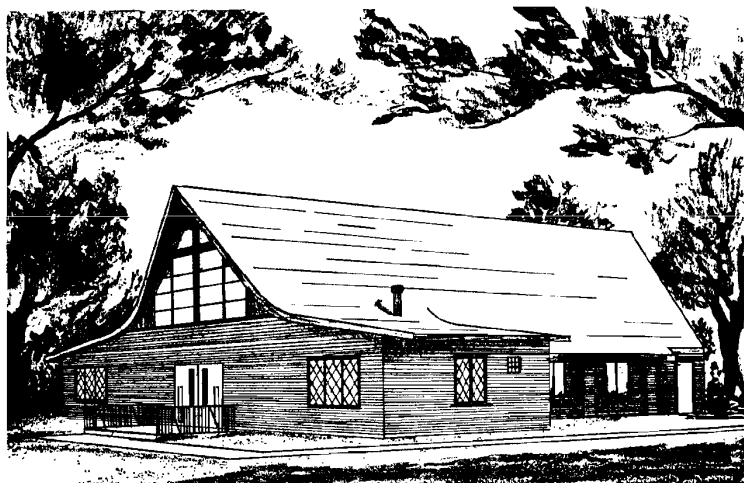


PROCEEDINGS

18th Annual Convention
OF THE
Concordia Lutheran Conference

JUNE 14 - 16, 1968

at



Peace Ev. Lutheran Church

TINLEY PARK, ILLINOIS

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R E G I S T E R O F A T T E N D A N C EPASTORAL

Bloedel, P. R.

Mehlberg, E. L.

Mensing, H. D.

Natterer, M. L.

Schaefer, O. W.

Absent and excused: A. J. Cordes

REGISTER OF LAY DELEGATES

<u>Congregation</u>	<u>Delegates</u>
Peace Lutheran Church Tinley Park, Illinois	Glen Frerichs David T. Mensing
Christ Lutheran Church Milwaukee, Wisconsin	Julius Schmitt Victor Bloedel
St. Stephen's Lutheran Church Wilmot, South Dakota	Carl Palmquist Elmer Frerichs Howard Wenck (Alternate)
St. Luke's Lutheran Church Seattle, Washington	Paul Luedtke Gerald Luedtke (Alternate) James Luedtke (Alternate)
St. John's Lutheran Church Lebanon, Oregon	Walter F. Fischer delegate excused
St. Paul's Lutheran Church Coos Bay, Oregon	John Dirksen delegate excused

SERMON DELIVERED AT THE OPENING SERVICE
By The Rev. E. L. Mehlberg
Milwaukee, Wisconsin

1 Corinthians 15:58: "Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye steadfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord."

In Christ, beloved Conference brethren and friends, especially the pastors and lay delegates assembled for this Convention:

As a nation we are facing a period in our history which is so critical that this could well be the final chapter of its existence! Corruption of every description has so undermined and destroyed its moral strength that it is ready to topple over and collapse any moment! Only God's special intervention can prevent this disaster! We pray that the Lord may yet graciously come to its assistance and rescue it if it be in accord with His will!

Our dear nation presently is suffering what may well be its final death pangs because the Christian churches, which are the divine preservative element of every healthy nation, have by and large lost their vitality. During the past half century worldliness has so corrupted the Christian churches of our land that it has reduced them to a miserable shambles. Outwardly they appear to be flourishing but inwardly, spiritually, they are reeking with rotteness! For they have with but few exceptions forsaken the Word of the Lord to chase after their own dreams and illusions, seeking their own honor and pleasure! As we look over these shambles, what a small remnant we are who by God's grace still hold fast to the old Scripturally correct position of our stalwart, godly and faithful Bible-teaching fathers like Luther, Walther, Hoenecke, Koren and Pieper!

And, brethren, as we look into the uncertain future ahead, what shall become also of us who have so far been spared by the Lord as a brand plucked from the fire? who every moment are in danger of falling away after the fashion of the unbelieving and false-believing churches which encircle us everywhere! Just to survive these trying times as true and faithful Christians is an awesome undertaking in itself, not to speak of faithfully carrying forward the work of the Church in which we as congregations individually and as a Conference of congregations collectively are engaged! To carry forward the work of the Church, however, is our solemn duty before the Lord. As faithful Christians we also would gladly carry it forward, but there appear to be so many obstacles in our pathway which seem to defy solution and tend to fill us with such a spirit of defeatism and weariness that we are at a complete loss how to proceed!

At such times like these, dear brethren, we especially have need to turn to the Lord with repentant and believing hearts to inquire of His Word how we may be able to survive these trying days and at the same time carry out the work He has so graciously committed to our care. In the words of our text such a blessed opportunity is given us. Therefore with a prayer for the enlightening guidance of the Holy Ghost, let us on the basis of our text meditate on the answer which Scripture gives to this important question:

HOW SHOULD WE CARRY OUT THE CHURCH WORK WHICH CONFRONTS US?

1. By keeping our Christian heritage of life in mind;
2. By continuing steadfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord; and
3. By knowing that our labor is not in vain in the Lord.

To the question, How should we carry out the church work which confronts us, the first part of the answer is this: 3

I.

By keeping our Christian heritage of life in mind.

The congregation at Corinth, to which the Apostle Paul in particular addressed this Epistle, was living in a period of history which was very much like that of our own. The moral corruption of that day had destroyed the stability of the Greek nation. The congregation there in Corinth had not been unaffected by this evil environment. Its very existence as a Christian congregation was being threatened on account of inner decay which was swiftly sapping its life strength. It was torn by factions and disunity, which brought on many other evils. Church discipline was neglected, the scandalous sin of incest was openly condoned in its midst, members lovelessly went to law against each other before the civil courts of the heathen, immorality of various kinds was practiced, the worship services of the congregation were often marred by disorder and confusion, the Lord's Supper was even made the occasion of offensive and loveless conduct, the rich treasure of gifts which the members had received of the Lord were often misused, and finally faith-destroying errors regarding the resurrection of the dead were threatening to give the death blow to that highly blessed and favored Christian congregation!

We can well understand that when the Apostle Paul heard about this sad state of affairs he was prompted "out of much affliction and anguish. . . with many tears," 2 Cor. 2:4, to write to these his dear backsliding brethren. With tender love and fatherly firmness he rebuked them. By divine destruction he corrected them. He exhorted them in the name of the Lord Jesus to put away all evil out of their midst and to conform their lives to the Gospel of Christ and the will of God. Then finally in the 15th chapter of this First Epistle, from which our text is taken, the Apostle sets them straight regarding the doctrine of the resurrection from the dead. He used this precious doctrine then also to strengthen their faith and hope in the glorious heritage of eternal life which belongs to all who humbly repent of their sins and believe on the Lord Jesus Christ for forgiveness and for the power to lead a new life of sanctification by the Spirit. He assured them that by such true faith in the risen Lord Jesus "death is swallowed up in victory!" This prompted the faithful Apostle to cry out in joyful spirit in behalf of his dear brethren there in the congregation and in behalf of all the saints everywhere to the end of time: "O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory? The sting of death is sin; and the strength of sin is the law. But thanks be to God which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ!"

We know that the Apostle's efforts in behalf of this congregation were not in vain because by God's grace these Christians humbly and repentantly accepted his rebuke and correction. They permitted the Holy Spirit to revive them by the Gospel, which filled them with renewed strength and zeal to carry out the church work which confronted them. The sure hope of eternal life, their blessed Christian heritage in Christ, spurred them on to be faithful and zealous in that work. It was on the basis of that saving instruction which filled the Corinthians with repentance and faith and zeal to face the future, that the Apostle then in the words of our text could confidently add the additional admonitions of our text.

Beloved brethren, let that same basis of saving, faith-inspiring instruction also encourage us all to carry out the church work which confronts us at this convention and locally in each of our congregations. For if we with humble and repentant spirit acknowledge our own sinfulness and faithlessness, if we permit the Gospel of Jesus to melt our hearts and fill them with joyous faith over the prospect of our Christian heritage of life in Christ; - if we keep these things in mind, God's Spirit will fill us with the strength and zeal we need to carry out the church work which confronts us, regardless of how discouraging and im-

possible it may seem to be. The situation at Corinth was most discouraging but⁴ not hopeless; ours, too, is not hopeless! For it is "God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ!"

As we therefore ponder the question of how we should carry out the church work which confronts us, let us proceed to do it, my beloved brethren, in the first place, by keeping our Christian heritage of life in mind. And in the second place:

II.

By continuing steadfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord:

For that is the earnest exhortation of the Lord through His Apostle: "Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye steadfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord." What the Apostle here exhorts in the name of the Lord Jesus is supplied us also by God's promised grace through His Spirit.

"Be ye steadfast," the Apostle exhorts. That is, we Christians should seek by a diligent use of the Holy Scriptures daily to strengthen, settle, and securely anchor our faith in Christ, that this foundation of our Christian life may stand firm and unshaken to the end, that we be not soon shaken in our faith nor tossed about by every wind of false doctrine! We need above everything else here on earth to hold fast to God's grace in Christ, as the Holy Scriptures everywhere exhort us. We need to practice our faith in the Gospel of living day in and day out by the strength it gives. We need to remember our total inability to remain Christians by our own strength or cooperation with God! We need to look constantly to the Lord, by whose saving grace alone we shall be able to persevere! The assurance that in Jesus we have full and free pardon of all our sins, the promise that His grace is sufficient for us to carry through all our trials in spite of our own great weakness, and the inheritance of heaven which He has given us; these should fill us with confidence and joyfulness to face what lies ahead in His service! That will give us the steadfastness of faith we need in order to carry out our church work.

That will also serve to make us "unmoveable." That is, the ability to stand fast in the full truth of God's Word despite all opposition from without. We should not be discouraged by the constant attacks of the devil, the world, and our own sinful flesh. We should, regardless of circumstances, remain unmoved by the difficulties we face in the work of the Lord. We should not permit doubts of any kind to overcome us. False teaching and false teachers every day are threatening, for example, to move us away from the solid foundation of God's Word. The world with its sinful allurements, pleasures, and riches are constantly seeking to divert us from our calling in Christ, so that we might neglect and finally abandon the faith altogether. We dare not give in to these terrible soul-destroying enemies of ours! We must resist them, and to the blood if need be, by holding fast to Jesus and His Word of life and salvation!

Such steadfastness and unmoveableness in Christ and His Gospel will then also make it possible by God's grace to carry out the exhortation that we be such who are "always abounding in the work of the Lord."

What this work of the Lord specifically is, our Lord and Savior Himself summed up in these words of His great commission before He ascended into heaven: "All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world." Matthew 28:18-20.

In this glorious work of making disciples of all nations, we are to abound, exhorts the Apostle here in our text. With our Christian heritage of the Gospel and the sure promise of eternal life to carry us through, we can afford to abound in this work of the Lord. We are not called to idleness and mere enjoyment of this life, but we are called to put forth diligent effort and work in the service of the Lord. Following our Savior's example, each of us should and can with the

help of His grace resolve: "I must work the works of him that sent me, while it is day: the night cometh when no man can work," John 9:4. The Lord has greatly honored us Christians by choosing us to be His own and by sending us into His vineyard. Our whole life and existence, therefore, should be faithfully and joyfully involved in carrying out this His glorious, saving work!

In order that we may do this work with willingness and zeal, it is necessary that we first permit God's work of love to be done in our own hearts and lives. To this end He sanctifies us by His grace and Word to give us the strength we need to love Him above all things and to desire greatly to serve Him by serving our fellow men everywhere with the gifts He entrusts to our care for that purpose. For He supplies us with all the gifts we need to carry forward successfully His work here on earth. He therefore grants His Church the gift of preaching and teaching the Gospel and the gifts of health and peace and funds whereby His work can be carried on in our local congregations, jointly through our conference of congregations, and in the mission fields of the entire world. These and many other gifts which He entrusts to our care make it possible for us to do His work.

The Lord now wants us to abound in their use. As we carry out His work we are to use these gifts as good stewards, constantly day by day making progress through them according to His will as it is revealed to us in His Word. It is contrary to the spirit of the Gospel, therefore, to be satisfied with the stage we have reached in our present knowledge of the Holy Scriptures and of the doctrines revealed therein or to be satisfied with the stage of sanctification we have presently reached. We must not be content to do as little for the work of the church as we can honorably get by with. We must not be satisfied to do only as much this year with the gifts He has given us as we did last year. Always abounding in the work of the Lord means that we are to strive to do ever better in the future than we have done in the past. We are to strive to be more godly this year and today than we were last year and yesterday. We should seek to have a greater knowledge of God's will, greater love to God and to our fellow man this year and today than we had last year and yesterday.

The Apostle confidently exhorts his Corinthian brethren and all of us Christians to abound always in the work of the Lord because He knows that this exhortation is God's will, and what is God's will for His Church is always something good and most beneficial! Therefore when we think about how we should carry out the church work which confronts us, we should do it, as the Apostle exhorts, by continuing steadfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord! And, finally:

III.

By knowing that our labor is not in vain in the Lord.

To be sure, the church work which confronts us is at times most discouraging and disheartening! At times a faithful pastor is filled with the dread thought that all his labors in the Lord have been useless, in vain! The great prophet Elijah once despaired of fruitfulness in his labors, thinking he alone was left in the world. The prophet Isaiah at one time in near despair cried to the Lord: "I have labored in vain, I have spent my strength for naught, and in vain." Is.49:3. The Apostle Paul's life in a similar way was full of disappointments, but by the Holy Ghost and from his own personal experience he gives this blessed assurance also to all true and faithful pastors: "Your labor is not in vain in the Lord!" Elijah's work was not in vain, for God told him that 7000 in Israel remained - who were still holding fast to the true God. Nor was Isaiah's work in vain, for he was cheered greatly when in his discouragement the Lord told him that he should perform great and wonderful works in His service. You, dear laymen, also have your discouragements in the work of the church. You, too, frequently find that your sincerest efforts for the Lord seem often to bear no fruit. What struggles and temptations you are exposed to when you follow your various callings in the home and outside of the home in public life. What disappointments sometimes threaten to overwhelm you as you seemingly seek in vain to grow in grace and to

further the work of the Church! May we all, therefore, never forget these precious⁶ Apostolic words of encouragement and strength and cheer: "Your labor is not in vain in the Lord!"

