



Lutheran Synod Quarterly

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A YEAR OF DECISION!

Without a doubt the year 1962 will be one in which far-reaching decisions will be made. This applies not only to our Nation and the rest of the Free World, as far as political matters are concerned, but particularly to the Lutheran Church here and abroad. We have in mind especially the situation that prevails in the Evangelical Lutheran Synodical Conference.

For those who have been, and still are, affiliated with the Synodical Conference it is no exaggeration to say that "all eyes are fixed on Cleveland." When the Lutheran Church - Missouri Synod holds its triennial convention there next June it will be faced, as far as human judgment can discern, with making decisions that will have a very fateful bearing on the future course of the Lutheran Church through-out the world. For one thing, the Missouri Synod must react to the severance of fellowship relations with it by the Wisconsin Synod, as well as the proposal of our Synod to dissolve the Synodical Conference. Whatever action it takes will, in a large measure, determine the future course of orthodox Lutheranism. It is difficult to see how the Missouri Synod can fail to come to grips with the question as to the course it wishes to follow -- the road that leads to increasing liberalism with all that that implies for her far-flung membership, or a path that will lead to a restoration of the conservative and confidence-inspiring position that in days of yore set her apart as a church body which, because the Scriptures so required, dared take an unequivocal stand, no matter how unpopular it might be.

Not to be overlooked in this "Year of Decision" on the part of the Missouri Synod is the role that the so-called "State of the Church Conference" is playing in its effort to bring its Synod back to her one-time soundly Biblical position in doctrine and practice. Should this group by the grace of God be enabled to rescue the parent body from being dashed to pieces on the rocks of liberalism and a false intellectualism, the future of our Synod would seem to be less strained and complicated. If the eleventh hour protest by this aforementioned group fails, then we and those affiliated with us in spirit as well as in confession will have some trying days ahead of us, in that we shall need an abundant measure of wisdom from on High to counsel and aid those who are of one mind with us and to keep our own membership from becoming confused and bewildered by the breaking down of former ties and associations.

If Cleveland proves to be a convention of evasion -- which hardly seems possible -- or compromise, or one that makes it evident that the Lutheran Church - Missouri Synod does not wish to abide by her former well-known confessional stand, then also our brethren overseas will have to make some painful decisions. Thus far they have perhaps not appreciated the seriousness of the developments within the Missouri Synod, which developments have led us as well as the Wisconsin Synod to take some unpopular but necessary steps in the matter of fellowship relations. The question these Lutheran bodies abroad, today still affiliated with us, must answer is whether they can with a good conscience countenance teachings and practices in the body with whom they have been in fellowship and which they themselves have in numerous ways criticized with unabashed frankness. Though it be considered uncharitable to mention it, or even to think of it, our Lutheran brethren outside the United States must ask themselves whether numbers and material benefits are any part of the standard by which they would determine what course they should follow for themselves, or whether it is to be the divinely inspired and inerrant Word alone and to which they have professed a commendable and genuine loyalty. 1962 may well become the year of decision for them too.

Perhaps the fore-going may seem to breathe a spirit of pessimism and despair. Were it not for the fact that the Lord of the Church is still mindful of His own, one might well lose all hope. However, He through His apostle tells us, "Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and today, and forever," (Heb. 13,8) and therein lies our hope and confidence. Knowing that He is still Lord over all, that it is His cause with which we are concerned, His work we are trying to carry on in our humble way, His saving Name we through that work would make known at home and abroad, we can confidently believe that our efforts will not be in vain. In fact, that is exactly what He in His Word tells us, that since we in Him have the victory over sin and death, "Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye steadfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labor is not in vain in the Lord." (I Cor. 15, 58)

May that be the source of our comfort and strength as we go forward into the new year with its new problems, new trials, new challenges, but also new grace and blessing. Whether we be engaged in shepherding many or few souls, in teaching old or young, in writing for the simple or the more informed Christian, or in not being able to do much more than to give of our means for the support of the various aspects of this Gospel-work -- one thing we all alike can do is constantly and fervently to intercede for our dear Lutheran Zion before the throne of grace. It is "the work of the Lord" in which we all are engaged, and the Savior in Whose Name we live and labor is the same gracious, compassionate, almighty, and abundantly-blessing Lord today that He was during what we might call the more glorious days of the conservative Lutheran Church. Therefore, we shall not be alone, or without strength and guidance. May our prayer then be, "The Lord our God be with us, as he was with our fathers: let him not leave us, nor forsake us." (I Kings 8, 57) With that hope and in that frame of mind the Lutheran Synod Quarterly, with the help of our ever-the-same Lord and Savior, will do what it can to serve you in the coming Year of Decision by keeping you informed on current happenings and developments in the Church, especially the Lutheran branch of the same.

M. H. Otto

"KING SVERRE'S ECCLESIASTICAL CONTROVERSIES"

Part VI

(Continued from Sept. issue)

SVERRE'S REPLY IN THE SPEECH AGAINST THE BISHOPS

At that crucial time it was necessary for Sverre to act surely and quickly, and he did. His courage rose with the danger, and he found the most effective means of answering the attack of the Pope. His answer came in his Speech Against the Bishops, a document written in the Norwegian language. In it he appeals to the Norwegian people, places before them the principles involved in the controversy, shows them the fallacies of the clergy and the arrogance of their claims, and asks the people to judge.⁸⁸

Although Sverre did not write the document himself, he unquestionably determined its contents and is therefore largely responsible for it. Paasche finds in it "Sverre's vigorous style" of writing, so that the work was "clearly composed in Sverre's nearest presence, surely with his own help." Paasche believes that the one who did the actual writing was an ecclesiastic who had recently studied at the University of Bologna, and who therefore had the benefit of up-to-date knowledge of church law.⁸⁹ The writer could well have been Einar Prest, a son-in-law of Sverre himself, and an ecclesiastic.⁹⁰

It is evident that the Speech Against the Bishops is influenced by the Decretum Gratiani, a scholarly work on church law, which appeared in about the year 1140.⁹¹ Such influence in no wise rules out the fact that the document in reality expresses Sverre's own views on the matter. With justice Bang asserts: "This speech . . . in regard to its spirit and its basic ideas was unmistakably inspired by Sverre himself."⁹² It was read to the people at their gatherings, and it must have made a profound impression on them.

