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." However, in one of the essays and in the Conference Meeting Rules in the Proceedings of the First Annual Meeting of the Orthodox Lutheran Conference, the phrase (in statu confessionis) was used wrongly as though one could be "in statu confessionis" WITH a heterodox church body (cf. pp.29 and 46 of the Proceedings.)

And so, even at Okabena there was apparently a certain amount of 14
 confusion concerning this term, its proper usage and its Scriptural implications. No stress was placed upon the Scriptural basis or foundation for a state of confession. (The essayist recalls how he, after the Okabena meeting, had asked the president of the newly formed body upon what Bible passage being in a state of confession was based. The Scripture passage cited by the president was II Thess. 3:14,15: "And if any man obey not our word by this epistle, note that man, and have no company with him, that he may be ashamed. Yet count him not as an enemy, but admonish him as a brother.")

In the Wisconsin Synod the term, "status confessionis", was and still is simply a "state of confusion." In the January, 1952, issue of the Theological Quarterly of the Wisconsin Synod, Prof. Reim made this comment concerning the OLC: "The reasons for which this little group has made its grave decision are the very ones on which we have placed ourselves on record at last summer's convention, and by which we stand unless we fail in the statu confessionis into which we have placed ourselves by our New Ulm resolutions."

We recall the splendid essays which were delivered at New Ulm (later summarized in the Northwestern Lutheran) setting forth plainly the true doctrines of Holy Writ and vividly pointing out the inadequacy and untruthfulness of the Common Confession. On the basis of these essays the Wis. Synod rejected the Common Confession and appealed to the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod to repudiate its stand upon the Common Confession and also to suspend negotiations with the American Luth. Church. It is with regard to this resolution in particular that Prof. Reim made the above statement concerning the Wis. Synod's state of confession over against Missouri. It was soon evident, however, that a great number in the Wis. Synod did not share Prof. Reim's position and that he, too, seemingly did not realize the implications of a true state of confession, or if he did, it was not long before he began to compromise his position.

At the 1952 Synodical Conference Convention at St. Paul, the Wis. Synod delegation declared through their Standing Committee on Church Union that "in order to guard our own faith and to remain true to our God, that, though we do not at this time disavow our fellowship with the Missouri Synod in the Synodical Conference, yet, because the confessional basis on which the synods of the Syn. Conference have jointly stood so far has been seriously impaired by the Common Confession, we continue to uphold our protest and to declare that the Mo. Synod by retaining the Common Confession and using it for further steps toward union with the ALC is disrupting the Synodical Conference (See Constitution, Art 5). Thus while we await a decision by our Synod in this grave situation, we continue our present relationship with the Missouri Synod only in the hope that it may still come to see the error of its way. Hence we find ourselves in a STATE OF CONFESSION (theologically expressed, IN STATU CONFESSIONIS)."

The next convention of the Wisconsin Synod made no Scriptural decision and this declared state of confession on the part of their delegates to the Synodical Conference became what Prof. Reim stated it should not become, namely, "a long-term arrangement", "a mere sham", "a clever explanation of how one can continue in a fellowship which is no longer based on full unity of doctrine and practice." (Northwestern Lutheran, Sept. 7, 1952, pp. 282, 283.) To this day the Wis. Synod is thoroughly confused and because of their confusion they most outrageously abuse these passages of Holy Scripture which

forbid unionism, i.e. religious work and worship with those not agreed in doctrine.

The Norwegian Synod was likewise and still is in a state of confusion with regard to its relationship over against the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod. Already in 1951, the Report on the June Convention of the Norwegian Synod, page 43, states: "We therefore believe that the Synod should realize and openly declare that it is in statu confessionis with the Missouri Synod. That is, we believe that, as our Synod has been admonishing our sister-Synod not to forsake the truth, so it must continue to do, and affirm that it will do, but only so long as the Missouri Synod seriously considers our testimony." One year later, at the 1952 Synodical Conference Convention at St. Paul, the Norwegian Synod deplored the "miscarriage of parliamentary justice" but rejoiced over the fact that "the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod, the Slovaks, Wisconsin, and the Norwegians are still brothers in the faith." About a year later, in 1953, students who left Missouri for conscience reasons and entered the Norwegian Synod Seminary were recommended by the Norwegian Synod officials for calls into Missouri Synod congregations. In 1955 we rejoiced over the Norwegian Synod's resolution concerning its relationship with the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod which stated: "We hereby declare with deepest regret that fellowship relations with the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod are suspended on the basis of Romans 16:17, and that the exercise of such relations cannot be resumed until the offenses contrary to the doctrine which we have learned have been removed by them in a proper manner." We also were happy to read the meaning of this resolution as set forth in their official paper: "Our convention felt it had to suspend relations with the Missouri Synod, because that body was by its tolerance of unscriptural doctrine and practice showing itself to be an erring church body; it had caused divisions and offenses in the Church, contrary to the doctrine which we had learned; and there was no indication that it was disavowing these unscriptural tendencies. Therefore, we, according to Rom. 16, 17, had to suspend fellowship." We were especially pleased with this resolution because of its plain appeal to Scripture. However, it soon became evident that this resolution was not being carried out by the rank and file of the Synod and in 1956 the Synod again involved itself in joint work and worship with the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod by resolving to "meet with the other Synods of the Synodical Conference to determine whether or not the constituent synods of the Synodical Conference are now in doctrinal agreement" and "to take part in the proposed international conference of conservative Lutheran theologians, affiliated with the Synodical Conference." In accordance with their resolution the Norwegian Synod appointed delegates as voting representatives to the Synodical Conference Convention. On Oct. 11, 1956, the Lutheran Sentinel reported an anniversary celebration at Watertown, Wisconsin, on which occasion the Rev. C.F. Golish (Missouri Synod) was a principal speaker together with pastors from the Wisconsin and Norwegian Synods. So also the Norwegian Synod's state of confession was a mere sham and a mockery of that Word of God upon which it was based.