We can not always see and recognize the fruit of our labors in the Lord. We are sometimes driven by Satan, world, and our own weak and sinful flesh to think that the troubles and difficulties are too great to bear if we would continue to remain true and faithful to the Lord and the full truth of His Word. What great comfort it is to know that the Lord's Apostle assures every true and faithful Christian that when he continues steadfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord; yes, even then when his efforts seem most weak and unfruitful; that, nevertheless, his labor is not in vain in the Lord! Our humble and dedicated service in the Lord may go on seemingly fruitless, unappreciated, and total unrewarded in this life, yet we are exhorted with cheerful hearts to know with all confidence: "Your labor is not in vain in the Lord."

Oh, how this should strengthen and encourage us to carry out the church work which confronts us at this convention and in our home congregation, knowing confidently that "your labor is not in vain in the Lord!" The Lord will take notice of all that we do for Him by faith in Jesus according to His Word. The tears, unnoticed to others, which we shed in the great distress brought on by our faithful labors in His kingdom and brought on by our loving and prayerful care for each other will not escape His notice (Ps. 56:8)! The life consuming strength we lovingly expend for Him and His Church will all one day be crowned by His reward of grace! For they that thus sow shall also reap a heavenly harvest (Ps. 126:5). We need but to have the God-bestowed willingness to wait for Him in quietness and joyful hope of mind by a living faith in Jesus our Savior. We need but trust always in His Word of promise which will never fail. He will most surely strengthen our hands for the tasks ahead and guide our feet into pathways where we can best serve Him to the glory of His name and to the furtherance of His Church!

Part of His reward of grace to those who faithfully serve Him, He gives already in this life in the form of increased riches and blessings of body and soul. But the greatest part of His blessings will come after this life is over. For He assures each of us: "Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life," Rev. 2:10. Yes, indeed, after a blessed death, we shall arise in the resurrection, be glorified in our bodies, and be received into the inheritance of heaven where we shall be given perfect joy in God's blissful presence forever!

My beloved brethren, that is how we should carry out the church work which confronts us: by keeping our Christian heritage of life in mind; by continuing steadfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord; and by knowing that our labor is not in vain in the Lord! Thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ!" Amen.

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SERMON PREACHED AT THE SUNDAY SERVICE

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By The Rev. O. W. Schaefer
Wilmot, South Dakota

Text: Jude 3 - "Earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints!"

In Christ Jesus, the Head of the Church, dearly beloved members of our Conference, visitors, and friends:

Throughout the history of the world there have been wars and battles of all kinds, major and minor, some lasting for years, others for lesser periods of time. Even now our own country finds itself engaged in a bitter struggle on foreign soil. All these are, of course, the result of sin in the world, and debates rage on as to which war was just and which was unjust. In the life of the Christian, however, there is a conflict and a battle concerning which the Bible assures us that it is proper and should be carried on with great zeal and courage. It is the war of which Paul writes to Timothy, "Fight the good fight of faith!" 1 Tim. 6:12. It is that tremendous struggle for the truth against any and all error. Today's Gospel again emphasized the importance of purity of doctrine as well as the need for being constantly on the alert for false teaching and denials of the truth. At no time in the history of the Church has this admonition been so in place as today when Christians who desire to walk on the old paths are besieged by an avalanche of errors great and small. Not only do these arise in Catholic and Reformed circles, but more and more Satan has gained a foothold with untruths in churches and synods that call themselves Lutheran. Our Confessions state: "No room is to be given the least error; in no way is it to be tolerated!" Yet it is a common experience today that when believers declare that all of the Bible is true as given by inspiration of God and that anything contrary to this is untrue and a lie, people look at them with amazement and regard them as way out of date to make such an observation. The argument of love, being more charitable, not so forceful, is advanced against any energetic contending for the faith. Were this idea to take control, the fight for truth would be doomed, and the Church would degenerate into a group of people without any sound basis for their salvation. What a tragedy that would be! It is therefore vital that we hear the clear call of God overagainst the voice of indifference, urging us to strive vigorously for God's pure Word. On the basis of our text let us consider the divine challenge so significant for these latter times:

CHRIST'S CALL TO EVERY CHRISTIAN: CONTEND FOR THE FAITH!

1. This is a divine command and loving advice.
2. It is an admonition to positive action.

Our text was written by Jude, the brother of James, to various Christians throughout Palestine. He writes with deep concern because spiritual dangers were threatening the Gospel in the areas where his readers lived. Corrupt teachers with their false doctrines were slyly creeping about and endangering the faith of the Christians. Therefore when this news reached him, he felt obliged to write them a letter, admonishing them not only to defend themselves, but also to contend, to fight most emphatically for the faith and the truth as the apostles had proclaimed it to them. He urges them to cling to it and to fight for God's Word with all the power at their command.

What Jude says in our text is meant also for us. He who fights for his country must feel a deep loyalty to it. So he who would battle for God's truth must love the Lord and His Word. Jesus says, "If a man love Me, he will keep My words," John 14:23, that is, he will give heed to them and watch over them. Luther once said that all Scripture is a golden chain, and one departure from the truth severs that chain. A single deviation from the inspired Word of God im-

perils the preserving of the entire revelation of the grace of God in Christ⁸ and of the blessings He has earned for us on the cross. Lest souls be endangered, the Word must be kept unsullied by human error. True love for souls and their eternal peace prompt the Christian to contend for the faith, for the truth of God.

This fight and battle has come to be assailed as something loveless. Jesus Himself was called a disturber and perverter of the people. The apostles were called factionists. Paul was attacked by former friends. Athanasius, an early Church father, was accused of pride and stubbornness. Luther also was branded a bold and rebellious spirit, a wild and drunken swine. But all faithful confessors endure such reproach for the Lord's sake, knowing that God will judge His foes.

The world instead fosters a brotherliness and a love which can only compromise the truth. It will tolerate error and lead to greater evils while endeavoring to maintain unity and peace. Recognizing this evil, Luther wrote, "As strongly as our opponents insist on unity of loving do we insist on unity of teaching and believing!" Hence one of our Confessions states, "Everyone should beware and not agree with those who maintain false doctrine!" This is in accord with God's will when He says, "Be no more children . . . carried about with every wind of doctrine, but speak the truth in love and grow up unto Him which is the Head, even Christ!" Eph. 4:14. Our text then is indeed a divine command and loving advice designed for the honor of God and the salvation of men.

Secondly, we note that the words of our text are a call to determined and constructive action. There have been and always will be such as advise being silent and inactive in the face of error. They say, Let us not get the membership excited! Let us not worry about it, God will take care of everything! What foolish talk this is when the Lord has placed us in His army, tells us to take the sword of the Spirit, and contend, fight! It has been said that a church which contends for nothing either has lost the truth or ceased to love it. In the times of the Reformation there lived a man named Martin of Basel, who despite his firm beliefs was afraid of confessing his faith before others. The Reformer himself stated, "A teacher who keeps silent on errors and wishes to be known as an orthodox teacher is worse than a heretic . . . he is a wolf and a fox, a hireling and belly server!" True disciples of Jesus will not keep silent, but speak out for the truth.

But even more: they will act, and when all evangelical admonition has proven fruitless, they will separate themselves from those persisting in error, as God tells them: "Mark them . . . and avoid!" Rom. 16:17. Luther was told to await the decisions of recognized teachers on doctrines at issue, but he replied, "Let the devil wait for that! The Bible has decided!" Lack of action by Christians in their own congregation or Synod was severely rebuked by Dr. Pieper, sound teacher of orthodox Missouri Synod days gone by, "If it were established that only ONE pastor was preaching false doctrine and we did not put a stop to it, we would cease to be orthodox and would be a unionistic fellowship!"

This action of contending for the faith is the responsibility of every Christian. Guarding and defending the truth is the duty not just of some select group of scholars, but of every member, layman and pastor alike. This includes taking a positive stand on the truth, refuting and removing error, and avoiding such as persist in championing false doctrine. Luther writes: "If you would be saved, be so sure in your own mind of the Word of grace that if ALL men speak otherwise, you stand alone and declare: I know that this Word is true!"

O let us all examine ourselves whether we are active watchmen for the Lord! Let us seek and obtain His pardon for often growing weary in this fight, believing it useless and no longer so vital! Let us plead for strength to remain firm in our own convictions despite the variety of errors prevalent as to the inspiration of the Bible, virgin birth, resurrection, creation, as well as false positions on Church and Ministry, lodges, Scouting, and more, with which Satan

would try to harm and destroy our faith. If we grow faint in the work of con-⁹
tending for the truth, remember Paul's assuring words, "The Lord stood with me
and strengthened me!" 2 Tim. 4:17. In His Word we also can find wisdom, faith-
fulness, and zeal to contend for the faith.

In an age where many say, Who can find and know the truth? when appeals are
made to be more charitable and tolerant, hurting no one's feelings and stepping
on no one's toes, when there is little genuine battling for God's truth, but
rather a spirit that speaks well of all denominations and lays great stress on
new discoveries in the field of religion, in such an age the sharp call of God
in our text demands our response in word and deed. In Jeremiah 14 God labels
error as false vision, a thing of naught, the deceit of the heart. Paul says,
"Stand fast in the faith and be strong!" 1 Cor. 16:13. And again, "Stand fast
in one spirit, with one mind striving together for the faith of the Gospel; and
in nothing terrified by your adversaries: which is to them an evident token of
perdition, but to you of salvation, and that of God!" Phil. 1:27b-28. To that
end let us pray: O Lord,

The wicked everywhere abound
And would Thy little flock confound;
Preserve this congregation,
For Thou art our Salvation!

Amen.

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P R E S I D E N T I A L R E P O R T

To the 1968 Convention

Dear Brethren:

Under the gracious blessings of the Lord we have for another year survived the devastating impact of this generation's unbelief and godlessness! We raise our hearts to the Lord in thanksgiving for His sustaining grace, which alone has preserved us in body and soul!

It is in that spirit of gratitude that I present to you the report on things which the Lord has accomplished through us in our midst as a Conference during this past year of grace.

One of the first official acts which it was my privileged responsibility to carry out in your midst was to place before the congregations for their ratification the theses: "This Scriptural Position We Still Hold." By the end of January the ratification was completely carried out with the unanimous vote of our congregations. Thereby the Lord once again has shown His gracious hand in blessing us with the Christian unity which is pleasing to Him, a unity based entirely on His Word, granting us also the confirming testimony of our faithful Bible-teaching fathers, assuring us that we still stand where they stood in defense of these truths which today, one by one, are being cast aside as outmoded even by those who would count themselves among the faithful Lutherans of our day. The attractive format in which our Editor has presented this monumental confession of this important phase of our faith very fittingly expresses also the value we place on it. We thank the Lord for this His unmerited grace in uniting us in the confession of this His truth, and we prayerfully look alone to Him for His continued grace to persevere in it.

Having completed the ratification of our theses on the doctrine of the Church and Ministry, we are also in a better position now to meet with other conservative Lutheran church bodies and individuals in the interest of Christian unity. Our Convention Motto: UNION THROUGH UNITY would emphasize this desire on our part. Our determination to approach this matter in a truly Scriptural manner also explains the choice of our Essay for this Convention: TOWARD UNION IN THE UNITY OF THE SPIRIT. May its presentation here be a source of great strengthening to us all. That we have been actively concerned about such unity with other Lutherans has also been shown by the fact that representatives from our Conference have met with others outside our fellowship during this past year in the interest of Lutheran union in the true unity of the Spirit. We will hear a report on these activities during the course of this Convention.

There was a number of referenda carried out during this year. One was dated October 12th. It was sent you as Referendum #1. It concerned the "Board Recommendation #2, whereby the usual subsidy to St. Luke's Congregation was proposed to be changed into a subsidy (\$285.00 per month) for the sacred printing done in behalf of the Conference congregations by its pastor as the printer. In connection with this referendum, I obtained authorization from the Board of Directors to lay a proposal from St. Luke's Congregation before the congregations of our Conference which was called Referendum #2. It proposed that instead of the subsidy proposed in Referendum #1, our Conference printer simply bill our Conference for any printing at current local prices, to be paid out of the Conference General treasury and Sunday School Fund. Referendum #1 was rejected. Referendum #2 was unanimously adopted by the congregations. It was also understood that this proposal would be in effect until this present Convention, at which time opportunity will be given to review the whole matter. I suggest that we act on this matter in connection with the Report of the Committee on Missions, unless some one has a better suggestion.

A special referendum to determine the time of our present Convention was also

presented to the congregations. By the end of February each congregation had approved the third Sunday in June. We will again at this Convention reconsider the convention date to determine the most favorable date for all the congregations for the years ahead. 11

Two memorials have been presented for our study and action. They are printed in the Prospectus on pages three and four. They concern matters among us of vital practical importance. We earnestly implore the Lord to give us the needed wisdom in responding to them in full accord with His will and Word.

Since we no longer have the opportunity to come together as a Board to discuss pressing issues which quite naturally arise in our work which is so greatly opposed by the devil, the world, and our own flesh, your president, besides much written official correspondence, made frequent and necessary use of the telephone to contact the brethren in order to inform, counsel, and seek counsel as the needs arose.

We thank the Lord that our treasury was able to take care of all the expenses of our work as a Conference during this fiscal year. We pray the Lord that He would graciously bless us in the necessary area of funds and in the grace of giving, that we may proceed in the many endeavors which a persisting lack of funds so far has denied being carried out. We earnestly look to Him for such grace according to His will.

In order to be able more efficiently to carry out his duties, the president needs the full cooperation of our brethren in carrying out By-law No. 3, D, which reads: "Preliminary convention reports and recommendations of Conference committees shall be sent to the President and the Vice-president, in writing, no later than two months before the time of convention." Aside from this failing, I am happy to acknowledge that there has been splendid brotherly cooperation by the pastors and their congregations with me in my humble efforts to serve you officially. I take this opportunity to thank you all, for this has made my work very pleasant during the past year. All glory to the Lord for this His grace!

At this time we wish also to make notable mention of the deep sorrow and great loss which our Conference sustained in the passing of a number of our dear brethren from several congregations, who have been pillars in our congregations and Conference during the trying years of our past existence! Our hearts weep in brotherly sympathy with the bereaved relatives and loved ones whom these faithful servants of the Lord left behind. But their godly works do also follow them! We raise grateful hearts to the Lord, who so blessed them in their lives with His grace and us through them. We do not at all begrudge them the victorious crown which the Lord has lovingly placed on their redeemed souls, which we here in the Church Militant must yet patiently wait for. We therefore rather rejoice over them and bless His name, being filled with great longing to share their joy with them as soon as this is possible, according to His will. Meanwhile, we rejoice because we confidently expect our Savior to carry out His sure promise to us too, for He says: "Surely I come quickly!" And we therefore earnestly respond: "Even so, Lord Jesus, come quickly. Amen." Revelation 22:20.