Bang furthermore lists the three chief points of the Speech Against the Bishops:

1. The kingship is of divine origin as well as the church.
2. Sverre is in the right in his conflict with the bishops. (The hierarchy tried to extend their rights beyond the limitations laid down by the old law.)
3. If anyone is excommunicated unjustly, such an excommunication is in itself dead and powerless, since it is after all the righteous God who judges.⁹³

In our discussion of the Speech Against the Bishops, we shall quote a number of portions of the same, some more at length, others more briefly, and also make observations regarding them. We shall refer to Sverre as the author of it, since it presents his views.

⁸⁸Gjerset, op. cit., p. 399.

⁸⁹Paasche, op. cit., p. 195.

⁹⁰Øverland, op. cit., pp. 278 f.

⁹¹Koht, Innhogg og Utsyn i Norsk Historie, p. 165.

⁹²Bang, op. cit., p. 106.

⁹³Loc. cit.

Sverre begins by invoking the presence and blessing of Almighty God. Then he expresses the hope that what he states will be understood. Thereupon he uses figurative language, comparing Christ and the Holy Church to a complete human being, and various classes of men to the members of the body. (We are quoting directly from the translation without changing or attempting to improve the language. The translation is by J. Stephnton.)

The foundation of a right understanding is, that Christ and Holy Church make one complete body, perfect and entire, with all its members sound. Christ Himself is the head, the Church is the trunk of this body. The eyes should be our Bishops, who should point us to the right way and the safe road, free from all erring paths, and should moreover have a careful oversight of all the members. The nostrils should be the Archdeacons, who should perceive and scent all the perfume of righteousness and sacred truth. The ears should be the Deans and Provosts, who should hear and decide causes and difficult suits in holy Christianity. The tongue and lips should be our Priests, who should preach to us sound doctrine, and themselves afford good examples by their conduct. The heart and breast should be the Kings, whose duty lies in solicitude, in deliberating and in acting, in emboldening and defending all the other members. The shoulders and back and loins should be the Earls and great Chiefs, to bear and lighten every burden that is to be borne. The arms should be the Barons, to be a sure aid to both breast and shoulders. The forearms and hands should be the Knights and Guardsmen, and other warriors besides, who should be the weapons for the protection and defense of the breast and all other members. The stomach and bowels should be the Monks and Friars, who should taste and eat only the food from which the whole body should receive nourishment and strength. The legs and arms should be the Yeomen and Commons, who should support this body by their labour and all their toil.⁹⁴

That is indeed a striking picture of the members of the church. He uses an extended metaphor comparing the offices with the members of the body. If everyone stayed in this place and did his duty, all would be fine, according to Sverre. But that has not been the case, he says, and as a result confusion and harm have been caused in the church. In the next paragraph he continues:

But now exists the evil, that all members suffer change in their nature, and each forsakes the office and service which it should perform. The eyes look sideways, and see dimly. The same scales have fallen upon the eyes of our bishops that fell on the eyes of the Apostles the night God was taken. The same drowsiness and heaviness is come upon them, and they see all things as in a dream, where they distinguish neither clear light nor true appearance. The nostrils perceive only a stench, and not a perfume or sweet smell. The ears are now dull of hearing, and can hear neither truth nor

⁹⁴Speech Against the Bishops (Anecdoton Sverri), in Appendix II of The Saga of King Sverre, translated by J. Stephnton, pp. 241 f.

good sense. Indeed truth is neither heard nor seen. Our bishops and other rulers, who should watch over Christianity, are blinded by covetousness, excess, ambition, arrogance, and injustice. There have now arisen bishops such as those whom God Himself slew aforetime, Hophni and Phineas, sons of Eli, High Priest of Shiloh, who did violence to the holy sacrifices which the people would offer to God, and seized with wrong and robbery all His offerings and holy sacrifices from God's holy people. And it has now come to pass that in the same manner our tithes and charitable offerings are demanded with threats and ban and excommunication. We are urged to build churches, and when they are built we are driven from them like heathens. We are urged to undertake the cost, but are given no rule over them. Sins and offenses into which men fall are used as rent-producing farms; sinners are not chastized with right punishments, as every one is at liberty to compound for his sins if he wishes, for silence is at once kept when the sanction of the law; but where the law fails to apply, it is taken unjustly and by laying charges against us; and the wealth that is obtained and amassed is removed out of the country on an evil errand, for it is transmitted to Rome to purchase excommunications and anathemas, which are sent to our land as recompense for our Christianity and the consecration of churches. These are the gifts and presents brought to us in return for our tithes and other property; we are given gall to drink instead of wine, and poison instead of God's blood. The mouths and lips of our priests have begun to stammer, their tongues to be speechless; for either they are altogether silent, or utter what is worse than nothing. They themselves afford no examples but what are evil and come of unbelief; they surpass the ignorant and foolish in deceiving men's wives, daughters, and kinswomen; they are not ashamed to bear false witness, they commit perjury, they practise legal quirks, and are zealous in all wrongful greed; they call that right which is wrong, and that wrong which is right, and so lead all folk astray, and themselves too, with their deceitful persuasions. Should they do us wrong and we ask reparation of them, they say they have no answer to give, no reparation to make, just as if we had been created without rights where they are concerned, meet to suffer from them every outrage they desire to inflict upon us. So acted Hophni and Phineas towards God's people in Shiloh. So acted the two false priests who condemned Susannah in Babylon because of their own lust and not according to her desert. It is clear that the grave-bands and the napkin which God loosed from the face of Lazarus when He called him from his grave are now bound about the faces of our teachers. They point us to no ways but those of death; some of them supply our land with excommunications and anathemas; some collect a crowd together, with weapons and shields deprive us of our property and our freedom, incite themselves and us to much slaughter, and so wish to destroy alike our bodies and our souls.⁹⁵

⁹⁵ Ibid pp. 242 f.