In the November, 1953, Orthodox Lutheran, we find one well-written article on the subject, "What Does Being 'In Statu Confessionis' Mean?" written over the signature of Dr. P. E. Kretzmann, and in the Proceedings of the Fourth Annual Convention of the Orthodox Luth. Conference is a short essay delivered by Dr. P. E. Kretzmann on "The 'Time Element' In the Application of Romans 16:17f." Besides these two articles only a few allusions to status confessionis are made in former articles of the

Orthodox Lutheran Conference. During the Kretzmann-Hallstein controversy of 1955 it became apparent that there was a definite difference of opinion especially regarding the application of the term, status confessionis, to a given situation, also with regard to its implications of confessional and church fellowship.

This brief historical sketch should furnish us with some idea of the confusion that surrounds this subject and the need for a thorough consideration of the Scripture texts which are basic to a clear understanding of a state of confession.

II.

SCRIPTURAL BASIS FOR STATUS CONFESSIONIS

It is not the intention of the essayist to go into lengthy details of exegesis on the various Bible passages presented in this essay, but only to set forth such plain Scripture texts as are pertinent to our subject and which shed light on the very heart of the matter under discussion. Let us remind ourselves, once again, of the situation which is involved when using the ecclesiastical term, status confessionis, namely, the position which true Christians, orthodox congregations, or larger orthodox church bodies must take when they find themselves in a heterodox group or when error in doctrine or practice has gained a foothold in a former orthodox group in which they hold membership. We have stated that the situation which calls for a state of confession may therefore involve a member over against his congregation, a congregation over against a synod or conference, or an entire synod over against sister synods and that in each of these several cases the same passages of Holy Writ apply. These passages group themselves naturally under 4 distinct headings each of which treat of a certain phase of a state of confession. These four headings are as follows: 1) admonition and exhortation; 2) patience and love; 3) severance of fellowship; and 4) acknowledgment of true brethren and the establishment of true fellowship. These four divisions are not set forth as stages or steps which one is required to follow who is contemplating, or finds himself in, a state of confession. They are rather to be regarded as phases which are intended to furnish us with an overall picture of what Scripture says to those who are faced with a situation which calls for a state of confession. The circumstances themselves will point the person or persons involved to those passages which are applicable to a given case.

Admonition and Exhortation. . .

In the very nature of the case a state of confession embraces all those passages which require Christians to admonish, to warn, to exhort, to rebuke, and to reprove those who have forsaken the Word of God in doctrine or practice. In this respect the very same passages come into play in the state of confession which are used with regard to church discipline with the exception of the 3rd stage of admonition which is outlined by the Savior in Matt. 18:17 and which is carried out only by a local congregation. In church discipline individual Christians and finally the entire congregation deal with a manifest and impenitent sinner in their midst with the purpose in view to gain the brother. In a state of confession an individual Christian, a congregation, or a synod deals with an erring corporate body of which they are a member or with whom they are in fellowship for the purpose of winning that corporate body back for the Truth. This must always be the chief aim of a state of confession! And as church discipline must tend progressively either

toward gaining the brother or toward excluding the manifest and 17
 impenitent sinner from the Christian congregation, so also a state
 of confession must tend progressively either toward winning the cor-
 porate body back for the Truth or toward rejecting it altogether as
 false and heterodox. There must never be a stalemate or a retrogression
 of any sort for the sake of outward peace or false unity. Such a situ-
 ation would be tantamount to a denial of the truth which would be the
 direct opposite of a state of confession.

In Lev.19:17 we find the Lord's command: "Thou shalt in any wise
 rebuke thy neighbor, and not suffer sin upon him." By failing to reprimand
 a brother we would personally become guilty of his offense and a
 partaker of his sin. There is a striking parallel between this command
 of God in Leviticus and the express command of the Savior in Luke 17:3:
 "If thy brother trespass against thee, rebuke him; and if he repent,
 forgive him." Christians in general are told in I Thess. 5:14 to "warn
 (admonish) them that are unruly." Concerning a person who departs from
 the Truth, Jesus says (Matt.18:15): "Tell him his fault," REPROVE his
 fault. The apostle Paul praises the Christians at Rome, saying in Rom.
 15:14: "And I am persuaded of you, my brethren, that ye also are full
 of goodness, filled with all knowledge, able also to admonish one ano-
 ther." Certainly Scripture makes it crystal clear that Christians are
 to admonish, exhort, and rebuke their fellow-Christians who have fallen
 into error. In this way they are earnestly to "contend for the faith
 once delivered to the saints," Jude 3. Luther writes that the "command
 to admonish the brother is just as necessary as 'thou shalt not kill;
 thou shalt not steal,' for if out of fear or for any other reason you
 neglect the duty to admonish, then not his body, not his property, but
 the salvation of his soul is endangered." (St.Louis, VI: 1633) Admonition
 is, therefore, a very important part of status confessionis.

Patience and Love ...