In closing this report, we ask the Lord to make us good stewards of all the gifts He has so graciously entrusted to our care. We implore Him to direct our Conference work in such a way that our various gifts may find their best application and fullest use to the glory of His name and to the furtherance of His Church here at this Convention, in our home congregations, and everywhere else where it may please Him to use us as His highly favored, faithful and dedicated servants!

This we may confidently also expect of Him because of this the Holy Scriptures assure us: "The Lord will give grace and glory: no good thing will He withhold from them that walk uprightly." Psalm 84:11. "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 throughout all

T O W A R D U N I O N I N T H E U N I T Y O F T H E S P I R I T
(True Ecumenicity)

Essay delivered at the 17th Annual Convention of the Concordia
Conference by Pastor M. L. Natterer, Lebanon, Oregon

Never before has Christianity witnessed so many religious denominations as it has during these last evil days of the world! The number of religious denominations easily passes into the hundreds! It is, as the Savior foretells, "and many false prophets shall rise, and shall deceive many" (Matt. 24:11). While we deplore these divisions as the work of the devil who is the author of all discord, there have been those who have defended the divisions in Christendom. They refer to the realm of nature and tell us that there we have not merely one particular kind of flower, but a vast assortment and variety of flowers for man to enjoy. Why should we object, therefore, that in the garden of the Church we find ever so many denominations which preach the Word of God and depict the Christian truths in its various beautiful colors! The many denominations are but regiments which indeed march separately but all belong to the same army! This is the language which the father of all lies, the devil (John 8:44), employs through the tongues of the false prophets to deceive the hearts and minds of the simple.

On the other hand, we have those who clamor for the union of all denominations. Their reasons, of course, may vary as to why they want such union. There are the practical individuals who feel that such divisions in Christendom result in a foolish waste of money and energy. For example, they feel that there are scores of places where one pastor and one congregation would suffice instead of 10 to 12 different pastors and congregations. And so also they apply this to the church periodicals. If the churches would band together then fewer periodicals would be needed thus avoiding much duplication as well as great expenditures. Then there are those who seek to appeal to the Scriptures (e.g., John 17:20,21; Eph. 4:3-6) and assert that God does not want such divisions and strife but unity and peace.

The number of physicians who seek to heal the "breach of Joseph" is legion. Unfortunately, however, such attempts generally fail to make the proper diagnosis. The outward symptoms are emphasized while the real hidden causes are overlooked. They occupy themselves only with the external divisions and ignore the real cause-doctrinal disunity! Moreover, they do not apply the real cure to the sickness, the Word of God; instead, they declare the healing to be complete when there is only outward union. Such attempts remind us of the quack physician who seeks to heal the body of cancer by applying a bandage to the body. No wonder the many attempts to bring about church union fail to bring about a union which is well-pleasing in the sight of God!

I

THE GOD-PLEASING UNITY UPON WHICH CHRISTIAN UNION IS BASED

What is the God-pleasing unity? For an answer to this question we dare not turn to our own thoughts and attempt to set up what we feel is the God-pleasing unity! We must turn to the Word of God which is the sole Source and Norm of all Christian doctrine. And, according to the Word of God, we see that such unity is a unity in the Spirit. We read in Ephesians, chapter 4, "Endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. 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" (vv. 2 - 6). Let us note these words well! The Apostle does not speak about a unity which does not exist and for which the Christians should strive; on the contrary, he states that the unity already exists and which the Christians are privileged to enjoy. Dr. Stoeckhardt in his splendid exposition of this Epistle writes, "The word of Scripture Ephesians 4:4 - 6 is a locus classicus for the doctrine of the

Church" (Kommentar über den Brief Pauli an die Epheser, page 178). And rightly so, for here we are told of the blessed unity which is in the Holy Christian Church, the Body of which Christ Himself is the Head. God the Holy Spirit is the Soul of the Body, the Church. He it is who has called the members of this glorious Church out of the darkness of sin and the domain of Satan into the marvelous light of Christ's Church; He it is who has worked the true saving faith within their hearts, leads and guides them into all truth, keeps and preserves them in the one true faith until their end; He it is who has called them in one hope of their calling so that they believe that they shall take possession of that inheritance which is incorruptible and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for them. (Cp. 1 Pet.1:3,4).

The God-pleasing unity is a unity in faith. In the Holy Christian Church there is, as the Apostle states, "one faith". The Lord of the Christians is Christ! He has purchased the members of His Church with His holy blood. Thus the Christians belong to Him and serve Him. All the members of the Holy Christian Church share one and the same faith. And they all possess the ardent desire to please Him who has worked this saving faith within their hearts. Through such faith true unity is restored with God. The Apostle assures us, "Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ" (Rom. 5:1). And the Lord Jesus prays in His highpriestly prayer, "That they all may be one; as Thou, Father, art in Me, and I in Thee, that they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that Thou hast sent Me" (John 17:21). O how these blessed words of Jesus are subjected to false interpretations! The contention is made that these words of the Savior constitute a command to drop all doctrinal differences and to unite all churches into one grand church. But the Savior does not pray here for an external unity, He prays for a spiritual unity. "Before His mind's eye there arose the picture of the future, when the purpose of His work in the world would be fully realized, when the holy Christian Church, the communion of saints, would be gathered from all nations" (Popular Commentary, Vol. I, page 506). Dr. Luther sets this forth very aptly, "According to Scripture, the church is the assembly of all those on earth who believe in Christ, just as we pray in the Creed: 'I believe in the Holy Ghost . . . the communion of saints.' This community or assembly consists of all who live in true faith, hope, and love, so that the essence, life, and nature of the church is not a bodily, but a spiritual assembly of hearts in one faith, as St. Paul says, Eph. 4:5, 'One baptism, one faith, one Lord.' Hence, although they be a thousand miles apart in body, they are yet an assembly in spirit because each one preaches, believes, hopes, loves and lives like the other" (St. Louis Edition, Vol. XVIII, 1013).

Luther's words are clearly in accord with Scripture. The Apostle writes to the Corinthians, "For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit" (1 Cor. 12:13). Again, "As we have many members in one body, and all members have not the same office, so we, being many, are one body in Christ, and everyone members one of another" (Rom. 12:4,5). Jesus Himself expressed it thus, "And other sheep I have, which are not of this fold: them also I must bring, and they shall hear My voice; and there shall be one fold and one Shepherd" (John 10:16).

The Good Shepherd has bound His sheep to His voice, His holy Word. Before His Ascension Christ gave His disciples the command, "Go ye therefore and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost, teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you" (Matt. 28:19). While speaking to the Jews who believed in Him, Jesus gave the marks of true discipleship, "If ye continue in My Word, then are ye My disciples indeed; and ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free" (John 8:31, 32). Thus the Church is no mere imaginary thing even though in its essence it is invisible. The Word and the Sacraments are the marks whereby we can recognize the existence of the Church. We can not go on the basis of the individual's

sincerity, for a person may be ever so sincere in what he believes and yet be wrong; we can not go merely on the basis of the individual's works, for a man may be ever so honorable and upright in the eyes of men and still be in the darkness of sin. Behold Nicodemus, the Pharisee. Surely he was an honorable man, sincere in his beliefs, yet the Savior tells him, "Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God" (John 3:5). It is through these marks, the Gospel and the Sacraments, that God the Holy Spirit creates and preserves faith. "Being born again, not of corruptible seed but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth forever. For all flesh is as grass, and all the glory of man as the flower of grass. The grass withereth, and the flower thereof falleth away: but the word of the Lord endureth for ever. And this is the word which by the gospel is preached unto you" (1 Pet. 1:23-25).

The Holy Christian Church is built solely and exclusively "upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief corner stone" (Eph.2:20). The visible Church may not forsake this foundation! It must preach and confess the pure Word of God; it must "continue steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine" (Acts 2:42). Which Church does that? With Dr. Walther we confess that "The Evangelical Lutheran Church is the True Visible Church of God on earth" (Walther and the Church, page 116) because it alone can truly be called "the Church of the pure doctrine". We say this not in the spirit of self-conceit, but rather in the words of Dr. Luther in his preface to the Smalcald Articles, "THROUGH GOD'S GRACE, our churches are so enlightened and equipped with the pure Word and right use of the Sacraments" . . . (Trig. page 457). It is not due to any merit or worthiness on our part, but the gift of God's undeserving grace! Unfortunately, not even all churches which call themselves Lutheran have retained this precious heritage. Therefore, when it is stated that "The Evangelical Lutheran Church is the True Visible Church of God on earth" it refers ONLY to those who truly confess, teach and practice the Word of God in its full truth and purity and use the Sacraments according to Christ's institution. This fact is brought out very clearly in Dr. Walther's presentation. Let us also bear in mind that the true Evangelical Lutheran Church is NOT the alone-saving Church but rather the Church of the true doctrine!

As Lutheran Christians we should certainly cherish as our greatest treasure the pure doctrine which we have inherited from our orthodox fathers and refuse to yield up one particle of it. Why? Because a Luther, Chemnitz, Walther or Pieper spun the doctrines of the Lutheran Church out of their own heads? God forbid! These courageous men were but humble students of the Word of God and drew the doctrines NOT from their own minds but from the Word of God! Luther declared, "It is not my doctrine, not the product of my hand, but God's gift" (Vol. VIII, 27, St. Louis Ed.) "The doctrine is not ours, but God's, whose called servants we only are. Therefore we may not in a single instance yield or change one small tittle of it" (Vol. IX, 644, St. Louis Ed.). And, if anyone will but take the time to compare the teachings of these men with the Scriptures, he will see for himself that they are merely repeating what God has already declared in His Holy Word.

We have no right, therefore, to sacrifice one doctrine of Holy Writ for the sake of an outward union. First of all, because the doctrine is not ours, but God's; secondly, because God tells us in no uncertain terms, "Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves" (Matt. 7:15); "Mark them which cause divisions and offenses contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned, and avoid them" (Rom. 16:17); "If any man preach any other gospel unto you than that ye have received, let him be accursed" (Gal. 1:9); and thirdly, because such fellowship without the fellowship of faith and confession would not be expressive of the unity of the one holy Christian Church, but a mere sham. Besides, it would only succeed in confirming the errorist in his delusion and breed indifference to the whole body of truth. And history has taught us only too well that indifference eventually means the loss of the

saving Gospel. The Apostle reminds the Galatians, "A little leaven leaveneth the whole lump" (Gal. 5:9). "The Evangelical Lutheran Church," writes Dr. Walther, "rejects all fraternal and churchly fellowship with those who reject her Confessions, in whole or in part" (Walther and the Church, page 127). It is the devil, the father of all lies, who seeks to mix truth and error!

There are those within the realm of Lutheranism who would refer to the 7th Article of the Augsburg Confession in an attempt to establish a union based only upon an agreement in the bare essentials. But let us look at Article VII. "Also they (the Lutherans) teach that one holy Church is to continue forever. The Church is the congregation of saints, in which the Gospel is rightly taught and the Sacraments are rightly administered. And to the true unity of the Church it is enough to agree concerning the doctrine of the Gospel and the administration of the Sacraments. Nor is it necessary that human traditions, that is, rites or ceremonies, instituted by men, should be everywhere alike. As Paul says: "One faith, one Baptism, one God and Father of all, etc. Eph. 4:5,6." The comment which Pastor H. W. Romoser makes on this article is quite enlightening. He writes: "However the preceding expressions, 'the Gospel is rightly taught (rein gepredigt) and the Sacraments are rightly (laut des Evangelii) administered,' dare not be disregarded, nor the fact that the Apology, the commentary on the Augustana, uses 'Gospel' and 'Word' several times interchangeably, nor the fact that we have just heard the Formula of Concord make clear the necessity of agreement 'in doctrine and all its articles', 7.11 and that the same confession points out, 'The term Gospel is not always employed and understood in one and the same sense, but in two ways, in the Holy Scriptures, as also by ancient and modern church-teachers. For sometimes it is employed so that thereby is understood the entire doctrine of Christ our Lord, which He proclaimed in His ministry on earth, and commanded to be proclaimed in the New Testament, and hence comprised in it the explanation of the Law and the proclamation of the favor and grace of God" (The Fellowship of the Church, October 1966, pg. 99). Cp. also Christian Dogmatics, Vol. III, pg. 222 ff.

We are aware of the fact that Article VII was really directed against the Roman Catholic doctrine which teaches that the Church is an outward organization governed by the Roman Pope and the hierarchy in the Roman Church. The charge was made against the Lutherans that by rejecting the teachings and ceremonies of the Roman Church they were thereby destroying the unity of the Church. The answer to this charge is made in Article VII. Where there is the spiritual union of believers, which consists in professing the same faith, there is the Church of God which has existed through all ages because there have always been true Christians. Now it is not necessary to agree on an exact order of worship, or a certain form of ordaining ministers, or a certain type of altar, or certain set form of prayer. While these things are certainly desirable and helpful, nonetheless, these are things in which Christians may differ without destroying the unity of the Church. That which destroys the unity of the Church is false doctrine and any perversion of the Holy Sacraments!

To be a God-pleasing unity therefore we must insist on full and honest agreement on the doctrines clearly revealed in Scripture as the basis of church union. And this means not merely the formal acceptance of the Scriptural teachings, but also the actual teaching and practice of the same. The well-known words of the Brief Statement in this connection are worth repeating. "The orthodox character of a church is established not by its mere name nor by its outward acceptance of, and subscription to, an orthodox creed, but by the doctrine which is actually taught in its pulpits, in its theological seminaries, and in its publications" (Of The Church, #29).

At this point we are confronted with many objections. We are told that that is insisting upon the acceptance of too much for unity. But hear what the Apostle writes by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, "Now I beseech you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing, and that there be

no divisions among you; but that ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment" (1 Cor. 1:10). And in his Epistle to Timothy, "If any men 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 . . . from such withdraw thyself" (1 Tim. 6:3-5). Rightly our Confessions declare, "We believe, teach and confess also that no Church should condemn another because one has less or more external ceremonies not commanded by God than the other, if otherwise there is agreement among them in doctrine AND ALL ITS ARTICLES, as also in the right use of the holy Sacraments . . ." (Formula of Concord, Art. X, page 831).