This is indeed a pointed attack against the clergy, especially the higher clergy, of Norway. The statement made about the eyes, in the second and third sentences of the paragraph, are undoubtedly directed primarily to Archbishop Erik, whose blindness according to Sverre was not only physical, but also religious. The statement concerning the building of churches by Sverre and others, and the refusal on the part of the clergy to allow owners to have jurisdiction over them, has reference to Sverre's dispute with both Eystein and Erik on the matter. The last sentence is without doubt an allusion to the rebellion of the Bagler party against Sverre. In this section, as elsewhere, he looks upon the idea of "everything for Rome" as a dangerous one.

However, he does not lay a great share of the blame on the Pope. He says that the Pope does not know much about what happens in their country. Rather he blames the bishops for having misrepresented things to him.

Now although we receive rebuke from the Bishop of Rome, or Cardinals, yet can we not impute it to the Pope, for he neither knows what goes forward in this land, nor in any other that lies far distant from him. Our bishops and clergy are to blame, for in their enmity to us they carry gossip and lies to the Pope. He thinks they bring truth, while they bring only false and lying statements. There is a King in the land of whom all men know whether he has done any wrong to Holy Church or the clergy; and we think that few kings have granted fuller right or freedom to the clergy, or have better protected holy establishments than this King, if truth be told. Now, inasmuch as this is true, then it is evident that if they have borne evil report of the King from Norway to the Pope, they have borne it with lies and evil guile, and have thereby done great injury to the King and to all the people, without any gain to themselves. And though the Pope has pronounced sentence, his condemnation will not touch the King or any innocent man in the land, for God is ever a righteous judge, and His judgments are according to right, and not according to the iniquity of lying and deceitful men.⁹⁶

Thereupon, to prove his point, particularly that raised in the last sentence, Sverre quotes three Popes: Urban, Gregory and Calixtus, and two of the greatest church fathers: St. Augustine and St. Jerome. All state a just person when unjustly accused need not be concerned, and really does not suffer punishment, for he is innocent. He then continues:

These examples, and many others, bear witness that the wrong judgments cannot inure us, though the deceitful wickedness of our clergy has had the power to put us to shame, for they flee from us and from this land as if we were heathen. Either the wise rulers of the Holy Church and Christendom have pronounced no excommunication though they have been urged, or else excommunication has been pronounced, and it has certainly fallen upon those who by injustice and wickedness requested it, and has not fallen upon us, who certainly deem ourselves innocent, and certainly believe ourselves

⁹⁶ Ibid., pp. 243 f.

exempt from all excommunication. And though we utter all these things in general terms, as if they referred to almost all the clergy, yet we would have it known that we refer to those only who recognize in this injustice to us the description of their own error, falsity, and treachery; these are not attributed to all, though more are involved than gain by them, and more than as a comfort to us. We would ask of those who do not recognize their own description in these wrongs towards us, that they would have no following with those who have now followed erroneous counsels. As for those who recognize themselves in this injustice to us, let them abandon it, and practise justice instead, and not act so as to draw upon themselves in this world the hatred of all who observe their conduct. Let them consider and take to heart the good example of the yeoman who commits not his sheep to the charge of a shepherd that the shepherd may sell them or slay them or chase them over the fell, or break their feet to pieces, or tear off their wool, but rather that he may lead them to good pastures and protect them from all danger. And if he lose one of them he should then search through every wood with much toil until he finds it. He must not drive them out of their good pastures away from the yeoman and into the mouth of the ravenous wolf. All should know, clerical and lay, that the clerical leaders are not set over God's people to tread scornfully upon their necks, to cast shame in their teeth, to regard them as good to be pillaged and wrongfully plundered of their goods. Still less are they set over God's people to turn them away from God to hell, as into the mouth of a ravenous wolf, either by wrongful ban and anathema or by false persuasions. They should rather, on God's behalf, watch over those who desire to be Christians, and if one is so foolish as to walk of himself in the paths of error, they ought to lead him back by fair persuasions, and gentle teachings and loving counsels.⁹⁷

Sverre continues by showing from Holy Scriptures and Decretals that the royal power is divinely instituted, and that he exercises the highest authority in church and state by God's appointment. He states:

All of you, clerical and lay, shall now know and perceive that kings and secular chiefs are not created to oppose God and Holy Church. God Himself binds secular rule to office in Holy Church, whereby kings exercise authority and guardianship in Holy Church; and it becomes their duty to demand large service from the stewards of the Church and to receive it.⁹⁸

After having quoted many passages from the Bible and also many of the writings of the church fathers, Sverre sets forth his thesis that the king has his authority from God, and that he is responsible to God in his rule. Sverre differs from both Gregory VII and Dante in his view on the relative position of Pope and King. Gregory said the Pope was above the king; Dante said each was supreme in his own sphere; and there can be no

⁹⁷ Ibid., pp. 245 f.