Admonition must always be coupled with patience and love also in
 a state of confession. A state of confession must not be regarded as
 anything else but an expression of love and compassion in which an in-
 dividual Christian, a congregation, or a synod patiently strives through
 prayerful admonition and protest in accordance with the Word of God,
 with meekness and humbleness of mind, to win a corporate body for the
 Truth or to return to the Truth which it has forsaken. This does not mean
 that the strength of our admonition and protest is to be weakened. Not
 in the least! We are still boldly to oppose error, vigorously caution
 against it, severely denounce the errorists - but all in love, with
 patience, and with a burning desire to save them. This goal or this end
 in view must never be lost sight of otherwise the weapons of our warfare
 in combating error in a state of confession become carnal and not
 spiritual. Pride, bitterness, hatred, and the like, must be ruled out
 from the very outset even as Jesus declares in John 6:63: "The flesh
 profiteth nothing." St.James therefore writes: "Brethren, if any of you
 do err from the truth, and one convert him: let him know that he which
 converteth the sinner from the error of his way shall save a soul from
 death, and shall hide a multitude of sins."(James 5:19, 20)

In this day of the amalgamation of religions, unionism, and syncret-
 ism much is made of patience and love, in fact, they are often inter-
 mingled as being synonymous. But Scripture makes it clear that there
 comes a time when, although love must continue, patience must come to an

end. Thus in Matt. 18:17 Jesus says, "If he neglect to hear the church, let him be unto thee as a heathen man and a publican," and St. Paul writes to the Corinthians: "Put away from among yourselves that wicked person," 1 Cor. 5:13. In verse 5 of that same chapter St. Paul urges the congregation at Corinth "to deliver such an one unto Satan for a destruction of the flesh, that the spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus."

The Bible speaks of patience in two different senses. It speaks of patience under suffering and affliction, and patience with the weak in faith, knowledge, and understanding. The latter case is the one which concerns us in this present discussion. With regard to those whose sin or error is caused by human frailty or weakness Scripture requires the utmost patience and longsuffering. Thus St. Paul writes to the Galatians: "Brethren, if any man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual, restore such an one in the spirit of meekness; considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted. Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ," Gal. 6:1,2. And in Romans 15, 1, we read: "We then that are strong ought to bear the infirmities of the weak, and not to please ourselves." In general, Christians are admonished in Colossians 3:12-14: "Put on, therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, longsuffering, forbearing one another, and forgiving one another, if any man have a quarrel against any; even as Christ forgave you, so also do ye. And above all these things, put on charity, which is the bond of perfectness.

On the other hand, God's Word does not urge patience with those who, in spite of proper Scriptural admonition, persistently teach, defend, and tenaciously cling to error in doctrine and practice. Here is where patience stops although love continues. Patience in such a case is no longer a virtue because it militates against those plain passages which warn a Christian for the sake of his own soul's salvation: "Beware of false prophets," Matt. 7:15; "A little leaven leaveneth the whole lump," Gal. 5:9; "Neither be partaker of other men's sins," 1 Tim. 5:22 or "partaker of his evil deeds," II John 10, 11.

In a state of confession a person is dealing with an erring majority. Humanly speaking, the odds are against such a person and the temptation is great to yield to the majority who have been deceived by the "good words and fair speeches" of false teachers. In II Timothy 2:17 we are told that false doctrine "will eat as doth a canker." With such passages in mind Dr. Sihler, a highly esteemed pastor and professor who played a prominent part in the organization of the Missouri Synod and served as its first vice-president, stated in his Theses on Church Fellowship, p. 16: "If, however, it is the case that a whole church fellowship should take a false position in doctrine and wanted to tolerate and cling to error in doctrines of faith, then the individual member in this communion who has a better knowledge must reprove not only the false teachers but also the whole communion, also if it should expel him therefor, as the Roman Church did Dr. Luther and the Jewish synagog did the apostle Paul. If such an erring communion or synod indeed submits to hearing testimony against its false position but does not better itself and do away with what is wrong, then the one concerned must himself step out, first, because of the evil appearance which he would otherwise give; secondly, because of the danger to which such a witness is exposed. Every error is something very dangerous, and continued living in an ecclesiastical atmosphere which is impregnated with error

by and by again dulls the conscience and is punished by God 19 through one's finally again falling victim to error and to hostility against the orthodox church, which one had escaped." (Quoted in the December, 1953, Confessional Lutheran.) Besides the danger involved in the exercise of a false patience over against error and errorists Dr. Sihler also mentions the "evil appearance" or the offense which one gives who remains in fellowship with an erring body which does not better itself or do away with what is wrong but merely listens to testimony against its error. The cry of PATIENCE in a state of confession, when that state has progressed to a point where patience is no longer required but rather warned against in Holy Scripture, is simply a clever tool in the hand of Satan and a subterfuge for the old Adam who does not want to break away from former friends, to leave an outward organization, or to give up a house of worship. In the final analysis such a cry of patience actually shows a lack of true Christian love either for one's own soul or for the souls of one's fellowmen.

Severance of Fellowship . . .

The very nature of status confessionis, particularly because it involves fellowship with those who are in error (either those who always have taught and tolerated error in doctrine and practice or those who have fallen back or away from the Truth of God's Word), calls for the application of all those passages in Holy Writ which require severance of fellowship. Such a termination of fellowship does not include a termination of love, intercession, and kindness toward those with whom one's fellowship has ceased. The very act of terminating fellowship in accordance with the Word of God is, in itself, an act of love, for it points those with whom religious fellowship has been broken to the gravity of the situation, constantly reminding them of the error of their ways, and pointing them more forcibly into the plain teaching and application of God's Word.

Those passages which indisputably speak of the severance of fraternal relations are as follows:

Romans 16:17: "Now I beseech you, brethren, mark them which cause divisions and offenses contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned; and avoid them."

II Thess. 3:6: "Now we command you, brethren, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye withdraw yourselves from every brother that walketh disorderly, and not after the tradition which he received of us."

I Timothy 6:3-5: "If any man teach otherwise, and consent not to wholesome words, even the words of our Lord Jesus Christ, and to the doctrine which is according to godliness: he is proud, knowing nothing, but doting about questions and strifes of words, whereof cometh envy, strife, railings, evil surmisings, perverse disputings of men of corrupt minds and destitute of the truth, supposing that gain is godliness: from such withdraw thyself."