II

AN APPRAISAL OF THE CURRENT ECUMENICAL MOVEMENT IN THE LIGHT OF THIS SCRIPTURAL BASIS

That many of the church-bodies (Reformed and Lutheran) are gradually merging is an obvious fact. On April 29th of this year The Methodist Church with a membership of over 10 million and the 750,000-member Evangelical United Brethren Church merged into a new denomination to be known as : The United Methodist Church. According to The Oregonian, March 20, 1968, not all of the United Brethren congregations feel as though they can go along with the merger. The newspaper reported, "More than half the Evangelical United Brethren congregations of Washington and Oregon declared Tuesday they will withdraw from their denomination because of an impending merger with the Methodist Church." These congregations have stated that they were withdrawing because of the liberalism in the Methodist Church. It is no secret that the Methodist Church harbors within its midst those who openly reject many of the very fundamental doctrines of Christianity.

Obviously such a merger was brought about by "agreeing to disagree". It is this kind of union that has been advocated by such prominent men as Bishop James Pike and Dr. Eugene Carson Blake. They are the principal proponents of the Consultation on Church Union (CCU) which hopes to have a specific plan of union ready in two years to unite more than 25 million Protestants. And what kind of union is to be expected? The theology of Bishop Pike and Dr. Blake does not have to be repeated; in public declarations their gross liberalism has been expounded for all to judge on the basis of God's Word. Thus we can well imagine upon what kind of a union document such a union will be based! Moreover, one of the member churches of the Consultation on Church Union, the United Church of Christ, adopted a Statement of Faith in 1959 which drew favorable comment from the Unitarians! The Unitarian Register calls "the new statement more unitarian than any theological pronouncement yet to come from an 'orthodox' denomination. To be sure the unitarianism is largely negative. The trinity is not mentioned. Jesus is not called God or Savior, but he is called Lord. God is an Infinite Spirit who is Jesus' father, but he is also the father of all men. Jesus is called a man. The Bible is not mentioned. In short, aside from the Madison Avenue language of the thing, there is nothing to roil the liberal Christians and much to annoy the conservative Christians in the United Church. It might, in fact, have been adopted by any Unitarian church of a century ago" (November, 1959). We shall let this suffice to show that the union within Reformed circles is by no means a God-pleasing unity.

And what shall we say about the situation in the Lutheran camp? Dr. Henry Koch describes the situation quite well in his essay on the Church. "At present there is a tendency to classify some of the non-fundamental articles of faith either as open questions or simply to term them non-church-divisive. They who argue thus know that the Church till now has taught and maintained that disagreement in non-fundamental articles is church-divisive. They would like to prove and achieve that some of the non-fundamental articles also be classified as non-church-

divisive. An article in question would be the Antichrist. And thus it goes on and on. One barrier after another is broken down. Disagreement in one article of faith after another is declared irrelevant for church fellowship. Such is the opinion of many Lutherans today. They, too, would be ready to depart from the firm convictions of the true Lutheran Church for the sake of expediency and the establishment of church fellowship with other Lutheran church bodies" (The Church: Its Essence and its Marks, Its Weapon and Its Enemies, Proceedings of the 40th Convention of the Synodical Conference, August 1948, page 72).

How significant that this position was openly advocated by the signers of A Statement just 3 years before Dr. Koch spoke these words! In Declaration No. 11 the 258 signers (Missouri Synod pastors and professors) of A Statement declared, "We affirm our conviction that in keeping with the historic Lutheran tradition and in harmony with the synodical resolution adopted in 1938 regarding church fellowship, such fellowship is possible without complete agreement in details of doctrine and practice which have never been considered divisive in the Lutheran Church." No God-pleasing discipline was ever carried out with the statementarians; consequently, we find their leaven of false doctrine permeated the entire Missouri Synod. The results? One denial after another of the Biblical truths by various professors and pastors within the Missouri Synod. It has become a house divided against itself: there are those who claim adherence to the old Scriptural doctrines and there are those who uphold positions contrary to the Scriptures; yet, it advocates union with The American Lutheran Church, another house divided against itself! After the 1938 resolutions referred to in A Statement were no longer to serve as a basis for the purpose of establishing fellowship with the American Lutheran Church, (See Proceedings of the Missouri Synod, 1947, page 510), nevertheless, in 1950 the Common Confession was adopted by a majority vote and was supposed to serve as a basis for establishing fellowship with the American Lutheran Church. Every faithful Lutheran, however, had to reject the Common Confession because it did not meet the requirements for a union document set forth in God's Word. Although the Common Confession was adopted by the Missouri Synod and the American Lutheran Church, it was shelved by the Missouri Synod because the American Lutheran Church united in 1960 with the Evangelical Lutheran Church and the United Evangelical Lutheran Church to form The American Lutheran Church (TALC). Obviously, it is just a matter of time until a union is brought about between the Missouri Synod and The American Lutheran Church. Already in the 1967 Convention of the Missouri Synod the resolution was adopted, "that the Synod recognize that the Scriptural and confessional basis for altar and pulpit fellowship between The Lutheran Church - Missouri Synod and The American Lutheran Church exists, that the Synod proceed to take the necessary steps toward full realization of altar and pulpit fellowship with The American Lutheran Church." Unfortunately, here as in the Reformed camp, we find an agreement to disagree with respect to Lutheran doctrines and practice!

III

THE ATTITUDE OF OUR CONFERENCE TOWARDS CHRISTIAN UNION

True Lutherans are genuinely interested in union, that is, a union in which there is full and honest agreement on the doctrines clearly revealed in Scripture. "The Lutheran Church loathes unionism, but loves, and labors for, a Christian union, Eph. 4:3. She is not separatistic. She charges those who separate from their brethren on the score of disagreement over adiaphora or of the prevalence of offenses in the sphere of life with sinful separatism. A. C. Ap., III, 112; VII and VIII, 49. F. C., Ep., X, 7. She is most patient with those who through weakness err in nonfundamental doctrines. We must 'overlook certain less serious mistakes, lest the Church fly apart into various schisms.' Ap., III, 111. Public harmony 'cannot last unless pastors and churches mutually overlook and pardon many things.' Ap., III, 122. She labors with the erring in great leniency and

patience. 'The time for breaking off fraternal relations with those also who err in non-fundamental doctrines arrives then only when they stubbornly refuse to accept the convincing testimony of Scripture.' F. C. W. Walther, *Lehre und Wehre*, 14, 109. 'I have no doubt that there are among you (at Zurich, Bern, Basel, etc.) right pious folk, who are sincere and want nothing but the truth; and I cherish the glad and firm hope that, though they are still somewhat entangled, in time, if we deal gently with these good weak people, God will happily end all error and misunderstanding. Amen.' Luther, XVII, 2162. Nor is the Lutheran Church content, after the divisions have taken place, to let matters rest as they are. She stands alone, but is not self-centered. She concerns herself with the reunion of broken Christendom. 'God, the Discerner of all men's hearts, is our witness that we do not delight and have no joy in this awful division.' Ap., Concl., Trigl., p. 451. 'We beseech Him to look upon the afflicted and scattered churches and to bring them back to godly and perpetual concord.' Ap., Preface, 19.16. F. C., Ep., XI, 22. 'It cannot be denied that we always sought peace and, as the psalm (34,14) says, pursued it, that we offered it and begged for it.' Luther, XVI, 928. 'We are prepared to confer amiably concerning all possible ways and means in order that we may come together.' A. C., Preface, 10. F. C., Th. D., XI, 96" (Pop. Sym. #13).

The lengthy quotation above has been given to show that our early Lutheran forefathers did not assume an attitude of indifference but were sincerely interested and manifested great zeal in seeking to promote true God-pleasing unity! And so also our forefathers in the Missouri Synod during the days of her orthodoxy. Free Conferences and intersynodical conferences were held already back in 1857. Pastors and laymen were invited to discuss their differences in the light of God's Word and the Lutheran Confessions. Dr. Walther stated the purpose in his *Lehre und Wehr*, II, page 4, "with view toward the final realization of one united evangelical Lutheran church of North America." We see how the Lord blessed the Scriptural testimony of those faithful teachers in a tangible way, namely, in the formation of the Synodical Conference in 1872.

This zeal for true Lutheran unity was manifested by Dr. Franz Pieper who stated in 1913, "We Missourians would like to do our share towards bringing about among the Lutheran church bodies of America a union . . . on the basis of the Scriptures and the Confessions." (Quoted in The Missouri Synod Layman and Lutheran Union, 1950, page 9). And, in an essay delivered in 1919 entitled, *Die Lehre von der Kirche in ihrer Anwendung auf unsere Zeit* (The Doctrine of the Church in its application to our present times) By Pastor W. Mahler, reference is made to these conferences. The question is asked, "When will these intersynodical conferences reach the goal of full unity?" And the answer is given: "That remains entirely with the Holy Spirit when this will happen. He gives the Word of Truth power and efficacy. Let us not therefore become impatient and expect an early outward union. Let us continue to testify to the Truth at these Conferences. We Missourians should be the last ones to shy away from these Conferences; for we know, that the testimony of the pure Gospel has divine power" (*Verhandlungen des Nebraska-Distrikts*, page 49). And note the position which these faithful teachers took! They insisted that fellowship must be based on unity in all doctrines clearly revealed in Holy Writ!

By God's grace, we take the very same Scriptural position taken by our Lutheran forefathers. We earnestly desire to establish a God-pleasing union with other Lutherans. This is stated in Article III of our Concordia Lutheran Conference Constitution as one of the objects of our Conference, namely, "Joint effort toward God-pleasing union with other Lutherans, namely such union as is based upon the unity of the spirit - full agreement in doctrine and practice on the basis of God's Word. (Acts 2:42; 1 Cor. 1:10; 3 John 8,9; 2 Tim. 1:8; 2 Tim. 1:16-18; Eph. 4:1-6)". This is also listed as one of our statements of purpose in our official periodical, "To seek out all who truly share our Scriptural position in doctrine and practice, and to urge the mutual public acknowledgement of such God-given unity. Thus we shall be able thereafter to practice a God-pleasing church fellow-

ship with them."

And let us remember that this plan for healing the breach among the Lutherans is the only God-pleasing one. It will not help to gloss over doctrinal differences or to compromise by using ambiguous words and phrases. Our position must continue to be that which is expressed in the Formula of Concord, Article XI, page 1095, "We have no intention of yielding aught of the eternal, immutable truth of God for the sake of temporal peace, tranquillity, and unity (which, moreover, is not in our power to do). Nor would such peace and unity, since it is devised against the truth and for its suppression, have any permanency. Since less are we inclined to adorn and conceal a corruption of the pure doctrine and manifest, condemned errors. But we entertain heartfelt pleasure and love for, and are on our part sincerely inclined and anxious to advance, that unity according to our utmost power, by which His glory remains to God uninjured, nothing of the divine truth of the Holy Gospel is surrendered, no room is given to the least error, poor sinners are brought to true, genuine repentance, raised up by faith, confirmed in new obedience, and thus justified and eternally saved alone through the sole merit of Christ." May God help us to do this! Amen.

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REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE ON SUNDAY SCHOOL MATERIALS

Dear Brethren:

During the year 1967-68 your Committee on Sunday School Materials has supplied leaflets and Sunday School worksheets for the children of our congregations. This has been the first repeat of Series I since the first printing in 1965-66. We were fortunate in that the series coincided well with the present Church Year so that only one new lesson leaflet, The Blind Man, had to be printed. The rest of the lesson leaflets was supplied from the stock on hand from the first printing, and there should be sufficient copies left for another first Series' run.

The mimeo stencils for our #1 worksheets were badly worn. Page #1 of this series of worksheets has therefore been in the process of being reworked. Since the pictures are now on the leaflets, it was decided to leave the pictures off of the worksheets because the artwork involved is quite time-consuming. In reworking these sheets the opportunity is being taken to correlate the material in the #1 worksheets more carefully with the material in the Sunday School printed leaflets.

During the past year the Committee authorized the printing of review lesson leaflets at the end of each quarter. Two of these review lesson leaflets with miniature pictures of the stories of the respective quarters have been printed, and quarterly review worksheets have also been made available to our congregations.

Projected program for the future: 1. Revision of present leaflets and worksheets as supply is exhausted; 2. Sunday School teachers' home study sheets; 3. Preparation of advanced Sunday School leaflets; and 4. Continuation of review lesson leaflets for all four quarters.

Respectfully submitted,
Rev. P. R. Bloedel, chairman

CONFERENCE PUBLISHING HOUSE REPORT
To the 1968 Convention

Dear Brethren:

We can but repeat what we have reported in previous conventions, namely, that there has been no further progress in this phase of our Conference endeavors. Lack of funds continues to be one of the chief reasons why we are not able to put into operation the plan which was proposed and adopted by the Conference in 1964.

The Committee recommends that Pastor Bloedel continue to operate the Print Shop in its service to the Conference in the areas approved by the 1964 Convention, such as: The Concordia Lutheran printing, Sunday School materials, and tracts; and that our congregations be encouraged to beseech the Lord to bless our continued prayerful efforts towards the eventual establishment of our own publishing house and to that end help build our Conference General Fund.

May the Lord of the Church graciously bless this undertaking according to His will!

Respectfully submitted,
Rev. E. L. Mehlberg, chairman
Rev. P. R. Bloedel

REPORT OF THE EDITORIAL COMMITTEE

Dear Brethren:

Since your Editorial Committee had no formal meetings during the past year, this report is simply to be regarded as the committee chairman's report.

By the grace of God we have once again been able to supply the homes of our brothers and sisters in Christ and to reach out to others with the printed word in the form of our conference publication, The Concordia Lutheran. The Lord has helped us to provide articles of edification, instruction, and exhortation on the basis of His pure Word as well as articles witnessing to our stand with regard to Scriptural doctrine and practice as Christians perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment. May this printed word continue to be a rich blessing to each of us as individuals, in our respective family circles, and among those who, though not one with us in faith, desire to follow the Savior and the pure teachings of His Word.

You will recall that last year a significant change was made in the preparation and dissemination of our official organ. It was determined to have it published quarterly instead of monthly, the reasons being 1. to reduce printing and mailing costs, 2. to give our pastoral contributors, several of whom are still necessarily burdened down with some secular work, more time to prepare articles and features and thus more equally to share in this effort, and 3. to improve the quality as well as the size of each issue.