⁹⁸ Ibid., p. 248.

doubt that Sverre placed the king above the Pope even, inasmuch as the king had the responsibility of everything, including the church, to answer for to God. One cannot arrive at any other conclusion after reading the following quotation:

So great a mass of examples show clearly that the salvation of a man's soul is at stake when he does not observe complete loyalty, kingly worship, and a right obedience; for kingly rule is created by God's command, and not after man's ordinance, and no man obtains kingly rule except by divine dispensation. A king would not be more powerful or mightier than others if God had not set him higher than others in His service: for in his kingly rule he serves God and not himself. Now, inasmuch as duty binds him to answer to God Himself, and to render an account of His protection and care of Holy Church, according to the Cause already quoted; and as duty binds a hearty worship and a guileless loyalty, therefore we cannot understand with what reason our clergy wish to remove the King from the oversight that he should have in Holy Church, and for which God requires him to answer, when we certainly know that men of inferior rank to the King have to exercise power in Holy Church. For knights and guardsmen, and even yeomen, have oversight in Holy Church if they are patrons of churches. There are three cases in which a man comes to have such oversight in Holy Church -- the first, if he inherits an estate after his father or mother, or other kinsmen, and the upholding of the Church goes with the inheritance; the second is when a man buys an estate, and the upholding of the Church goes with the lands which he buys; the third is when a man builds a church at his own pains and cost, and endows it with lands for its future upholding. It must now be made clear, so that all may fully understand, what oversight it is which those whom we have just mentioned lawfully exercise in Holy Church, according as it is said in xvi, causa and ultima questione ejusdem causa, and found in other places in the writings of the Apostles (Popes) themselves: (Latin omitted here.) "This oversight in Holy Church has to be exercised by the sons, grandsons, or other fit heirs of the man who built the church or has been its upholder. Those who are rightful heirs shall have a care that no one through deceit or transference remove any things which the upholders of the Church gave to it at the outset. That which was set apart for the maintenance of the priest at the beginning shall so remain; and that which was set apart at the beginning for tar, for lights, and for vestments in the church, shall so remain. And if the priest makes any change in what was thus set apart at the beginning, so that the church is injured thereby, then shall the patrons whom I have just named make the matter known to the Bishop, and ask him to devise a remedy, if they themselves are unable to devise one; and if the Bishop will not devise a remedy, or if he himself does such things as those I have mentioned, then shall the patrons of the church make the matter known to the Archbishop, and ask him to devise a remedy. If the Archbishop will not

devise a remedy, or if he himself does such things, then the patrons lay the matter before the King, and cause him to rectify it by authority which God has placed in his hands." Now, this bears witness that the King is set above all other dignitaries; for the King has here to direct the Bishop or the Archbishop to do justice, if they themselves will pay no heed to it. This, be it said, relates to the direction and guardianship of Holy Church, and not to those other violations of law which might occur in secular matters. How great is the King's power in secular matters may thus be seen, since he sits even in the highest seat of judgment in matters relating to Holy Church, which would have been thought, if men had not heard this quotation, to lie under the direction of the Bishop.⁹⁹

After boldly stating that the King has the highest authority, even in the church, he quotes Gratian and others to support his views. Then comes the important paragraph concerning the king's authority, responsibility and supervision in matters in his own country. This the king cannot renounce or transfer, for it is given him by God. That paragraph is quoted earlier in this treatise. (See footnote No. 18.)

More quotations follow. Then Sverre raises the important point that it is usually the bishops, and not the kings, who lead the people into errors in religious matters. He states:

It may now be seen whether the King is to blame, and claims their rights to rob them of their dignity, or they quarrel with the King's honour and wish to deprive him of it and render him honourless and this unrest turns into heresy, as seems too likely, heresy and the profanation of Christianity will be seen to proceed from a course whence they have aforesaid proceeded. We know few instances where kings have originated heresies, but we know many where kings have overthrown them when bishops have originated them.¹⁰⁰

Then follows an exposition of the fallacies of many ecclesiastics who have been regarded as heretics. Of interest is one named Nicolas Advena, a bishop in Saracenland, who is identified with Mohammed. In the preface of his edition of the Speech Against the Bishops was written, the canonist Huguccio of Pisa, in his capacity as professor of law at Bologna, had identified Nicolas Advena with Mohammed, and the author undoubtedly got the parallel from him. According to that legend, Nicolas Advena was a Catholic prelate who, because of his failure to become Pope, began the Mohammedan religion. The early church fathers had spoken of a Nicolas who was proselyte from Antioch. He was, they said, one of the first seven deacons in the congregation at Jerusalem, and the leader of heresy referred to in Revelation 2:15. This Nicolas Proselytos is mentioned in Acts 6:15, and in the Vulgate it is given as Nicolas Advena. The next step was, then, to identify this Nicolas Advena, the supposed leader of the Nicolaitan heresy, with the Catholic prelate of the late sixth and early seventh century, and

⁹⁹ Ibid., pp. 251 f.

¹⁰⁰ Ibid., p. 258

hence with Mohammed.¹⁰¹

This is an extremely fanciful association. Chronologically it is utterly impossible that the Nicolas Advena could be Mohammed. That the author would use such a non-historical person in his argument is an indication of their carelessness and lack of accuracy in such matters in those days. The fact is, however, that the author did use the name of Nicolas Advena, and identified him with Mohammed. Several scholars are of the opinion that Sverre especially emphasized him because his first name happened to be the same as that of Sverre's enemy, Bishop Nicolas of Oslo. He continues:

Not many kings will be found who have originated heresy, for kings ever talk of their realm, of their kingly rule, and the defense of their lands. Bishops are appointed to proclaim truth and Christianity, and whether they preach in church or at assemblies, they declare before people that all they preach must be followed; to fail in carrying out all they command is wrong, they say, and opposed to Christianity . . . Always, though, heresy has been quelled by the strength and rule of great men whenever it has grown to be powerful.¹⁰²

This argument is not one of Sverre's strongest, simply because the kings in many cases have not been particularly interested in doctrine, or well versed in it, nor have they dealt with it so much as churchmen. Sverre was, of course, a notable exception himself. The plain fact is that because the churchmen primarily deal with doctrine they will also be more likely to mislead people into heresy.