II Tim. 3, 1-7: "This know also, that in the last days perilous times shall come. For men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, without natural affection, trucebreakers, false accusers, incontinent, fierce, despisers of those that

are good, traitors, heady, high-minded, 20
 lovers of pleasures more than lovers of
 God; having a form of godliness, but denying
 the power thereof: from such turn away. For of
 this sort are they which creep into houses, and
 lead captive silly women laden with sins, led
 away with divers lusts; ever learning, and never
 able to come to the knowledge of the truth."

Titus 3:10: "A man that is a heretic, after the first and second
 admonition, reject."

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

These passages, although they are all spoken with regard to cases
 differing one from another, yet they all stress one particular point,
 namely, that persistence in false doctrine and practice on the part of
 an individual or group of individuals requires severance of fellowship
 on the part of those who would remain true to the whole counsel of God.
 It is, therefore, vain to endeavor to arrange these passages in such a
 way so as to make the claim that the application of one passage must
 come before or after another in a certain order or sequence. The cases
 alluded to in these passages may differ according to the situation with
 the apostle especially has in mind, but one thing is certain, on the
 basis of these Scripture texts, namely, that God requires Christians not
 to identify themselves with persistent errorists, not to associate with
 them as brethren in the faith, not to make light of or countenance their
 errors. Thus we read in Psalm 1: "Blessed is the man that walketh not
 in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor
 sitteth in the seat of the scornful. But his delight is in the law of
 the Lord; and in his law doth he meditate day and night."

In the Abiding Word, vol. 2, page 559, we read that "such passages
 as Rom. 16:17; 1 Cor. 5:11; 2 Thess. 3:14, and 2 John 10, which prohibit
 'to eat with' or enjoin 'to avoid' or 'have no company with' or 'receive
 him not into your house', refer only to brotherly relationships, but do
 not forbid normal civil intercourse or polite and civil manners. St. Paul
 very definitely teaches that a Christian should not sever his marriage
 with a spouse who is or has become an unbeliever, a heathen (1 Cor. 7:
 12-14); and just as definitely he states that only the brotherly rela-
 tions of Christian and Christian have been severed, not the social and
 generally human relations, 'for then must ye needs go out of the world'
 (1 Cor. 5:9-13)."

If it, therefore, becomes apparent that error in a corporate body
 becomes persistent and is tolerated in spite of admonition, those
 Christians, who are in a state of confession over against such a cor-
 porate body, need not relinquish their membership immediately but must
 in accordance with the Word of God discontinue their prayer-, pulpit-,
 and altar fellowship with that body, its adherents, and its representa-
 tives. This cessation of every kind of church fellowship with the cor-
 porate body in which outward membership is still held, we have referred
 to in OUR DECLARATION (1956) as "a true state of confession," because
 it is actually the final and most forceful admonition which can be
 given on the part of one in the confessional state.

**Acknowledgment of True Brethren and the Establishment of
True Fellowship . . .** 21

Inasmuch as it is a "confession" against error in a corporate body a state of confession takes for granted and implies the acknowledgment of true brethren and the establishment of true fellowship. This is in perfect harmony with the Word of God, for the apostle Paul says to Timothy: "Be not thou therefore ashamed of the testimony of our Lord nor of me, His prisoner," II Tim.1:8. Timothy must therefore acknowledge Paul as his fellow believer and brother in the faith, and if he is ashamed of Paul because of his confession, he will also be ashamed of Christ. We recall Luther's fine comment which was printed in the Orthodox Lutheran, vol. 2, p.187, concerning this passage in II Timothy: "I see that it is necessary to speak a good word of admonition to those whom Satan is now beginning to persecute. Among them are those who want to escape danger, when they are attacked, by saying: I do not stand with Luther nor with anyone else; I stand with the holy Gospel; and so they are left in peace. Still in their hearts they regard my doctrine as evangelical and adhere to it. Surely, such a confession does them no good, but it is the same as denying Christ... If Timothy had said: I do not stand with Paul or Peter but with Christ, and yet knew that Peter and Paul taught Christ, he would have denied Christ." In this manner a state of confession ties in with confessional fellowship and requires a public and open acknowledgment of those who are of the same mind and of the same judgment (I Cor.1:10). A state of confession, in order to be based on Scripture, must therefore of necessity include an acknowledgment of true brethren wherever such are known, for such action performs an important part in one's protest over against the errors of a corporate body, and is a forthright and vigorous testimony in behalf of the Truth and that is exactly what a state of confession is supposed to do. In vol.1, p. 121, of the Orthodox Lutheran, we read: "If someone holds protesting membership in a heterodox Lutheran body, that does not necessarily mean anything to us of the Orthodox Lutheran Conference; but if he protests against the same errors which we oppose, and 'shares our Confession of Faith,' then we can justly expect that he inform us of this agreement and declare fellowship of faith with us, though he may not immediately join us. Then-and only then-we should be in duty bound to acknowledge him as a brother. . . From the time that a protesting member of a heterodox body tells us of his agreement with us, however, we expect that he will publicly acknowledge us in the face of our adversaries, make common cause with us, support our work to the extent of his ability, and show evidence that he is either making progress in bringing his associates to the acceptance of the truth or sever his connection with them." Having quoted Matt.10:32,33 (Whosoever shall confess Me before men, etc.); Luke 9, 26 (Whosoever shall be ashamed of Me and of My words, of him shall the Son of Man be ashamed etc.) and Romans 10: 9,10 (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. For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.) Dr. Walther states: "According to these texts a person cannot be saved who in his heart indeed wants to carry with him faith in Christ and His Truth but will not confess it with the mouth. Hence every Christian, for the sake of his salvation, is obliged publicly to profess fellowship and hold with those whom he has recognized as witnesses for Christ and His unadulterated truth." (See also III John 8,9.)