The report of the Business Manager will provide us with information relative to printing and mailing costs of our quarterly publication. You will have noticed that articles have been supplied by a greater variety of our pastors and also from one layman through his pastor. These articles, however, have been arriving at the editor's desk much later than they should and consequently the periodical has gone to press and to subscribers at a date much later than originally planned. It is our hope to publish our paper no later than the second week of the quarter for which it is designated. This would, of course, mean that the articles for publication should be in the editor's hands no later than one month before the quarter begins. The first quarter deadline for articles should therefore be December 1st; the second quarter deadline, March 1st; the third quarter deadline, June 1st, and the fourth quarter deadline, September 1st. Our pastors and contributing laymen must orientate themselves to meet these deadlines if the second reason for a quarterly publication as stated in our last year's resolution is to be recognized as a cogent and valid reason. The quality of workmanship in our quarterly issues of The Concordia Lutheran as well as the quality of material presented in each issue remains essentially the same as in previous years.

There was no Concordia Lutheran printed for September, 1967. This was simply an oversight on the part of the editor in his preparation for the first quarterly issue for that year. There was also no material submitted to the editor for the September issue. The undersigned apologizes for the omission of this issue and since, at this date, nothing can be done to remedy the situation, the 1967 volume (Volume XII) is to be regarded as complete as is.

New insertion slips have been printed and are now in use informing the recipient of the fact that his subscription has expired or that the periodical which he has received is complimentary. The Complimentary Copy insertion slip is being inserted in all of the sample copies which are sent to the pastors of our Conference and made available, through them, to visitors in their respective churches. This insertion slip has a convenient order blank to be used by those visitors who desire to subscribe to our periodical.

Now may the Lord of the Church continue to bless this project of our united congregations that our membership may be edified thereby and that His Word may be spread abroad that others may know that although we have little strength, yet, His

Word is kept and upheld among us in its full truth and purity and that we might be a light to those who sit in darkness and in the shadow of death.

Respectfully submitted,

Rev. P. R. Bloedel

REPORT OF THE TRACT COMMITTEE

Dear Brethren:

Inasmuch as your Tract Committee has been unable to meet formally during the past year, this report also is to be regarded simply as the report of the chairman of this committee.

Last year, shortly before the 1967 convention of our Conference, your committee made available the Constitution of our Conference in a very fine printed form. This supply of Constitution booklets is ample, and they can be received at 20¢ a copy through the Business Manager of the Tract Committee. Also available in booklet form at 15¢ per copy is the document on the Church and Ministry which was ratified by the members of our Conference during this past year, namely, "This Scriptural Position We Still Hold." May the Lord richly bless the use of the booklets to the glory of His holy name!

Three problems present themselves relative to the effective functioning of your tract committee: 1. The preparation of tracts is time-consuming and thus tract topics must be chosen with the utmost care. 2. The preparation of tracts is costly and sufficient copies must be printed in order that a reasonable price may be set for any given tract. 3. The merit of certain tracts is dubious as observed on the basis of the slow consumption of tracts previously printed.

A suggested solution for these problems stated is simply this: The Conference in convention assembled should schedule a set number of tracts, should decide on the subjects to be treated, and should appoint authors for such tracts to be printed during the coming year.

The initial printing of such tracts could be made by letterpress, reproduction proofs pulled for photographing and for the preparation of offset plates for future runs.

May the Lord Jesus bless our efforts in making topics of a timely and useful nature available for our congregations and as a testimony of our doctrine and practice before those who are without!

Respectfully submitted,

Rev. P. R. Bloedel

AUDITING REPORT OF THE CONCORDIA LUTHERAN AND THE TRACT COMMITTEE

We have examined the books of the Business Manager of the Concordia Lutheran and of the Treasurer of the Tract Committee and have found them to be in good order.

Respectfully submitted,

Rev. O. W. Schaefer, chairman

Mr. Carl Palmquist

Mr. John Dirksen

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THE CONCORDIA LUTHERAN
Report of the Business Manager for the fiscal year from
June 1, 1967 to May 31, 1968

Cash On Hand June 1, 1967					\$ 252.29
Cash receipts from subscriptions					
6 New subscriptions	@ \$2.00	\$	12.00		
1 New gift subscription	@ \$2.00		2.00		
33 Renewals, 1 year	@ \$2.00		66.00		
4 Renewals, 2 year	@ \$4.00		16.00		
6 Renewals, 1 year gift	@ \$2.00		<u>12.00</u>		
50 TOTAL RECEIPTS				108.00	
TOTAL CASH ON HAND					360.29
Cash Payments					
Postage and stamps		\$	45.98		
Mailing permit			30.00		
Imprint authorization			15.00		
Bank charges			.15		
Printing inserts & subscription blanks			<u>53.81</u>		
TOTAL EXPENSES				144.94	
CASH ON HAND May 31, 1968					\$ 215.35

CONCORDIA LUTHERAN CONFERENCE PUBLICATIONS
Report of the Business Manager for fiscal year from
June 1, 1967 to May 31, 1968

Cash on Hand June 1, 1967					\$ 119.74
Cash receipts for tracts		\$	6.86		
TOTAL CASH ON HAND				\$ 126.60	
Cash Payments					
For tracts "This Scriptural Position. . ."			<u>55.91</u>		
CASH ON HAND May 31, 1968					\$ 70.69

Respectfully submitted,

Martin R. Luedtke, Business Manager

REPORT OF THE SEMINARY INSTRUCTOR
To the 1968 Convention

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Dear Brethren:

Again during the past year the Lord did not see fit to send us any students. I did receive several inquiries regarding the enrollment requirements and other details. The one inquiry came from Pastor R. H. Godfrey of Huntington Beach, California, and the other from Mr. David C. Linn, a student presently attending Northwestern College of the Wisconsin Synod. In both cases the necessary literature was sent and other pertinent information was given by means of correspondence.

Pastor Godfrey, among other things, inquired about a possible correspondence course which we might be able to offer him in the event he decided to join our Conference. We informed him that our Seminary arrangement presently does not provide that kind of instruction, but that if he found it possible to enter our fellowship, we would be glad to give his situation our careful and prayerful attention at this Convention in order to do what can be done in the interest of providing for his Seminary needs.

To date there has been no further response from either of these men. Pastor Natterer's CLU Report partly explained the reason why Pastor Godfrey is not pursuing the matter of Seminary instruction with us further, at least for the present.

We ask the Lord to continue to bless our efforts at providing adequate seminary instruction to our young men in the Conference, whose hearts He may choose to fill with the desire to enter this most blessed and necessary calling in life. To that end let us also continue to follow our Savior's gracious directive, Matt. 9:38: "Pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest that he will send forth labourers into His harvest!"

Meanwhile, on our part, let us gladly offer what gifts the Lord has placed at our disposal in our Conference in meeting the problem of a future ministry, that His name may be glorified and His Church furthered and extended among us at home and abroad, according to His will!

Respectfully submitted,

Rev. E. L. Mehlberg, Instructor

ANNUAL REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE ON MISSIONS

The Regulations of our Conference for this committee are set forth in the Constitution, Article IX, C; to which our delegates may wish to refer in their consideration of this report. Nevertheless, the overall regulation and highest authority for this work remains the revealed will of the Lord.

Our dear Savior tells us in the last chapter of Matthew: "All power is given unto Me in heaven and in earth. Go ye, therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost; teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world." He also commands and promises in the last chapter of Mark: "Go ye into all the world and preach the Gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned."

When we hear these words and think on them, it is easy for us poor sinful servants of the Lord to react to them in either of these two extremes: In our love and zeal for Jesus and the souls for which He lived and died, we may think that he requires us immediately to reach out into all the foreign countries where there are many well-known heathen; and, not being able to do this at once, be

troubled with feelings of great frustration or even resentment that he expects such things of us which we find ourselves unable to do. Or, seeing immediately that we cannot fully carry out this all-embracing will of our Lord, we may be tempted, in the weakness of our flesh, to conclude that, under our conditions today, in which we are not even able to do all that we should like to do for Jesus in our own local congregations, we need not be busy at all, for the present, in Christian mission work.

But, dear Brethren, let us not fall into either of these wrong extremes. For our dear Savior, our omniscient Lord and our sympathetic Brother, knows and understands much better than we do, both our love and the limitations that sorely vex and trouble us. And so He has, in His precious Word, also shown us how we are to proceed to do His will under these very conditions. He tells us, even as He told the disciples of old: "Ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth." (Acts 1:8). First of all, we are to be witnesses unto Him in Jerusalem; that is, our own locality where we are and live day by day. Let us be careful therefore to use these day-by-day opportunities to be witnesses of our Savior and his Word by word and deed. For "if we cannot cross the ocean and the heathen lands explore, we can find the heathen nearer; we can help them at our door." Then also, we are to be witnesses of the Savior in all Judea, our environs; then in Samaria, that is, we are to reach out farther; and finally, to the uttermost part of the earth; each sphere of activity to be added, as the Lord of the Church, in His grace, gives us opportunity. Or, as He also plainly teaches: "As we have therefore opportunity, let us do good." (Galatians 6:10).

Because we cannot immediately do all that we should like to do for the Lord Jesus in the way of Christian missions, let us not be discouraged, let us not become complacent and inactive, let us not stand still, but let us resolve in and from our hearts, to go forward as His witnesses as He gives us opportunity; and let us, as faithful stewards of His gracious salvation, so thing and plan ahead as we are now doing in connection with our seminary plans, that even as He supplies the opportunities, the open doors near and far, the laborers of His harvest to send forth where we cannot go, and the means to support and stand by them, we shall be ready to meet His every challenge. Thus, being ready and willing under each and every condition to do our own part faithfully, we may with ever joyful hearts commit our cause of Christian missions unto Him who is able still to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think. "Unto Him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus throughout all ages, world without end. Amen." (Ephesians 3:20-21).

Respectfully submitted,

Rev. H. D. Mensing

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ANNUAL REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE ON THEOLOGICAL EDUCATION

The regulations of our Conference for this committee are set forth in the Constitution, Article IX, B; to which our delegates may wish to refer in their consideration of this report. Yet the allembicing regulation and highest authority for this work remains the revealed will of the Lord concerning the Public Ministry of the Word and Sacrament. That inspired Word of God, above all, determines the work of this committee, even as it rules over our congregations and all of us individually; and that Word of God must be the chief consideration of you, the esteemed delegates to this convention, in your deliberations and decisions also concerning this important work.

In the Second Epistle to Timothy, our Lord speaks to us through His Apostle, giving us in these few words the nature and scope of this particular work: "Thou therefore, my son, be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus. And the things that thou hast heard of me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also." This work therefore is not something light or of little importance. It is not something that we may choose to do or not to do. It is not something we are permitted to do with complacency or mediocrity. It is not something that we can just begin to do in a manner still far from adequate and then let stand at a status quo. It is not something that we may just leave up to the Lord to do for us. No. This is a work which the Lord of the Church has ordained, a work which He requires us to do for Him in order that the Word of God may have free course among us and in the world; it is of such great importance that it is of all but absolute necessity to the continuance of His true church among us and the propagation of the Christian faith. It is the work of establishing and maintaining the Public Ministry in our midst. But more than this. It is the provision for additional men to be added to the ministry which now exists among us, so that the work may not stand still but go forward. And it is the provision for a future ministry, so that our children and young people and the generations to come may not, because of our neglect or complacency, lose the priceless treasure of the pure Word and Sacrament which the Lord has entrusted to us.

Now, more specifically, we find this work of our conference, in accordance with the above-quoted direction of the Lord, to comprise three particular categories, or separate, but necessarily related, endeavors; namely, first, that we find in our midst faithful Christian men who are suited to training for the Christian ministry; secondly, that we provide them with the best possible instruction and training so that, at the close of their seminary work, being both faithful in doctrine and life, and truly able to preach, teach, and apply the Word of Life, they are found fit to be entrusted with the administration of God's Word and Sacrament; and, thirdly, that we have, administer and support an active mission program, so that the graduates of our seminary can be used and supported in the Vineyard of the Lord, even though they may not be immediately needed to fill a pastoral vacancy in one of our congregations. We believe that this third category of the work is of utmost importance in coordination with the seminary instruction, unless the talents entrusted to us by the Lord in our young men and their nurture and training in the seminary work are simply to be "buried in the earth." Nevertheless, this being properly a part of our mission program, it is to be presented and discussed in connection with the report of the Committee on Missions. Let us here concern ourselves only with the first two.

We must first of all find faithful Christian men, most preferably for obvious reasons young men, who by native talent and upbringing are both suited to the training for the ministry and desirous thereof. During the past six years we have had no students in our seminary. Could it be that we have no faithful Christian young men in our congregations who are suited to and desirous of the Christian ministry? We would hesitate to answer "yes", for we do not intend to sit in judgment over the hearts of our brethren. But why, then, do we have no students?

We believe that it is an important part of our duty, not only of the Committee on Theological Education but also of our conference, our congregations, our pastors, our laymen, and our seminary instructor to find out the reason or reasons and then to take such appropriate measures as to put out of the way, as much as in us lieth, all such things as hinder this will of the Lord from being done. Let us therefore not simply wait for men to offer themselves for ministerial preparation or for godly parents to dedicate their sons to this work, but let us go out and recruit laborers for the harvest of the Lord, even as we hunt out prospects in the mission field, being ready and willing, with Christian understanding and patience, also to discuss with our brethren whatever may be in their way.

The second category or phase of this work, the very essence of it, in fact, is that we provide for our ministerial students adequate training through our conference seminary, so as to fulfill the requirements of our Lord's direction that we commit the Public Ministry to "faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also." As we proceed with this presentation and discussion, let it be understood that your Committee is speaking with complete objectivity, impersonally, and that therefore we are voicing or intimating no question at all about the personal sincerity, dedication, or qualification of our present instructor, the Board, the Committee, or of anyone in any way connected with the present administration of the seminary work. Also in our discussions of this report, we trust that our brethren will be completely objective, to this end only that, as good stewards of the Lord's talents, we put them to the exchangers, that He may in turn receive His own with usury (Matthew 25:14 - 30), or, in other words, that we make the very best and wisest arrangements possible, under the Lord, for the truly adequate training of His and our pastors, to His glory and the best welfare of His beloved church.

Many of us will recall that our very first attempt to impart theological instruction was by various of our pastors through correspondence. This was recognized by all of us as obviously inadequate. Then, at our 1958 and 1959 conventions, we laid the groundwork of our present seminary arrangement. This was an important and happy step forward.