Sverre concludes his Speech Against the Bishops with the following words:

Let all these things remain in memory which we have written and read out touching the concessions which the clergy claim to have been given to them, or other special privileges in various matters which they claim; and let men understand how concessions and privileges are to be procured so as not to be void. For wise rulers have determined not to permit that a man should appropriate to himself such kingly rule as he can seize with deceitful device, and then possess it as if he had lawfully acquired it; kingly rule would soon be in the hands of other men than the King himself if that were permitted. So too of the other matters which we have expounded before you, patronage in the Church, obedience to the King, wrongful ban and excommunication; let them be pardoned with a good understanding. Ban and excommunication we may dread because of our sins, or of the shame to which they put us before other folk who learn of the dishonour which our clergy inflict on us. But we have no fear that we shall be condemned by God, for he pronounces no judgment other than just; and the more a man is oppressed by the injustice of men, the nearer to him is help from the justice of God.¹⁰³

¹⁰¹ Gustav Storm, in his preface to his edition of En Tale Mod Biskoperne (Christiania, 1885), pp. ix ff.

¹⁰² Speech Against the Bishops, p. 260.

(To Be Continued)

R. E. Honsey

The Presbyterian Guardian for August, 1961, under the heading "Missouri Synod Lutherans Raise Doctrinal Issues", carries a full two-page report on the State of the Church Conference held by Missouri Synod Lutherans at Milwaukee last May. The report was written by the Rev. Carl J. Reitsma of Cedar Grove, Wisconsin. The Presbyterian Guardian is the church paper of the Orthodox Presbyterians, a group organized under the leadership of Dr. J. Gresham Machen, who a generation ago left Princeton Seminary and the Presbyterian Church when it became clear that the Modernism, which had infiltrated his church and seminary, could not be eradicated. The Orthodox Presbyterian Church is noted for its conservative and scholarly Westminster Theological Seminary at Philadelphia.

Pastor Reitsma's report covers pretty well the actions of the Free Conference. It occurs to us that the readers of the Lutheran Synod Quarterly might like to read some of the comments of the visitor who was not a Lutheran.

Pastor Reitsma's opening paragraph earned him a letter of rebuke from a Guardian reader in the October issue, who felt that Reitsma had written as though "threatened schism is cause for exhilaration". The paragraph follows:

It was like the exciting meetings that led to the formation of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church when 500 aroused Missouri Synod Lutherans met in Milwaukee's elegant Schroeder Hotel in mid-May to discuss and denounce Modernism in their own church. Since individual action for the last ten years apparently had failed to restore doctrinal purity in the seminaries, publications, and youth organizations, this unofficial meeting was arranged to mobilize conservatives in the church. It called itself the "State of the Church Conference." There were some laymen present, but the majority were pastors.

In making his report and comments, this Presbyterian minister recognizes that there are some vital doctrinal differences between Calvinists and Lutherans, that the Lutherans "do not agree on Double Predestination and some other things." But he is gratified to see that there are others "who have the courage to say that what a man believes makes a difference." He felt that the "essayists presented thirteen excellent papers on Scripture, The Church, The Ecumenical Movement, Youth, and Education," and that "there can be no doubt as to the seriousness of the situation. It is no wonder that Bible-believers in the Missouri Synod are worried about what looks like a spreading modernist take-over in their church."

As evidence of this, Reitsma cited the fact that Missouri periodicals and theologians speak approvingly of Bonhoeffer, Tillich, Barth, Bultmann; that Martin Marty, a Missouri minister, is an associate editor of the Christian Century, "one of America's most outspoken liberal religious journals"; that at Valparaiso H. Richard Niebuhr delivered the third Centennial lecture in which he warned against "putting our confidence in churches, doctrines, and Bibles" (emphasis by Reitsma); that the Board of Missions of Missouri Synod obtained membership in the Home Missions Division of the National Council of Churches.

Pastor Reitsma devoted considerable space to the "Scharlemann controversy", and after quoting at some length from Dr. Scharlemann's essays he made this judgment: "Whether or not the situation in the Missouri Synod is as serious as the delegates to this conference seemed to think it is, these statements by Dr. Scharlemann are bad. The Bible is inspired and inerrant not because I regard it as true, but simply because God is its Author."

In summarizing the dozen resolutions of the Conference, Pastor Reitsma pointed out that "the Rev. Dr. Neelak S. Tjernagel, a social science teacher at Concordia Teachers College, River Forest, Ill., declared that the conference was making itself vulnerable on so many fronts that the all important battle for the authority of Scripture might be lost. 'The sanctuary is ablaze,' he said, 'and we are obscuring the main challenge'. The conference, however, turned down this advice and unfortunately, I think, let itself be drawn into side issues."

The position the State of the Church Conference took in its resolutions on prayer fellowship proved puzzling to Pastor Reitsma. He reported the Free Conference resolution which takes issue with "The Theology of Fellowship" statement, and then in questioning the delegates on these points, he states:

I discovered that it was their conviction that Lutherans could not in good conscience pray with non-Lutherans. Furthermore, I was surprised to learn that this is so regardless of whether the non-Lutheran be a rank modernist or a truly devout Evangelical. The degree of "heterodoxy" seems to make no difference. And finally, while this insistence on no fellowship with non-Lutherans forbids church fellowship it also forbids informal prayer fellowship between members of Lutheran and non-Lutheran churches. There are differences of opinion on the practical application of these principles to actual life situations, but I sensed that this is an important and emotion-filled issue. These men were convinced that prayer is only proper among those of full doctrinal agreement.

While Pastor Reitsma does not agree with his understanding of the State of the Church Conference resolutions regarding prayer fellowship, "hoping that Orthodox Presbyterians would reject such narrow denominational restrictions upon prayer fellowship," he does acknowledge that indiscriminate prayer fellowship raises some real confessional problems and leads one into situations where the truth is compromised and denied. He does not toss off this problem with a few airy remarks about "What Sophie Might Think." In closing this part of his report, Pastor Reitsma thoughtfully confesses to his readers:

It does seem to me that we need to emphasize more than we have that prayer is a privilege that belongs to Christians alone. The minister is sometimes called upon to take his turn with the local rabbi and priest to lead at P.T.A. opening devotions, or to lead in prayer at civic functions. When such public groups of uncommitted men and women are led in prayer by us, notwithstanding the dubious practice of "preaching in our prayer," we cannot avoid leaving the impression that God is on friendly terms with everybody no matter what his brand of religion might be.