III.

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These are then the Scriptural considerations and implications which must be taken into account by one who finds himself in a situation which requires a state of confession. These Scriptural considerations remain the same whether the status confessionis is on the part of an individual or on the part of a church body and consequently also the nature of a state of confession remains basically the same in either instance. It is then on the basis of such Scripture texts as are presented in this essay that we make our applications and judgments with regard to specific cases involving a state of confession, either on the part of an individual, a congregation, or a church body. Let us, therefore, as a practical conclusion to this essay, by means of an open discussion, set forth hypothetical or concrete cases which deal with status confessionis and thus apply the Word of God which we have set forth in this essay to such practical cases or situations. (Concrete cases in point: Wisconsin Synod definitely placed itself in a state of confession at New Ulm in 1951; Chicago Study Club placed itself in a state of confession especially through the publication of its "Re-affirmation" of 1949 and through the fine articles of protest in the Confessional Lutheran; Norwegian Synod placed itself in a state of confession when it repudiated the Common Confession in 1951.) Let us always bear in mind that a state of confession, in order to bring about the desired Scriptural result, must cause the group over against which it is taken to acknowledge and repent of its sin, to profess its earnest purpose to remove the error and publicly to reject that false doctrine and practice to which it had become addicted and on account of which the state of confessions was entered into by the faithful brethren. Unless such a result is forth-coming, there must be no vacillation or retrogression, but constant progress in the direction set forth in God's Word, to the glory of His name, and for the salvation of mankind.

PRESIDENTIAL REPORT

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Delegate Convention of the Concordia Luth. Conference
Wilmot, South Dak. Aug. 24-26, 1957

By the unmerited mercy of God our Conference has experienced a year of richest blessings: the Word of God in its truth and purity and the Sacraments according to our Lord's institution have remained with us, providing us all with the one thing needful, forgiveness of sins, life, and salvation. May this blessing ever remain with us and ours and may we ever continue to cherish it as our highest good and by a life of loving devotion to our Lord demonstrate our sincere gratitude for this His grace.

Our desire to have God's Word continue among us prompted us in our Convention here last year to take steps toward reorganizing our Orthodox Lutheran Conference and adopting a new name, the Concordia Lutheran Conference, the name which we now bear. That was accomplished by means of a referendum which, in accordance with the Conference's decision here last year, I placed before you brethren by letter last Sept. 16. You indicated your unanimous approval of the plan to reorganize by adopting the Agreement, which document subsequently appeared in the January issue of our official church paper, the Concordia Lutheran.

A complete report on this referendum was presented by me to the first meeting of the Board of Directors which was held in Milwaukee on November 27 and 28. The results of that Board meeting were communicated to you by an official letter from me under date of December 16, 1956 in which I especially directed your attention to the fact that the Board recognized the resolution of the Convention concerning the reorganization as having been carried out and the reorganization accomplished. In addition to this I informed you that the Board has found it necessary to recommend some changes in connection with our Concordia Lutheran. Substitutions were offered which affected the emblem and Scriptures on the cover of that official organ of our Conference. The Board's action together with editor Bloedel's final efforts to offer a presentable cover for our church paper is subject to your final approval at this Convention. You will have an opportunity to express your opinions and final judgment in the matter at some later time during these sessions.

There remains yet the very important matter of revising the Constitution of our Conference. At last year's convention you instructed the Board of Directors to be prepared to submit a revised constitution to this present Convention for adoption. The Board in its meeting of Nov. 27-28, referred to above, requested the Committee on Theological Education to begin immediate study on a revision of the old constitution and to report back to the Board at its next meeting. At this same meeting it was found necessary to make some provision for the traveling expenses of the Board members. This matter, too, will be presented to you here for consideration and final disposition.

On April 30 to May 1st the Board met again in Milwaukee. I was unable to attend because of circumstances beyond my control. At that meeting the Committee on Theol. Education reported on the progress it had made regarding the problem of providing for a future ministry in our Conference. This report will be presented to us later on at these

sessions. That committee also reported regarding its work on the 24 Constitution revision. The Committee on Mission Opportunities reported on the new mission field which had been opened in Muscatine, Iowa. We thank the Lord for every opportunity He gives us to bring the Gospel of salvation to others and we plead with Him that He give us the grace to be zealous mission workers, according to His will.

The third Board of Directors' meeting was held last night as scheduled. Its recommendations will be presented to the Convention during the course of these sessions.

At this time I wish to report with gratitude to the Lord that your officers and Board members were able in a Christian and brotherly manner to meet the various problems which confronted us in our fellowship since our last convention and, under God's blessings, to resolve them. May I take this opportunity to express my own sincere thanks to you all for your brotherly cooperation, your assistance, and especially for your prayers in my behalf during the past year.

In closing my report, I pray that the Lord will be with us to guide and bless us in all our deliberations: "And let the beauty of the Lord our God be upon us; and establish thou the work of our hands upon us; yea, the work of our hands establish thou it." Psalm 90, 17.