Nevertheless, if we take in hand the Proceedings of the 1958 and '59 conventions, and read over both the CTE reports and the resolutions of those meetings, it is evident that we as a conference did not at that time recognize even this seminary plan and arrangement as an adequate answer to our needs, for the entire arrangement is recorded there as a temporary expedient. Now this temporary arrangement has been in effect among us for nine years. And, if we are going to strive from here on actively to recruit students, it is the opinion of your committee that the time is at hand for us also, simultaneously, to take stock of ourselves, to study our present set-up, and earnestly consider how it may still be improved, under the Lord, in order to become more attractive to a greater number of prospective students, in order better to handle a growing student-body, and in order more adequately to handle the gigantic and, educationally speaking, inhuman and impossible task of teaching, now by one dedicated and capable man, who is also a pastor, all those necessary courses of study that comprise the curriculum outlined in our Seminary Catalogue, which we urge every one of our delegates to read over at this convention.

Brethren, if it was necessary at the time of the Apostle Paul for the Christian pastors to be well-trained for the ministry, able to teach others also, and as this is emphasized also in these words: "Study to show thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the Word of Truth;" and if such completely adequate preparation for the ministry was necessary for the pastors of the past hundred years here in America; then even a still better preparation is necessary for our young pastors today, when there are many more false prophets and gainsayers to convict, and when the tenets of false religion, evolution, and atheism under the guise of higher education and much that is science

falsely so-called are spread abroad. Surely in view of the Lord's requirements for His ministry, and to safeguard the precious sheep of the Savior's fold in these times of vicious attacks upon Scripture and the apostacy of many Christians, we dare not let well enough alone; we dare not stay at the status quo; but we must go forward in this important work of the Public Ministry and its adequate preparation with all the care, wisdom, energy, and means that our Lord provides us.

Your committee acknowledges that it has at the present no plan to suggest toward this end. But we trust that our dear Lord, who has so richly and graciously helped us hitherto, will also help us further to do His will more fully and perfectly in regard to His ministry, if only we trustingly heed the command still to go forward in His Name. We therefore now commend this entire matter to our dear brethren, in convention assembled, for their earnest, brotherly discussion and for some definite action pointed toward forward movement in the Lord of the Church. And in order that we may be strong in the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ to do this work, we take this occasion to repeat here a challenging, strengthening word of God which was incorporated into our CTE report of 1958, when we first set about to establish a seminary. "We are in much the same position today as were the Children of Israel when they upon the Lord's command, departed from Egypt for the promised Land of Canaan. On the one hand, there lay before them the apparently impassable waters of the Red Sea. On the other hand, they were being pursued by the hosts of Pharaoh. But just then, when to human eyes everything seemed impossible, nothing was impossible for the Lord, who led them and who had told them the way in which they should go. And so we read, Exodus 14:13-15: 'And Moses said unto the people, Fear ye not, stand still, and see the salvation of the Lord, which he will show to you today; for the Egyptians whom ye have seen today, ye shall see them again no more forever. The Lord shall fight for you. And ye shall hold your peace. And the Lord said unto Moses, Wherefore criest thou unto me? Speak unto the Children of Israel, that they go forward!' "

Respectfully submitted,

Pastor H. David Mensing

Pastor P. R. Bloedel

David T. Mensing

Martin R. Luedtke

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REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE ON LUTHERAN UNION
To the 1968 Convention

Dear Brethren:

Early last Fall your chairman of the Committee on Lutheran Union wrote to Rev. C. A. MacKenzie, the chairman of the Commission on Doctrine and Practice of the Lutheran Churches of the Reformation, informing him and Rev. H. Romoser that the undersigned was now the newly-elected chairman of the Committee on Lutheran Union. He assured them, "We want you to know that we, on our part, stand ready to meet with you to discuss those things which separate us. We are willing to put forth every effort, as the Lord grants us grace, to bring about a reunification in harmony with God's Word." No response was ever received to this letter.

It is to be noted, however, that in 1966 Rev. C. A. MacKenzie informed Pastor Schaefer, who was then the Chairman of the Committee on Lutheran Union, that as soon as some definite conclusions were reached concerning their relationship with the Wisconsin Synod they would get in touch with us about the possibility of holding meetings with our group relative to doctrinal agreement. (See letter of October 5, 1966.)

Copies of the Theses on the Church and Ministry, adopted and ratified by our congregations, were sent to some of the pastors of the Lutheran Churches of the Reformation the early part of this year. Pastor H. Romoser responded with the words, "Thanks for the Concordia Lutheran copy and, in particular, for the excellent presentation on Church and Ministry. - Our latest Lutheran Churches of the Reformation Meeting with the Wisconsin committee produced no substantial results. - I told them what I thought of their 'enthusiastic' comment in The Northwestern Lutheran. - They find the Synodical Conference Proceedings, 1948, Interim Committee report, bothersome. - Especially the quote of the Synodical Conference 1908 essay by F. Pieper." A lengthy reply was also received by Pastor W. McLaughlin, who said in part, "My response is that both upon first reading it (in the Christian News) and also now, after a very thorough study of it and looking up all the references, I fully and unequivocally agree with it. This is the Scriptural position on Church and Ministry which I have always held since I became a Missouri Synod Lutheran in 1926." Perhaps we can infer from Pastor Romoser's comments that their meetings with the Wisconsin Synod are now reaching a conclusion. If so, we pray that they would soon get in touch with us about the possibility of holding meetings with our group as Rev. MacKenzie assured us in his letter of October 5, 1966.

It might also be mentioned in this connection that after consultation with the President of our Conference a copy of our Theses on the Church and Ministry was sent to Rev. Otten with the request that the same be published in his periodical, The Christian News. It was our opinion that this was an opportunity to give our Theses the widest possible dissemination. It was printed in the February 26th issue of that periodical. A copy of our Theses was also sent to the Confessional Lutheran. Their response indicated that while they appreciated receiving the Theses and would give them serious consideration, the articles in the Confessional Lutheran would be directed more to the issue of fellowship between the American Lutheran Church and the Missouri Synod.

Although another Lutheran Free Conference will be held next month in Minneapolis, Minnesota, your committee is of the opinion that there would be no advantage in sending representatives to this meeting chiefly for two reasons: 1. the topic to be discussed (the Doctrine of Christ) is not in controversy among conservative Lutherans; and, 2. the Doctrine of the Church and Ministry which is in controversy and which had been discussed in the last two Free Conferences has not been settled and should therefore be continued in this next Free Conference.

Last summer a contact was made with Pastor Godfrey of Huntington Beach, California, who had stopped off at Lebanon while on a vacation. After considerable correspondence your chairman arranged for a meeting on May 14th. Present at

this meeting in Huntington Beach were: Rev. P. Bloedel, your chairman, Rev. R. Godfrey, Rev. G. Nauman, and Rev. Tschopp. Unfortunately, there was a disagreement in the area of fellowship. However, assurance was given us that this matter would be given very prayerful study and a report of this study would be given sometime after July 14th. We pray that God the Holy Spirit may bless the study of His Holy Word so that a God-pleasing unity may yet result between them and us!

In March of this year a letter was received by a student at Northwestern College as a result of the appearance of our Theses in the Christian News. Since the college is located in Watertown, Wisconsin, Pastor Mehlberg was requested to contact this student. This he did in a letter in which he also stated that he would be glad to have a personal meeting with him at a time and place mutually agreeable. Pastor Mehlberg has informed me that he has not yet received a reply from this student.

In April, at the request of your chairman, Pastor H. D. Mensing agreed to represent him as chairman at a meeting between the Board of Doctrine of the Church of the Lutheran Confession and our Committee on Lutheran Union. After the preliminary arrangements were made a meeting was scheduled for the second week in May. Pastor Mensing and the other members of our Committee reported to me that they had met in four separate sessions, for two days with the Church of the Lutheran Confession Board of Doctrine. The meetings were held in an atmosphere of mutual Christian friendliness and genuine concern to find one another in the true unity of the Spirit. The agenda for the meetings was the doctrine of the Church and Ministry as set forth in the Theses of the Church of the Lutheran Confession and in the Theses of the Concordia Lutheran Conference, the purpose of the meetings, on our part, being to demonstrate the true Scripture doctrine. After the meetings both groups, however, were mutually of the opinion that they had borne no fruit at all from their discussions except that there after they understood one another's position all the more clearly, and it was mutually recognized that, being still definitely disagreed in doctrine there was no unity of the Spirit between them. There was mutual agreement only to leave the door still open between the two groups for possible further discussion.

May the Lord of the Church help us in continuing to manifest that wonderful attitude of Luther, "I shall not be found wanting in any respect if it please God; I shall do and suffer as much as I possibly can to achieve a true, sound permanent unity" (St. Louis Edition, Vol. 17, 2119f.).

Respectfully submitted,

Rev. M. L. Natterer, Chairman

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CONCORDIA LUTHERAN CONFERENCE

FINANCIAL REPORT

1967 - 68

	<u>General Fund</u>	<u>Seminary Fund</u>	<u>Sunday School Fund</u>
Cash Balance, June 1, 1967	\$ 235.82	\$ 193.51	\$.04
Add Cash Receipts:			
Peace, Tinley Park	187.80	92.80	133.75
St. Stephen's, Wilmot	1325.71	252.00	116.50
Christ, Milwaukee	782.00	70.00	220.00
St. Paul's, Coos Bay	138.00	50.00	66.00
St. Luke's, Seattle	252.68	18.00	115.00
St. John's, Lebanon	330.00	55.00	55.00
1967 Convention Service	60.46		
Memorial Wreath	3.00		
Sunday School Materials sold			94.15
Total Receipts	3079.65	537.80	800.40
Total Cash Available	\$3315.47	\$731.31	\$800.44
Less Disbursements:			
Concordia Lutheran printing	981.01		
Travel and Lodging	438.78		
Telephone	94.54		
Miscellaneous Expenses	90.48		
Sunday School leaflet printing			239.61
Sunday School work sheet supplies and mailing			169.90
Seminary Library		27.68	
Professor's Salary		600.00	
St. Luke's Subsidy	942.00		
Total Expenditures	2546.81	627.68	409.51
Cash Balance, May 31, 1968	\$ 768.66	\$ 103.63	\$ 390.93

V. K. Bloedel, Treasurer

1967 EQUALIZATION FUND COMPUTATIONS

CONTRIBUTIONS FOR EQUALIZATION PURPOSES:

St. Luke's, Seattle, Washington	\$ 25.00
Peace, Tinley Park, Illinois	15.00
Christ, Milwaukee, Wisconsin	14.00
St. Stephen's, Wilmot, South Dakota	<u>59.64</u>
Total contributed for equalization	\$ 113.64

CONGREGATIONS PARTICIPATING IN EQUALIZATION:	<u>Total Expenses</u>	<u>Amount Paid</u>
Peace, Tinley Park, Illinois	\$ 144.05	\$ 33.84
St. Stephen's, Wilmot, South Dakota	<u>190.00</u>	<u>79.80</u>
Totals	\$ 334.05	\$ 113.64

V. K. Bloedel, Treasurer

REPORT OF THE AUDITING COMMITTEE

Having examined the books of the Conference Treasurer, Mr. Victor Bloedel, the Auditing Committee is pleased to report that we have found them in good order. The balances in the various funds are such as are reported in the Treasurer's Report and are verified by a reconciliation of the bank statement and reported balances.

Respectfully submitted,
 Rev. O. W. Schaefer, chairman
 Mr. Carl Palmquist
 Mr. John Dirksen

MEMORIAL TO THE CONCORDIA LUTHERAN CONFERENCE, IN CONVENTION ASSEMBLED

- WHEREAS the congregations comprising the Concordia Lutheran Conference are apparently at present the only ones in our country which truly share our Scriptural position in doctrine and practice, in view of the fact that the overtures of our Conference to other congregations and church bodies toward a re-establishment of union on the basis of true unity have so far proved to no avail; and
- WHEREAS growth in individual congregations among us has been exceedingly slow, indicating more and more that the world today cares less for the true Word of God than perhaps it ever did, and that we, as a true but tiny remnant of the Lutheran Church can, humanly speaking, expect no great growth in these latter times; and
- WHEREAS there has been, in fact, some falling away of former brethren as the statistical reports of our Conference indicate; and
- WHEREAS the Lord's requirement that we make the wisest possible use of our stewardship compels us to face facts realistically and sensibly, the facts, for example, which here follow:
- 1) Each of our small congregations is having to maintain a separate physical plant at comparatively great expense for its size;
 - 2) None of our congregations is able fully and/or adequately to support the public ministry in its midst due to its small size, in spite of great dedication on the part of both our laymen and pastors; ("In the light of past discussions regarding preparation of a future ministry it was taken for granted in the writing of this Memorial that this statement would be understood strictly in an objective sense to include what would normally be considered adequate in our times, and this was not to constitute a subjective judgment of an individual congregation or pastor. The congregation desires it to be understood in this light, namely, in complete objectivity (for the background of this understanding please compare Proceedings, 1958, p. 26").
 - 3) Our younger brethren and sisters are tempted ever more severely to marry outside their faith, since there are very limited possibilities for close and endearing friendships within our local congregations because of their small size and also with our larger fellowship because of great distance. We, as Christians, should do everything possible under the Lord to alleviate such heavy temptations of our brethren;
 - 4) Although we officially operate a seminary for the training of a future ministry in our midst, we have had for the past six years no new student, having graduated one candidate in the summer of 1962. Furthermore, our one and only candidate has not been used full-time in our Conference since that time--a fact which raises the serious doubts in the minds of those who might consider seminary training that they likewise will not be used actively and full-time in the ministry of the Word and Sacraments, or that, even if they are called into our ministry, they may not be able to accept such call, because they cannot expect to have a normal workable living from the inadequate salaries which our faithful congregations are trying their best to give under our present arrangements--a fact which is indisputable under our nation's current economy;
 - 5) Our Conference, moreover, may experience great difficulty in obtaining recognition of our seminary by the Selective Service System under our present arrangement, which provides only one theological instructor for fourteen major theological subjects, and, with no

students currently enrolled, provides no continuous operation. If we do not take definite and immediate steps to correct these conditions, we may find ourselves in the very near future with a severe shortage of pastors and no time to begin first to train replacements, as it takes only little time for a congregation to disintegrate without full-time spiritual care; and this does not even speak of the mission-work and sought-after growth which, of course, should continually be on the hearts of us all;

- 6) The smallness of our individual congregations as well as of our Conference makes it extremely difficult to gain recognition either in our respective communities or in the country as a whole. This, in turn, results in less effective mission-work in our home areas; and

WHEREAS history demonstrates that amalgamations often can alleviate many of these problems; and

WHEREAS several such amalgamations in our Conference between, for example, our congregations on the west coast or between the congregations in the middle west, or even a total or general amalgamation of all our congregations could well result in one or two larger, more efficiently functioning congregations with a pool of six experienced pastors between them. To illustrate the result of a single amalgamation, the following could be achieved under the Lord's blessing:

- 1) A pastoral staff of pastor, assistant pastor and four full-time missionaries or some similar arrangement;
- 2) A seminary with a staff of from three to six and a possible immediate enrollment of students;
- 3) A pooling of the many different talents with which the laymen in our Conference have been blessed by the Lord;
- 4) A Christian Day School with an enrollment of at least sixty children;
- 5) An increased physical plant, accomplished by pooling present capital, to accommodate the increased number in attendance at divine services, as well as facilities for the educational programs mentioned;
- 6) An increased possibility of growth from within as well as from without with the Lord's continued blessing, without the constantly urgent need for increases in the financial burden each member is now required to bear; and

WHEREAS our congregation feels very strongly that this type of arrangements is a time-tested, sensible, practical, and feasible approach to the solution of our mutual problem and that we have presented this approach, the most efficient suggestion we could think of, objectively without proposing a particular location and time-table for amalgamation, so that it may receive likewise an objective, impersonal discussion at this convention, to the end that the problem of survival for the future may receive our prompt attention, "that the generation to come may know."