We hope that Pastor Reitsma's request will be given serious consideration by the Presbyterian Guardian editors. Only good can come if all Christians will study the answers to this problem, as given in the Holy Scriptures. Prof. Schuetze's discussion of this in the Northwestern Lutheran of Oct. 22 and following issues, and reprinted in this number of the Lutheran Synod Quarterly, is well worth careful perusal.

We quote Pastor Reitsma's concluding paragraph in full. It could well be pondered not only by all members of the Lutheran Church - Missouri Synod but all of us Lutherans, for it is evidently written by a man who has not only had great respect for the sound position of the Missouri Synod in years past but by a man who has also, through personal experience, seen how an otherwise fairly orthodox group can quickly deteriorate if Modernism infiltrates its leadership:

After adopting the resolutions, the Conference meetings came to their close. The picture presented is dark, frightening and all too familiar. What will the Missouri Synod do in the days ahead? Will it learn to live with Modernism, reduce the true gospel to an alternative within the denomination, allow the authority of God's Word to be debatable? Or will it insist on orthodoxy, accept the opprobrium it involves and continue in the line of Dr. Walther and Dr. Maier? Obedience requires that those who love the Lord bear the stigma of "obscurantism" as well as the martyr-fire.

The same issue of the Presbyterian Guardian also reports on the resolutions of the Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod and our Evangelical Lutheran Synod with regard to fellowship with the Lutheran Church - Missouri Synod. Among other things, this report calls attention to the fact that the ELS resolutions state that "gross error, publicly promulgated, goes publicly unrepudiated" in the Lutheran Church - Missouri Synod.

B. W. Teigen

STATEMENT BY THE ELS UNION COMMITTEE

AS TO THE MISSOURI SYNOD'S MEETING WITH THE NLC

What is involved in this matter? It is not the issue of whether or not one should meet with those outside one's own fellowship in order to testify to the truth, where one feels such testimony can and should be given in accordance with I Peter 3:15, "... and be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear." It is not the issue of whether or not one should meet with the NLC in order to discuss doctrine, nor is it the issue of whether or not such meetings should be opened with prayer, though we of course do not agree with the Missouri officials that the fact that you meet with heterodox Lutherans to discuss doctrine gives you the right to pray together. The real issue in these NLC meetings, so far as we are concerned, is that the Doctrinal Committee of the Missouri Synod should meet with the NLC AT THIS TIME to discuss WHAT THEY ARE DISCUSSING.

We are indebted to The American Lutheran for publishing in the March and April issues for 1959, the official correspondence between Dr. Paul C. Empie of the NLC, and Dr. J. W. Behnken of the Missouri Synod, on this whole matter.

It is not necessary here to go into detail as to how the NLC invitation was first declined by the Mo. Doctrinal Committee through Dr. Behnken, and later accepted, although it will prove interesting to those who take the trouble to read these letters. The purpose of this presentation will be served simply by pointing out first the reason for these meetings, and then secondly to what extent doctrine was to be discussed. Dr. Empie wrote in his initial letter to Dr. Behnken, October 6, 1958, as follows: "You will note that the proposed meeting is described as 'exploratory' and is to be convened to study present co-operative relationships among Lutherans in America and the 'possibility' of extending them." In answer to Dr. Behnken's letter of March 6, 1959, regarding the matter of doctrinal discussion in such meetings, Dr. Empie in his letter of March 23, 1959, replied: "In reply to your direct question, which appears to indicate the conditions referred to above, let us assure you that we continue to recognize as an implicit element in such exploratory conversations the taking into account of the theological basis upon which such co-operative activities have been carried on in the past and upon which it may be proposed to extend them in time and number. Being an agency rather than a church, the Council cannot engage in discussions involving church fellowship in the fullest sense of the term; however, it most certainly can and will examine with you the doctrinal implications of cooperation between Christians. We believe that with God's blessing such discussions would be mutually helpful."

From the above it becomes clear that the discussions with the NLC were to center around present cooperative endeavors with a view to expanding them. The "theological basis", the "doctrinal implications", of such cooperation were to be considered. What doctrines would this involve? What doctrines would they be discussing? No doubt many doctrines might come into consideration, but chiefly the doctrine of Church Fellowship.

Now at the same time that the Missouri Doctrinal Committee was arranging to attend and to participate in such meetings with the NLC, the Joint Doctrinal Committees of the Synodical Conference, having so happily come to agreement on statements on Scripture, Anti-Christ, and basically also on justification, were in the midst of a deep and serious disagreement on the doctrine of Church Fellowship. And so we had this strange situation that while the four doctrinal committees of the synods of the Synodical Conference were engaged in what was already then shaping up as a life or death struggle in the Synodical Conference, one of the four informed the others, fervent pleas from the other three committees notwithstanding, that they were going to meet with the NLC and discuss this very doctrine of Church Fellowship with them.

We of the ELS committee felt that this action on the part of the Missouri Doctrinal Committee was a violation of Point 2 of the basis of agreement for the Joint Doctrinal Committee meetings, to which all four committees had agreed, namely: "That we declare our willingness without equivocation and evasion to come to grips with all the issues that have arisen between us." In view of the sharp and serious differences in the Joint Committees of the Synodical Conference on the doctrine of Church Fellowship, we could not see how the Missouri Committee's action in meeting with the NLC to discuss at this time that very doctrine was in harmony with their agreement with us "to come to grips with all the issues that have arisen between us."