Respectfully submitted,

E. L. Mehlberg, President

REPORT
of the
COMMITTEE ON MISSION OPPORTUNITIES

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Dear Brethren:

In our report to the Board of Directors' Meeting which was held the latter part of April, our Committee asked the Board for some advice concerning a request from a family in Fairbanks, Texas, who desired to have a true Lutheran congregation established in their area. The Board suggested that we send a pastor down to Texas to investigate the possibilities of establishing such a congregation. In compliance with this practical proposal we decided to request Pastor Hallstein to make the trip down there. In a letter dated May 16th our Committee wrote to Pastor Hallstein, "Having checked a map of the United States, we find that you are about the closest pastor to Houston, and we, therefore, kindly request you to travel to Houston and investigate the possibilities of establishing a mission there.' Your help will be much appreciated. Your expenses will be authorized by us and paid by our Conference treasury." Pastor Hallstein very promptly consented to our request and immediately corresponded with this family to make the necessary arrangements for the long trip. Unfortunately, however, the letters from this man in Texas seemed to indicate a misunderstanding on his part. While he was very enthusiastic in the beginning about having a pastor come down there, now, for some reason, it seems as though he has become quite hesitant. Perhaps Pastors Hallstein and Schaefer will be able to shed some light on the matter, since they also have been in correspondence with this particular family.

The information which we have concerning Muscatine, Iowa, is as follows: On May 16th our Committee wrote to Pastor Shufelt, "The arrangements which you and your congregation have made in Muscatine are splendid for the time being. It is certainly wonderful that the Lord has blessed you with a man like Julius Schmitt who is able to conduct a reading service on those Sundays when you, personally, do not preach. We wholeheartedly agree with the members of the Board of Directors that the project in Muscatine should be the concern of the entire Conference. To have a mission-station established in Muscatine should be a source of great encouragement to ALL of our congregations. Therefore, we would suggest that your mission money be turned over to our Conference treasurer and your expenses be authorized by our Committee." Our Committee then received the following decision reached by the Oskaloosa congregation, "We appreciate the willingness of the Committee and of our Conference to share in our mission opportunity and sincerely wish to share with them this blessed privilege of hearing and answering the Lord's call to this service. But in view of the fact that the Board of Directors desired to have the result of a canvass before undertaking the subsidy necessary to enable the Pastor to give full time to the work of the Church, and in view of the fact that our whole congregation is going to Muscatine for services every first and third Sunday and that we are planning a united congregation with two preaching places, it seemed good to us to continue as we are doing and to bear the expense of the canvass from our mission funds and then if the results should move the Board of Directors and the Conference to decide favorably on assuming whatever expense may be needed in the way of subsidy to the pastor's salary to enable him to put all his time and energy into the building of the Church, we would gladly cooperate and do our best to outgrow the

need for a subsidy as soon as possible. A motion was carried to this end."

Pastor Shufelt has also informed our Committee that Pastor Mensing and one of his sons and Robert Steinke Jr. spent two days canvassing in Muscatine during which time they made 327 calls. Our Committee is indeed grateful for the spontaneous and wholehearted cooperation of the brethren.

It has also been brought to the attention of the Committee that an independent Lutheran congregation exists in Lyons, Nebraska. A man by the name of Pederson is the pastor of the congregation. We wonder if any of the brethren have been in contact with Pastor Pederson. Would it be the duty of the Mission Committee to contact such independent congregations and inform them of our doctrinal stand, or, is that the business of the Praesidium?

May the Lord of the harvest send forth laborers into His harvest to proclaim His pure Word in these last days of sore distress!

Respectfully submitted,

M.L.Natterer

Mission Committee, Secretary

REPORT OF THE AUDITING COMMITTEE

To whom it may concern:

We, the undersigned, having duly compared the financial book records of the Concordia Lutheran Conference with properly signed vouchers, statements, receipts, memos, and cancelled checks, find these records to be correct and in good order.

August 19, 1957

Victor K. Bloedel

Gustav Bloedel

MINUTES OF THE SEVENTH ANNUAL CONVENTION

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Concordia Lutheran Conference
Held at St. Stephen's Luth. Church
Wilmot, S.Dak. - Aug.24-26, 1957

The seventh annual convention of the Concordia Luth. Conference was held at St. Stephen's Lutheran Church, Wilmot, S.D., August 24 - 26, 1957.

The convention proper began Saturday, August 24, at 9:30 a.m. with a divine service in which President Mehlberg preached on Eph. 4, 1-6. The host pastor, Rev. O.W.Schaefer, served as liturgist. After this service the first session was called to order by the President. The agenda was presented and discussed. The motion was carried to allot 45 minutes after the recess at 3 p.m. on Saturday for the reading of the revised Constitution and basic questions. The motion was carried to delete the item given for 4:30 p.m. on Saturday. The motion was passed to adopt the agenda as changed.

The Credentials Committee, Pastor Schaefer reporting, presented its report which showed that pastors and lay delegates were present from the following member congregations: Christ Lutheran, Milwaukee; Trinity Lutheran, Oskaloosa, Iowa; and St. Paul's Lutheran, Empire, Oregon. The following member congregation was represented by pastor only: Peace Lutheran, Tinley Park, Ill. Pastors were present from these congregations in fellowship with the C.L.C.: Trinity Ev. Lutheran, Clark, S.D. and St. Stephen's Lutheran, Wilmot, S.D. The motion was carried that the delegates be officially seated at this convention. The report was accepted by the convention.

The President then read his annual report on the activities of the Board of Directors during the past year. The convention accepted this report.

The Committee on Registration, Mr. Ernst Steinke reporting, gave its initial report, which showed that 7 pastors, 5 lay delegates, and 28 visitors were in attendance. The motion was carried to accept this preliminary report.

The treasurer's report was then given. It showed a balance on July 31, 1957, of \$1177.85. A miscellaneous item of \$200 was explained by the treasurer and thanks expressed to the congregations of the Conference for help given recently to Christ Lutheran Church, Milwaukee, in a time of special need. The secretary then read the report of the Auditing Committee which found the records to be correct and in good order. The motion was carried to accept both reports.

Since no requests for membership had been received, there was no report of the Committee on Membership.