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that we ask the Conference to go on record as willing to study and to give serious consideration to the possibilities of amalgamation and urge our sister congregations to do likewise in their own midsts, and that it welcome, as does Peace Congregation, any positive, constructive suggestions toward the solution of the vexing problems outlined in this memorial;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that, in order to implement this study, a steering committee be appointed to receive, study, catalog and assemble all the

facts and proposals made during the coming fiscal year by our member congregations, to the end that a fruitful and more practical discussion of this general plan for the future may be held at the next regular convention, and that this steering committee make available to the member congregations at least ninety days before that convention a compilation of all information received during the year, so that all may have sufficient time to study the total picture before the time of convention.

Respectfully and fraternally,

Unanimously adopted,
April 7, 1968

PEACE EV. LUTHERAN CHURCH, Tinley Park,
Illinois

Henry J. Bochman, Elder-Trustee

H. Daniel Mensing, Secretary

UNPRINTED MEMORIAL

of Christ Lutheran Church, Milwaukee, Wisconsin

WHEREAS Christ Lutheran Church has continued to be richly blessed by the Lord and is therefore able fully to support its own pastor; and
WHEREAS the Seminary of our Conference during the past six years has not had a single student enrolled; and
WHEREAS the Conference Seminary in view of this fact has not been fully supported by all our member congregations;
THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that Christ Lutheran Church informs the Conference that it requests discontinuance of the \$50.00 per month for professor's salary; and
BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that in the event a prospective student would enroll in the Seminary, the professor's salary be reinstated and the Seminary reactivated.

Christ Lutheran Church
Milwaukee, Wisconsin

MEMORIAL TO
The CONCORDIA LUTHERAN CONFERENCE
1968 CONVENTION

WHEREAS, A Christ-centered Christmas is most desirable, and
WHEREAS, The current trend is to omit the Baby Jesus in the observance of His Birthday, and
WHEREAS, It is becoming increasingly difficult to obtain suitable orthodox children's Christmas programs, based on God's Holy Word, in its truth and purity; therefore be it
RESOLVED, That the Concordia Lutheran Conference publish a series of God-pleasing children's Christmas programs.

ST. JOHN'S LUTHERAN CHURCH
483 Tangent Street
Lebanon, Oregon 97355

Rev. M. L. Natterer, Pastor
George Varney, Chairman
Walter F. Fischer, Secretary

MINUTES OF THE EIGHTEENTH ANNUAL CONVENTION
 Concordia Lutheran Conference
 Held at Peace Ev. Lutheran Church
 Tinley Park, Illinois June 14-16, 1968

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The Eighteenth Annual Convention of the Concordia Lutheran Conference began on Friday, June 14, 1968, at 9:30 a.m. with a divine service in which Pastor M.L.Natterer of Lebanon, Oregon, read the edifying sermon on 1 Cor. 15: 58 which President E. L. Mehlberg of Milwaukee, Wisconsin, had prepared but did not deliver personally because he was under doctor's care due to throat surgery. Pastor H. D. Mensing, the host pastor, served as liturgist. The offering was received for the General Fund of the Conference treasury.

President Mehlberg officially opened the first session of the convention at 11:20 a.m. He presented first the agenda. The motion was carried to accept it with some revision.

The report of the Credentials Committee showed that 5 pastors and 10 lay delegates were present, representing 17 votes. The motion was carried that they be officially seated at this convention.

The preliminary report of the Registration and Excuse Committee was given by Pastor Mensing. It showed that 5 pastors, 10 lay delegates, and 45 visitors were in attendance, or a total of 60 people. The motion was carried to accept this preliminary report.

The Annual Report of President Mehlberg was then read by Pastor Natterer. The motion was carried to accept this report subject to the report of the Review Committee. The Vice-president then appointed Pastor Mensing, Mr. John Dirksen, and Mr. Walter Fischer to this committee.

The noon hour followed.

FRIDAY AFTERNOON SESSION - JUNE 14, 1968

This session began at 1:30 p.m. with a devotion led by Pastor Natterer. Hymn 427 was sung, and Isaiah 54 and a prayer were read.

Pastor Natterer then began the reading of his edifying essay entitled "Toward Union in the Unity of the Spirit."

The report of the Press Committee was given by Pastor Mensing. He stated that no report had as yet been released to the local press and that all matters to be published officially are first approved by the Press Committee. The motion was carried to accept this report.

The report of the Treasurer was given by Mr. Victor Bloedel. He presented the financial report for the month of May as well as an Annual Report. The motion was carried to accept this report with thanks, subject to audit. He also gave a report on the Equalization Fund of last year. The motion was carried to receive this as a supplement to the Treasurer's Report and to append it thereto for the Proceedings.

Recess followed.

After this the election of officers took place.

The following were nominated for PRESIDENT: O.W.Schaefer, M.L.Natterer, H.D. Mensing, and E.L.Mehlberg. Elected: O.W.Schaefer.

The following were nominated for VICE-PRESIDENT: M.L.Natterer, H.D.Mensing, and

E.L.Mehlberg. Elected: H.D.Mensing.

The following were nominated for SECRETARY: M.L.Natterer, E.L.Mehlberg, A.J. Cordes, and P.R.Bloedel. Elected: M.L.Natterer.

The following were nominated for TREASURER: Mr. Victor Bloedel, Mr. Glen Frerichs, and Mr. Walter Fischer. Elected: Mr. Victor Bloedel.

The following were nominated for BOARD MEMBER-AT-LARGE from the Middle West: Mr. Glen Frerichs, Mr. Daniel Mensing, Mr. Howard Wenck. and Mr. Carl Palmquist. Elected: Mr. Howard Wenck.

The following were nominated for BOARD MEMBER-AT-LARGE from the Far West: Mr. Walter Fischer, Mr. John Dirksen, Mr. Paul Luedtke, and Mr. Martin Luedtke. Elected: Mr. Walter Fischer.

The report of the Editorial Committee was given by Pastor Bloedel. He also read the report of the Business Manager of the Concordia Lutheran as prepared by Mr. Martin Luedtke. The motion was carried to accept these reports with thanks.

The report of the Tract Committee was given by Pastor Bloedel. The motion was carried to accept this report and to refer its recommendations to the Resolutions Committee.

The report of the Business Manager of the Tract Committee, prepared by Mr. Martin Luedtke, was given by Pastor Bloedel. The motion was carried to accept this report subject to audit.

The report of the Committee for Sunday School materials was given by Pastor Bloedel. The motion was carried to accept this report and to have its recommendations reviewed by the Resolutions Committee, which is to set the pertinent problems before the convention.

The report of the Committee on the Conference Publishing House, prepared by Pastor Mehlberg, was read by Pastor Bloedel. The motion was carried to accept this report with thanks, to commend our printer of sacred printing, and to request the Resolutions Committee to draft a recommendation with regard to the transfer of General Fund moneys to a special Fund for a Conference Publishing House.

The report of the Committee on Theological Education was read by Pastor Mensing. The motion was carried to adopt this report and that additional discussion on this report be included with the matter of the Memorial from Peace Church, Tinley Park, as the first item of business on Saturday morning at which time the CTE report is to be re-read as well as the resolution from Christ Lutheran Church, Milwaukee, concerning the Seminary.

The supper hour followed.

SATURDAY MORNING SESSION - JUNE 15, 1968

This session began at 9:15 a.m. with a devotion led by Pastor Schaefer. Hymn 294 was sung, and Ps. 119: 89ff. and a prayer were read.

The minutes of the Friday sessions were read and adopted.

As specified in the Friday minutes, the report of the CTE was no re-read by Pastor Mensing.

The motion was carried to hear the report of the Seminary instructor followed by the reading of the unprinted Memorial from Christ Lutheran Church, Milwaukee.

Pastor Mehlberg then read his Seminary instructor's report, and the motion was carried to accept the report.

The unprinted Memorial from Christ Lutheran Church, Milwaukee, was presented by Mr. Victor Bloedel. Following this the Memorial from Peace Lutheran Church, Tinley Park, was read by the Secretary of the Conference.

The elections continued at this point.

The following slates were presented for the EDITORIAL COMMITTEE:

<u>Slate A</u>	<u>Slate B</u>	<u>Slate C</u>
P. Bloedel	M.L.Natterer	E.L.Mehlberg
M.L.Natterer	P. Bloedel	H.D.Mensing
M. Luedtke	P. Luedtke	David T. Mensing

Slate A was elected.

The following slates were presented for the COMMITTEE ON THEOL. EDUCATION:

<u>Slate A</u>	<u>Slate B</u>
P. Bloedel	A.J.Cordes
H.D.Mensing	P. Bloedel
M. Luedtke	P. Luedtke
David Mensing	Glen Frerichs

Slate A was elected.

The following slates were presented for the COMMITTEE ON MISSIONS:

<u>Slate A</u>	<u>Slate B</u>	<u>Slate C</u>
E.L.Mehlberg	P. Bloedel	M.L.Natterer
J. Schmitt	David Mensing	W. Fischer
Royal DeLair	Carl Palmquist	Glen Frerichs

Slate C was elected.

The following were nominated for LAY MEMBER of the Committee on Lutheran Union: Mr. Julius Schmitt, Mr. David Mensing, and Mr. Victor Bloedel. Elected: Mr. David Mensing.

Recess followed.

Upon recommendation of the Nominating Committee the motion was carried that the incumbents of the Committee on Sunday School materials be retained.

The motion was carried to declare the elections unanimous and to thank the Nominating Committee for its efficient work.

The report of the CTE and the two Memorials mentioned previously were discussed further. The motion was carried that we consider in this connection God's command, His promise, our repentance, and our re-dedication according to His Word, the latter point leading us to the practical solution of the problem before us, namely, a future ministry and a more adequate Seminary set-up.

The discussion continued as follows:

- 1) God's command. Matt. 28 and Mark 16. The public ministry established by God's Word in various places. Matt.18: 15-18. Titus 1: 5. Acts 20: 28. 1 and 2 Tim. Titus. Matt.9: 38 (prayer).
- 2) God's promise. Matt. 28: 20. Is. 55. Rom. 10.

The noon hour followed.

SATURDAY AFTERNOON SESSION - JUNE 15, 1968

This session began with a devotion led by Pastor Natterer. Hymn 395 was sung, and Is. 40 and a prayer were read.

Discussion continued on

- 2) God's promise. Passages considered included Prov. 3: 6, Phil.4: 13, 2 Cor. 12: 9, and Is. 66: 2.
- 3) Repentance. It was stated that we have been "dragging our feet." We need to repent and move forward. Lam. 3: 40. Prov.28: 13.
- 4) Re-dedication. Joshua 23 and 24. Paul calls the Christian a "new creature." Mal. 3: 7ff. Luke 9: 62. 1 Cor. 15: 58.

Application was taken up next. It was stated that we ought to re-dedicate ourselves at home to our obligations toward the ministry and thus better encourage young men to prepare for this work. The Milwaukee Memorial gives the Conference opportunity to re-evaluate our Seminary set-up and is intended to challenge all our members in their obligations to the Seminary and to show their determination to move forward in the matter of providing for a future ministry.

The motion was then carried to place the Memorials from Peace Church and Christ Church into the hands of the Resolutions Committee for the formulating of a resolution to be discussed by the delegates.

Recess followed.

At this point Pastor Natterer continued the reading of his essay entitled "Toward Union in the Unity of the Spirit." Discussion followed.

The report of the Auditing Committee was given by Mr. John Dirksen. The motion was carried to accept it.

The report of the Auditing Committee with reference to the financial records of the business manager of the Tract Committee and the Concordia Lutheran was read. The motion was carried to accept it.

The report of the Committee on Lutheran Union was read by Pastor Natterer. During the discussion of this report Pastor Mensing gave a brief account of the meeting held last May in Eau Claire, Wisconsin, between the Union Committees of our own Conference and the Church of the Lutheran Confession. In the name of the Conference President Mehlberg thanked Pastor Mensing for so ably leading the discussions at Eau Claire. As to the forthcoming meeting of the Lutheran Free Conference in Minneapolis it was felt that there was no reason for our unofficial attendance because last year's topic on Church and Ministry was not agreed upon and will not be continued this year and thus the Conference has forsaken its ultimate objective of reaching full unity in doctrine and practice, through a sound position on the Holy Scriptures.

The preliminary report of the Budget Committee was given by Mr. Glen Frerichs.

The report of the Committee to review the Presidential Report was given by Pastor Mensing. The motion was carried to adopt it.

Upon recommendation of the Board the motion was carried to refer the changing of By-law 3, D to read "no later than one month" to the Resolutions Committee.

The motion was carried to adopt the recommendation of the Board that future conventions be so scheduled as to conclude on the 4th Sunday in June.

The matter of biennial conventions was discussed. Various expressions were given in favor of continuing annual meetings as evidence that we value our fellowship highly. The motion was carried to continue holding ANNUAL conventions.

The initial report of the Resolutions Committee was given by Mr. David Mensing. The first resolution concerned the Conference Publishing House. The motion was carried to re-submit this to the Committee for re-wording.

The next resolution offered by the Committee concerned the Memorials from Peace Church and Christ Church.

The supper hour followed.