In reporting this to our Synod at its 1960 convention, we listed it as one of the reasons why we felt that we should no longer participate in the Joint Doctrinal Committee meetings. Our Synod agreed with us and, following good procedure, presented the matter to the 1960 Synodical Conference convention, pleading with them to seek to get the Missouri Doctrinal Committee to remove this obstacle to further meetings. At the recessed convention in May, 1961, the Synodical Conference delegates voted by a large majority in favor of a resolution which asked, among other things, that Missouri should refrain from such an activity. To date the only official response from the Missouri Synod has been a letter from Dr. Behnken to our vice-president, Pastor Julian Anderson, stating that the Missouri Doctrinal Committee intends to go ahead and attend a third meeting with the NLC, scheduled prior to the Synodical Conference recessed convention.

From what has been stated above regarding our objections to the Missouri Doctrinal Committee's meetings with the NLC, it should be evident also why we of the ELC Committee could not see our way clear to accept the invitation of the Missouri Committee to come along with them in these meetings. Had we as a Synodical Conference been agreed and united in the doctrine of Church Fellowship, it would have been a different matter, but to transfer our disagreements in this doctrine, which go far deeper than the matter of prayer at intersynodical doctrinal meetings, from the privacy of the Synodical Conference doctrinal meetings to the arena of the NLC would have been folly indeed.

On behalf of the ELS Doctrinal Committee

October 24, 1961

Theodore Aaberg

ST. LOUIS SMOG

The fall 1961 Seminary Newsletter, an alumni bulletin published in the interest of Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, carried the following article with this heading: "How Clear Is Clear?"

Various people may take issue with important documents -- especially those of a theological nature -- by criticizing their lack of clarity. This was also the experience of Dr. John H. C. Fritz, former dean of students at Concordia Seminary, Saint Louis. He was once conducting a public hearing in St. Louis on the Common Confession. A few dissidents insisted that the document became clear only after much explanation. Dr. Fritz thought that the language was clear as it stood. After prolonged discussion in which a few insisted that the committee redraft the document and speak more clearly, Dr. Fritz suddenly opened the Bible and read from the 18th chapter of St. Luke where Jesus spoke to His disciples: "Behold we go up to Jerusalem and all things that are written by the prophets concerning the Son of Man shall be accomplished. For He shall be delivered unto the Gentiles and shall be mocked and spitefully entreated and spit upon; and they shall scourge Him and put Him to death; and the third day He

shall rise again."

"Is that clear?" asked Dr. Fritz in his open and stern manner.

"Certainly." "Of course", several answered.

Then after looking at his critics through his shaggy eyebrows for a moment he continued to read, "And they (the disciples) understood none of these things."

Such an article, coming from a seminary which has had as its presidents theologians such as Walther, Pieper, and the elder Fuerbringer, "though it make the unskillful laugh cannot but make the judicious grieve." Its purpose we hope is not to discredit Dean Fritz, and one would certainly like to know more about the context in which the Dean was said to have made the statement. He was too good a Bible theologian to equate an intellectual understanding of a human document with the spiritual understanding of the Gospel.

Since the article can hardly pass for a bit of merriment, one wonders why it was published at all in the Seminary Newsletter. Its purpose seems to be that of inculcating an air of condescending but slightly impatient tolerance for "a few dissidents" who take issue with important theological documents "by criticizing their lack of clarity."

It is indeed true that there is such a thing as unnecessary, carping criticism; and everyone of us must be careful to avoid making such criticism which may come merely from personal animus. But the honest desire for clarity certainly should not be dismissed in such a cavalier manner as this article does. Could it be that St. Louis is slightly irked by some of the pointed and persistent questions that have continued to be asked about the last two important documents that have come out of St. Louis, namely, the Fellowship Statement, Part II, and the faculty statement on "The Form and Function of Scripture"?

At any rate, it would be well for us all to look at the rest of the verse which Dean Fritz is purported to have quoted: "And this saying was hid from them; neither knew they the things which were spoken." This passage has much for us to think about today, for we note how desperately difficult it is for all of us to disengage our thoughts from the kingdom of earthly glories. The pull of the Ecumenical Movement, with its emphasis on the outward visible unity of the church, and our desire to make our impact felt upon the world around us, can have some devastating effects on our theology.

More helpful for us would have been for the Seminary Newsletter to quote a former great teacher at St. Louis, Dr. George Stoeckhardt, who had this comment on Luke 18, 34: "Diese Rede war den Jüngern Jesu verborgen. Fleisch und Blut kann und mag das wort vom Kreuz nicht fassen. Gott selbst muss es uns offenbaren." (Biblische Geschichte p. 229).

B. W. Teigen

NEWS AND COMMENTS

The Lutheran, family paper of the ULCA, contained a comment of interest to our readers in its November 1, 1961 issue. Its editor, G. Elson Ruff, after expressing surprise that the Wisconsin Synod had applied Romans 16: 17-18 to the Missouri Synod, stated: "The ironic point, of course, is that Missouri Synod Lutherans for many years used these words of St. Paul to explain why they could not associate with most other Lutherans in America. Gradually, though, they have emerged from this self-satisfaction. . . . What has happened is that the Missouri Lutherans have been coming out of smug security onto the world stage of ideas and influences which beat down upon most thoughtful people of each new period." (p. 50) Dr. Ruff would seemingly like to leave his readers with the impression that there are no doctrinal problems in the Lutheran Church in America and that all church problems are sociological. One need not comment on the quotation, for it speaks for itself. Nor do parish pastors need any comment on the wide range of doctrine and practice present in the Lutheran Church in America today.

GER

The November, 1961 Lutheran Spokesman of the CLC contained the parochial statistics of that body, listing pastors, teachers, and congregations. 60 pastors and professors are on its clergy roster. In addition there are 11 "crm". 3 men are affiliated with the group, one of whom is "crm". The CLC conducts services at 62 places, of which 12 are affiliated. 9 of these are members of multiple parishes. It also conducts 7 Christian Day Schools. 3 parishes have 2 pastors.