The report of the business manager of the Concordia Lutheran submitted by Mr. August Luft, was then read. It showed that there are 131 active subscribers. Laymen are encouraged to serve as publicity men for the C.L. Words of commendation were also expressed for the fine work done by the editor of our periodical. The motion was carried that we put forth every effort to increase the subscription list as much as possible during the coming year and that the business manager be requested to send quarterly reports on the progress of this campaign to the congregations. The motion was carried to accept the report of the business manager.

The noon recess followed.

SATURDAY AFTERNOON SESSION - AUGUST 24, 1957

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The Saturday afternoon session began with the singing of hymn 472, a devotion based on 1 Cor. 12, 1-27 by Pastor Paul Bloedel, and a prayer.

The minutes of the morning session were read and approved.

Pastor E.C.Hallstein then read his essay on "A Digest Regarding the Developments of the Organizational Relationships and the Doctrinal Position of the Various Lutheran Bodies in America of the Present Day." The motion was carried to accept this paper with thanks and to have it published in installments in our official organ.

A brief recess followed.

The Committee on Nominations, Pastor Bloedel reporting for Pastor Natterer, then presented slates of candidates for the election. The following were proposed for the office of PRESIDENT: E.Mehlberg, H.D. Mensing, and E.C.Hallstein. With no majority on the first ballot, a second ballot was necessary. Elected: Pastor Mehlberg.

During the elections Mr. Alfred Bloedel began the reading of the revised Constitution.

The following slate was proposed for VICE-PRESIDENT: E.C.Hallstein and H.D.Mensing. Elected: Pastor Hallstein.

The following slate was proposed for SECRETARY: O.W.Schaefer and H.D.Mensing. Elected: Pastor Schaefer.

The following slate was proposed for TREASURER: E.Bloedel and L. Martin. Elected: E. Bloedel.

The following slate was proposed for EDITOR of the C.L.: Paul Bloedel and M. Natterer. Elected: Pastor Bloedel.

The supper hour followed.

SUNDAY MORNING - AUGUST 25, 1957

The convention communion service, attended by more than 100 people, was held Sunday morning, August 25. Pastor Paul Bloedel delivered an inspiring sermon on 1 Cor. 15, 58, encouraging all to abound in the work of the Lord. The host pastor served as liturgist. At this service an offering of \$138.03 was received for the Conference treasury.

SUNDAY AFTERNOON SESSION - AUGUST 25, 1957

The Sunday afternoon session began with hymn 413 and a devotion based on 1 Kings 19 by Pastor E.C.Hallstein.

In the absence of Pres. Mehlberg, who was not feeling well, Pastor Hallstein took the chair. The minutes of the previous session were adopted as read.

Pastor Bloedel then presented his essay on "The Nature of a True State of Confession, especially on the Part of a Church Body." He gave a brief sketch of the history of the term "status confessionis" and presented the Scriptural basis for a true state of confession. The motion was carried to accept this essay with thanks.

A brief recess followed.

Pres. Mehlberg rejoined the convention now and gave the report of the Comm. on Church Fellowship. He referred to the resolution concerning the Norwegian Synod passed by the convention in Wilmot on Aug. 19, 1956 (See page 29 of Official Proceedings). He read a letter which he had written to Pres. M. Otto of the Norwegian Synod and also the latter's response, in which Pres. Otto stated that his Synod's position on Church and Ministry is that of the Brief Statement. The status of

the Norwegian Synod remains the same as last year. The motion 29
was carried to accept this report.

The following slate was proposed for BUSINESS M.A.N.A.G.E.R of the C.L.:
August Luft and F. Williams. Elected: Mr. Luft.

During the elections Mr. E. Blcedel began the reading of the report
of the Committee on Training a Future Ministry.

The following slate was proposed for BOARD MEMBER-AT-LARGE: Robert
Steinke Sr., L. Martin, and J. Schmitt. Elected: Mr. Steinke Sr.

The following slate was proposed for the COMM. ON MISSION OPPORTU-
NITIES: Rev. M.Natterer, Rev. H.D.Mensing, Rev. J.E.Shufelt, Mr. M.
Kofoid, Mr. J. Schmitt, Mr. H. Fischer, and Mr. E. Steinke. The motion
was carried to vote for three men located in the same geographic area:
one pastor and two laymen. Elected: Pastor Natterer, Mr. Kofoid, and
Mr. Fischer.

The following slate was proposed for the COMM. ON THEOLOGICAL EDU-
CATION: Rev. Mensing, Rev.Shufelt, E. Blcedel, J.Schmitt, L.Martin,
and E.Steinke. Elected: Pastor Mensing, E. Blcedel, and L. Martin.

The motion was carried to accept the resolutions offered in the
Prospectus toward the Training of a Future Ministry submitted by the
C.T.E.

The motion was passed to dismiss the Comm. on Nominations with
thanks.

Adjournment followed at 6:00 p.m.

MONDAY MORNING SESSION - AUGUST 26, 1957

The Monday morning session began with hymn 417, a devotion based
on Phil. 2, 1-16 by Pastor Mensing, and a prayer.

The minutes of the previous session were read and approved.

The Budget Committee presented its initial report:

Missions	\$2900
C.L.subsidy	740
Traveling	250
Proceedings	30
Miscellaneous	20
Theol. Education .	200
Contingent Fund ..	300
	<u> </u>
	\$4440

The motion was carried to re-open at this time the discussion of
the Future Ministry. Since final action on this matter will not be
taken until the 1958 convention, the motion was passed to ask Pastor
Blcedel to prepare a resolution to cover the interim year regarding
the future ministry.