SUNDAY MORNING - JUNE 16, 1968

In the convention communion service Pastor O. W. Schaefer of Wilmot, S.D. preached the sermon on Jude 3. The host pastor served as liturgist. The offering was used to help defray the convention expenses of the local congregation.

SUNDAY AFTERNOON SESSION - JUNE 16, 1968

This session began at 3:15 p.m. with a devotion led by Pastor Bloedel. Hymns 493 and 464 were sung, and Acts 4: 8ff. and a prayer were read.

The minutes of the Saturday sessions were read and adopted.

Pastor Natterer then read the concluding portion of his essay. The motion was carried to accept this essay with thanks.

Pastor Natterer continued with the report of the Committee on Lutheran Union. Several revisions were offered together with some clarifications. The motion was carried to accept the report in its revised form and to request that the matter of our attendance at the Lutheran Free Conference in Minneapolis be referred to the Resolutions Committee.

The Memorial from St. John's Lutheran Church, Lebanon, Oregon, concerning God-pleasing children's Christmas programs was presented. The motion was carried that this matter be given to the Editorial Committee for study during the coming year and for recommendation to the next convention. In the meantime our pastors are to send samples of their own Christmas programs to the Committee.

The Resolutions Committee continued with its report. The revised resolution concerning the Conference Publishing House was presented. The motion was carried to adopt it.

The second resolution dealt with the printing of tracts. The motion was carried to re-submit this to the Committee.

The third resolution concerned Sunday School materials. The motion was carried

to adopt this.

The fourth resolution dealt with the report of the CTE and the Memorials from Peace Church and Christ Church. The motion was made and seconded to adopt this.

The motion was carried to have an evening session starting at 7 p.m.

SUNDAY EVENING SESSION - JUNE 16, 1968

Discussion continued on the fourth resolution. The motion was then carried unanimously to adopt it.

Revised resolution no. 2 was presented. The motion was carried to adopt it.

The fifth resolution concerned contact between our Conference and members of the Free Church in Germany and the translation of our document on Church and Ministry into the German language. The motion was carried to adopt it.

The sixth resolution dealt with the Lutheran Free Conference in Minneapolis. The motion was carried to adopt it.

The report of the Committee on Missions was given by Pastor Mensing. The motion was carried to accept it.

The final report of the Budget Committee was given by Mr. Glen Frerichs. It is as follows:

Concordia Lutheran printing	\$ 1400
Traveling	200
Telephone	125
Miscellaneous expense	100
Sunday School leaflet printing	250
Sunday School Work Sheet supplies and mailing	175
Seminary library	30
Professor's salary *	600
Tracts etc.	50
Transfer to Conf. Publ. House Fund	400
Total:	<u>\$ 3330</u>

* Contingent upon convention's resolution and subsequent referendum regarding the Seminary. If the professor's salary is discontinued for this year, this budget item is still to be maintained as savings in the Seminary Fund.

The motion was carried to adopt this budget.

The seventh resolution dealt with officers and committees of the Conference. The motion was carried to adopt it.

The eighth resolution pertained to Peace Church for the use of various machines and to Mrs. E.L.Mehlberg for her assistance and offered our thanks. The motion was carried to adopt it.

The ninth resolution thanked the host pastor and the members of his congregation, assisted by the pastor and members of Christ Lutheran Church, Milwaukee, for

their generous hospitality and Christian fellowship. The motion was carried to adopt it.

St. Luke's Congregation, Seattle, offered to take care of the printing of the 1968 Proceedings. The motion was carried to accept this kind offer with thanks.

The final report of the Committee on Registration and Excuses showed that 5 pastors, 10 lay delegates, and 50 guests registered their attendance at the convention. An excuse was received by letter from Pastor A.J.Cordes. The motion was carried to excuse him full-time. The Committee also urged those pastors who in the future may not find it financially possible to attend a convention to inform their brethren ahead of time, so that they can be of assistance in such need. The motion was carried to adopt the report.

Invitations for the next convention are to be referred to the President, and our congregations are encouraged to give this matter serious and prayerful consideration.

Suggestions for essays and a motto for the next convention are to be sent to the Praesidium as soon as possible.

The tenth resolution concerned the changing of By-law 3, D, to "no later than one month." The motion to accept this change was lost.

The eleventh resolution thanked St. Luke's Congregation of Seattle for preparing the 1967 Proceedings. The motion was carried to accept this.

The minutes of the Sunday sessions were not read since they will be reviewed by the Praesidium as usual.

With all the business items attended to, the 1968 convention came to a close with Prayer and the Benediction.

Adjournment followed at 8:45 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

O. W. Schaefer, Secretary

RESOLUTIONS ADOPTED AT THE CONVENTION

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Resolution 1:

WHEREAS the Committee on a Publishing House recommended at the 1967 convention that Pastor Paul Bloedel of Seattle continue to operate the Print Shop in its service to the Conference in the areas of printing the Concordia Lutheran, Sunday School materials, and tracts; and

WHEREAS upon adoption of that recommendation by the convention, Pastor Bloedel has continued under the gracious blessing of the Lord to do this important work and has expanded the amount of material available to our congregations; and

WHEREAS in order to accomplish this expansion, Pastor Bloedel has increased the technical capacity of his shop by purchasing additional equipment at considerable expense to himself; and

WHEREAS the Conference has in the past earmarked no specific funds for the establishment of a Conference publishing house but has encouraged the member congregations to keep this goal in mind when considering their contributions to the General Fund of the Conference; and

WHEREAS the current report of the Conference treasurer shows a present balance of \$768.66 in the General Fund, a fact which we joyfully recognize with praise to the Lord for His continued abundant blessing:

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the convention authorize the Conference treasurer to effect a transfer of \$400.00 from the General Fund to a special fund for the purpose of helping establish a Conference publishing house; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that in the interest of good stewardship, the moneys of this special fund be kept in a savings account where they will be able to draw a favorable rate of return and be released by our Conference through the Board of Directors when a suitable plan for the use of these funds is recommended by the Publishing House Committee.

Resolution 2:

WHEREAS we recognize the importance of making available to our congregations tracts containing topics of a timely and useful nature, as well as material which will help testify of our Scriptural doctrine and practice to those outside our fellowship; and

WHEREAS the preparation of tracts is time-consuming and demands the utmost care in the selection of topics on the basis of current applicability and probable demand on the part of our congregations:

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the pastors of our Conference discuss the need for tracts with their respective voters' assemblies and solicit from them suggestions for tract topics and that these suggestions be sent by the pastors to the Tract Committee of the Conference for its consideration; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Tract Committee then select two topics for publication during the coming year and appoint authors to write these tracts: and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the initial printing of these tracts be done by

letterpress and that proofs be pulled for photographing and for the preparation of offset plates for future runs.

Resolution 3:

WHEREAS we recognize with praise to the Lord that our congregations have derived much spiritual benefit from the Sunday School materials published by our Conference; and

WHEREAS the Sunday School Materials Committee and, in particular, its chairman, Pastor Bloedel, have under the gracious hand of God maintained a great deal of Christian foresight in planning the program for the best possible educational value to children and teachers alike:

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Conference officially authorize the Sunday School Materials Committee to proceed with its projected program as outlined in its report to the convention, namely, 1) to effect revision of present leaflets and worksheets as the supply is exhausted; 2) to prepare leaflets of a more advanced nature for older children; 3) to continue on a regular basis to publish review leaflets each quarter, as these have been shown during a trial period this year to be of significant value in our Sunday School classes; and 4) to undertake the preparation of exegetical study helps for Sunday School teachers.

Resolution 4:

WHEREAS the report of the Committee on Theological Education brought to our attention the need for definite progress in the training of a future ministry: and

WHEREAS two Memorials vitally concerned with a future ministry in our Conference have been presented in this convention for its action; and

WHEREAS the present Seminary program for the training of a future ministry has been lying dormant for the past six years; and

WHEREAS we as a Conference should not expect to train pastors without providing them upon graduation with a field in which to labor, as well as full and adequate financial support according to God's Word; and

WHEREAS the average age of our pastors is considerably higher than the average age of our baptized membership; and

WHEREAS it is clearly the Lord's will that we do all in our power to preserve the public ministry of the pure Word for ourselves and our children and their children after them:

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Milwaukee Seminary Plan, originally inaugurated as a temporary measure in 1959, be declared no longer in effect, and that we heartily thank Pastor Mehlberg for his faithful and dedicated service to the Seminary in the past and likewise express our gratitude to the Lord for granting to his labors His gracious blessings; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Committee on Theological Education, together with Pastor Mehlberg because of his past experience, set up a Seminary plan with a faculty of at least two full-time theological professors and a small but adequate physical plant, together with the possibility of

engaging several part-time lay-instructors;

- a) that this Committee visit the member-congregations at their invitation during the year following this convention to present the plan in detail, to solicit their endorsement and support in the form of financial pledges, and to encourage the building up of our Seminary Fund in order that we may implement the entire plan as soon as possible;
- b) that this Committee also present the need for the full-time use of our Seminary graduates as well as their full and adequate support (financial) according to God's Word;
- c) that this Committee submit a report of its work and its recommendations to the next convention; and
- d) that Points I and II of this resolution be submitted to our congregations as separate propositions by referendum and be put into effect respectively by a majority positive vote.

Resolution 5:

WHEREAS one of the purposes of our Conference is to seek out all those who truly share our Scriptural position in doctrine and practice and to urge the mutual public acknowledgment of such God-given unity; and

WHEREAS Pastor Mensing may be given the opportunity next summer to travel to Germany:

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that we encourage Pastor Mensing, as our present chairman of the Committee on Lutheran Union, if the opportunity presents itself, to contact in the name of the Conference members of the Free Church in Germany who are truly interested in learning more about our position and our church-body in the attempt to discuss the possibility of arriving at a God-pleasing union between us; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Conference accept the generous offer of Pastor Natterer to translate into German the document "This Scriptural Position We Still Hold", so that also pastors of the Free Church in Germany may be informed of our position on the doctrine of Church and Ministry.

Resolution 6:

WHEREAS the purpose of a Free Conference among Lutherans who are not perfectly joined together in the same mind and the same judgment is to examine the doctrine of Scripture which separates them for the purpose of reaching a God-pleasing unity; and

WHEREAS the Lutheran Free Conference has as its expressed ultimate objective the reaching of "full unity in doctrine and practice" and the furthering of "full confessional unity in Christian doctrine and practice through a sound position on the Holy Scriptures," and

WHEREAS a free conference of this type ought not to be permitted to degenerate into merely a gathering of "conservative" Lutherans of varying degrees who desire to discuss topics upon which all are agreed - thus acquiring

for itself a unionistic character, and

WHEREAS after having presented the doctrine of the Church and Ministry for deliberation and debate to its last two meetings, the Lutheran Free Conference did not reach full unity on these matters and did not establish a line of demarcation between those who accept one position, those who accept another, and those who hesitate between two opinions; and

WHEREAS the Lutheran Free Conference has now forsaken the continuation of discussion on the doctrine of the Church and Ministry in order to pursue a new topic, namely, the doctrine of Christ, which is not in controversy among conservative Lutherans:

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that our Conference make known through its President and Vice-president to the proper officials of the Lutheran Free Conference that none of our membership will attend as participants in their proposed meeting in Minneapolis; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that as soon as it becomes evident to us that the Lutheran Free Conference has returned to its ultimate objective as stated above, which is our earnest prayer, we then reconsider sending representatives to its meetings; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the President and Vice-president of the Conference send a copy of this resolution to the Planning Committee of the Lutheran Free Conference together with a cover letter over their signatures.

Resolution 7:

WHEREAS the officers, standing committees, and appointed committees have with the continued blessing of the Lord of the Church faithfully serve our beloved Conference during the past year:

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that we express our sincere gratitude for all that these brethren have wrought in their dedicated Christian service to our Conference in the past year of grace; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Holy Spirit grant a rich measure of His grace to those brethren who have been selected in this convention to hold positions of leadership among us for the coming year, so that all they think, say, and do may be in accordance with the oracles of God, to His glory, and for the furtherance of His Kingdom among us.

Resolution 8:

WHEREAS a convention of this nature requires the availability of office and business machines for the use of its committees, as well as secretarial services for the typing and duplication of reports and resolutions:

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that we express special thanks to Peace Ev. Lutheran Church for putting a wide variety of such machines at the disposal of the convention and to Mrs. E. L. Mehlberg for her able and generous help in typing and duplicating materials during convention sessions.

Resolution 9:

WHEREAS Peace Ev. Lutheran Church of Tinley Park, Illinois, has shown itself to be a most gracious host to the 1968 convention of the Concordia Lutheran Conference by extending to delegates and guests Christian hospitality in the church and in the homes of its members; and

WHEREAS we were privileged to enjoy not only nourishment for our bodies through the dedicated service of the ladies of the congregation but especially received in rich abundance the Bread of Life as nourishment for our souls; and

WHEREAS Christ Lutheran Church of Milwaukee, Wisconsin, graciously shared with Peace Congregation the expense of hosting the convention; and

WHEREAS our devotions and divine services were beautified by special organ and choral music to the praise of our Lord and Savior, the Head of His Church:

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Concordia Lutheran Conference express its wholehearted gratitude to the pastor and members of this congregation for their most liberal hospitality and Christian fellowship and to the pastor and members of Christ Lutheran Church of Milwaukee for their generous financial help in this undertaking, all of which contributed to the success of the convention, to our spiritual edification, and to our physical comfort; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Conference especially thank Mrs. H. David Mensing and those who assisted her, namely, Mrs. Paul Luedtke and Mr. Jim Luedtke, for serving as organists for this convention, and that we express our gratitude also to Mr. H. Daniel Mensing, musical director, and the youth present from our various congregations for the choral offerings which enhanced the devotions and services held during this convention, and that special thanks be given also to Mr. and Mrs. Lloyd Martin for the kind use of their home and its facilities for the meals served during the convention.

Resolution 10: (Note: this was defeated.)

WHEREAS it has been found in recent years most difficult for the officers and committee chairmen of the Conference to comply with By-law 3, D, concerning submission of preliminary reports to the President of the Conference no later than two months before the time of convention; and

WHEREAS the Board of Directors of the Conference at its most recent meeting recommended the amendment of this By-law to allow more time for the submission of reports:

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that By-law 3, D be amended as follows: strike the italicized word two and substitute for it the word one.

Resolution 11:

WHEREAS St. Luke's Congregation assumed the responsibility of preparing the stencils for the Proceedings of the 1967 Convention, and for the mimeographing and assembling them:

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that we heartily thank these brethren for this labor of love in our behalf.