Changes and additions proposed by the Committee on Constitution
Revision were discussed. The motion was carried to adopt the Preamble
and Articles I-III. The motion was carried to re-work point 2 of Art.V
and present this later.

The noon hour followed.

MONDAY AFTERNOON SESSION - AUGUST 26, 1957

The Monday afternoon session began with hymn 265 and a devotion
based on 1 Peter 1, 3 ff. by President Mehlberg.

Discussion on the revised Constitution continued. The motion was
carried to adopt articles IV - VII.

Recess followed.

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The motion was carried to adopt Articles VIII - XII. The motion was carried that the entire revised Constitution be adopted and be sent to all member congregations for their unanimous approval of Art. II, III, IV, and VI, and a 2/3 majority approval of all other articles, that it also be sent to those congregations of our fellowship who are not member congregations for their unanimous consent to Art. II, III, IV, and VI.

The motion was carried to dismiss the Comm. on Constitution Revision with thanks for its thorough work.

The motion was carried that the convention empower the President to appoint such individuals and committees as are provided by the new Constitution if and when it has been ratified by the member congregations and when it has been approved by those of our fellowship who are not member congregations.

At this time requests for subsidies were presented: 1) \$1500 for the church at Muscatine, IOWA; and 2) \$900 for Christ Lutheran Church in Milwaukee. Upon recommendation of the Board the motion was passed to subsidize these two congregations in the amounts asked for for one year, these subsidies subject to re-consideration at each next convention as long as there is request therefor, and when such request is made, that the pastor of such a subsidized parish be asked to give a brief interest report to the convention.

Pastor Paul Bloddel then presented the resolution concerning the Future Ministry during the interim year as requested by the convention in the Monday morning session. It reads as follows:

"Whereas, it is the chief purpose of our Conference better to carry out the command of our Lord: Go ye into all the world etc. and Go ye therefore and teach all nations etc., and

Whereas, in order to do this it is an absolute necessity for men to be trained for the work of the ministry, and

Whereas, it is both possible and probable that vacancies in the pastoral office may develop in our midst and that we have no men to fill such vacancies, and

Whereas, all progress in effective mission work would be impeded if the training of pastors would be neglected,

Therefore, be it resolved:

That we exhort our congregations to give serious consideration to the encouragement of young men to enter the work of the ministry, and that when and if qualified men come to us for training in our ministry, the Board of Directors be empowered to make definite plans for the immediate instruction of such students in accordance with the Constitutional provisions for the CTE. The motion was carried to adopt this resolution.

The supper hour followed.

MONDAY EVENING SESSION - AUGUST 26, 1957

The Comm. on Resolutions, Pastor Shufelt reporting, then presented three resolutions:

- 1) The convention unanimously passed a resolution in which it expressed regret over the unhappy circumstances brought about by the Minneapolis faction which led to "Our Declaration" as published in the Febr. 1956 issue of the O.L., reaffirmed its loyalty to the principles of the bonafide O.L.C., and repudiated and denounced as untrue the charges brought by the faction against the officers of the O.L.C. and also the charge

of causing a schism in the Conference made against Pastor Hallstein and those pastors and people who supported his stand.

- 2) It was resolved that hearty and sincere thanks be given to Pastor Schaefer and his congregation and to Pastor Hallstein and his congregation for their several gifts and services in the interest of the members and friends of the Conference and in graciously and generously providing for their comfort and daily necessities.
- 3) The motion was carried to thank especially Pastor Mensing for his very diligent and faithful work on the matters of Constitution Revision and Training of a Future Ministry.

With regard to the request of the faction for the President's files, the motion was unanimously carried that we hold that we are the rightful possessors and therefore cannot relinquish them to anyone to whom they do not belong in the sight of God.

The motion was carried to cast a unanimous vote for the officers in the elections of this convention.

The motion was carried that in the First Proceedings of the C.L.C. page 29 and 46, "in statu confessionis with" be changed to "in statu confessionis overagainst."

The motion was carried that the Vice-president and the Secretary again serve as the Press Committee until other arrangements are made and that this Committee make some announcement concerning the LWF convention in Minneapolis if they should find such announcement feasible.

The motion was carried to accept the report of the Comm. on Mission Opportunities and the recommendation of the Board that the Secretary call Mr. Guese in Houston, Texas, to thank him for his gift of \$100 and to try to arrange for a discussion meeting between him and Pastor Hallstein in the near future and also send him an official letter of thanks for his generous donation.

The motion was carried to approve the recommendation of the Board to pay the traveling expenses of Board members at the rate of 2¢ per mile per person when two or more travel in one car, this not to exceed 8¢ per mile.

An invitation for next year's convention was extended by Peace Lutheran Church in Tinley Park, Ill. The motion was carried to accept this invitation.

The budget (see Mon. a.m. minutes) was then discussed. The motion was passed to adopt the budget of \$4440.

The motion was carried that we accept Mr. Julius Schmitt's kind offer to mimeograph the copies of the Proceedings.

The motion was carried to accept Mr. E. Bloedel's report concerning the budget for 1957-58. The Budget Comm. was dismissed with thanks.

Pastor Bloedel gave his report as editor of the C.L. and encouraged the brethren to submit more articles to him regularly. The motion was carried to accept the editor's report with sincere thanks for his faithful and capable labors.

The motion was carried to approve the action of the Board with reference to the new emblem and Scripture verse in the C.L.

The final report of the Comm. on Registration showed 7 pastors, 5 lay delegates, and 52 visitors in attendance. It was accepted.

The Committee on Excuses reported that the following be excused for valid reasons: Pastor Natterer; two lay delegates from St. John's, Lebanon, Oregon; two lay delegates from Peace, Tinley Park, Ill.; and one lay delegates from St. Paul's, Empire, Oregon. The convention concurred in this report.