GER

The ELS received several criticisms in the October, 1961 issue of the Journal of Theology of the Church of the Lutheran Confessions (CLC). Two of them came from the pen of C. M. Gullerud, formerly of the ELS, and concerned two resolutions passed by the ELS in its August, 1961 convention.

The first criticism was: "History will record the fact that the E.L.S. did not in 1961 reach a final decision on its membership in the Synodical Conference." (p. 34) The writer evidently felt that the ELS should have simply quit the Synodical Conference and abandoned the work of years. How much more orderly, proper, and practical is the suggested dissolution contained in the ELS resolutions, which will prevent the misuse of the name of the Synodical Conference and which might salvage some of the work -- and souls -- of the Synodical Conference.

The second criticism is of a more serious nature. It dealt with the resolution of the recent ELS convention which advised pastors who had resigned from the ELS and whose congregations had still continued their membership, to present their resignations to their congregations so as to give the congregation an opportunity to express itself on the situation. The following criticism is offered: "It would appear from this resolution that the E.L.S. believes that when a pastor separates from the Synod for reasons of conscience, then this automatically removes the basis on which his call was predicated." (p. 38) The writer then went on to enumerate the valid reasons for which a pastor could be removed from his office by a congregation: false doctrine, ungodly life, and wilful neglect of pastoral duties. Again, it would seem that the writer misread the resolution

of the ELS. The resolution says nothing about congregations deposing their pastors. No calls were terminated through this resolution nor were congregations told to do so. The resolution of the ELS (Cf. Proceedings, pp. 90-91) dealt with specific situations in which congregations had continued their membership in the ELS. Such action would seem to indicate that the congregations were in agreement with the ELS and not with their pastors who had resigned from that body. One could only imagine the tension which would exist in such a case. Certainly such a situation does place the burden directly on the pastor. The ELS resolution simply asked them to face up to it. It is also important for the congregation to be given an opportunity to express itself, for it also has rights. These rights consist of more than just saying "yes" to everything a pastor says. To hold such a position is to revert to the position of Grabau in the old Buffalo Synod. Our Synod also has an obligation towards its congregations. It is to aid, to advise, and to protect them as well as the pastors. That is also a matter of conscience for it, for as a federation of congregations - and no more - it is interested in the welfare of all its parts, the congregations.

GER

The Northwestern Lutheran of the Wisconsin Synod has been publishing a series of articles on what is and what is not sinful unionism. We quote here without comment an article by Prof. Armin Schuetze on certain phases of this problem. (The Northwestern Lutheran, p. 342 ff.)

MAY WE PRAY AT TABLE

WITH PEOPLE NOT OF THE WISCONSIN SYNOD?

This question has at times been asked in connection with the presentation on the doctrine of church or religious fellowship that our Commission on Doctrinal Matters used in their discussions in the Joint Union Committees of the Synodical Conference. And no doubt it is a question that is being asked even more often now that our Synod felt compelled to suspend its fellowship relations with the Lutheran Church - Missouri Synod. What answer does Scripture give to the above question?

Preliminary Considerations

First, let this be said. There is no reason for a Christian to abandon prayer and family devotion when others of another faith are present with him at his table. It is his home, and he will proceed with prayer and devotion as he does when no guests are present. Nor is the Christian called upon first to make an announcement to those of another faith that they, of course, are excluded from his fellowship at that time. When St. Paul was on board ship on his journey to Rome, and a severe storm threatened shipwreck, he encouraged the others on board ship to eat, and we read of him: "And when he had thus spoken, he took bread, and gave thanks to God in presence of them all: and when he had broken it, he began to eat" (Acts 27:35). Paul did not hesitate to pray in the presence of the heathen on board ship. It was a good testimony, and so will also our prayer and devotion be.

Circumstances may bring you to the table of those not of your faith. When you are a guest at another person's table, and he speaks his table prayer in your presence, you surely will permit him to do so without disturbing him,

even though it may be that you are not joining him in his prayer.

There may also be instances when you attend a dinner, a banquet at which people of many faiths are present. Sometimes committees that arrange such gatherings, through misguided piety, will invite the Roman Catholic priest or some Protestant pastor to speak a table prayer. Scripture does not absolutely forbid your presence at worship in which you yourself cannot join. Elisha did not tell Naaman that he was sinning by being present at his king's side in the temple of the idol of Syria, Rimmon (cf. II Kings 5:18,19). However, you will have no part in setting up such worship; if you serve on a committee to make the arrangements, you will use your influence to prevent such prayers that are intended to unite people of various faiths in worship.

Getting at the Real Question

What has been said up to now doesn't, however, really answer our question. We are not asking what we may do in the presence of someone else or what he may do in our presence. We are asking whether we may jointly pray at table with anyone who belongs to a church body not in confessional fellowship with us. May we actually jointly appear with our prayers before the throne of God?

Avoid Persistent Errorists

God does want us to join with fellow Christians in worshipping Him, in prayer. But He forbids us to do that with those who persistently hold to false doctrine. About them His command is: "avoid them" (Rom. 16:17), and that will include avoiding joint prayer with them.

How to Recognize Persistent Errorists

If you are to avoid persistent errorists, you must in some way recognize them. You cannot, of course, look into their hearts. Only God can do that. You are to judge them by their fruits, by what they produce. Jesus said: "By their fruits ye shall know them" (Matt. 7:20). In this case that is their confession. St. John warns his readers not to believe every spirit, but to try (test) the spirits whether they are of God. How will they be able to do this? He continues: "Hereby know ye the Spirit of God: Every spirit that confesseth that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is of God; and every spirit that confesseth not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is not of God" (I John 4:2,3). This gives expression to the principle: we must judge on the basis of the confession that is made.

In Regard to Joint Public Expressions of Faith

Membership in a church body is an act of confession. Through his membership a person confesses himself to the teachings of that church. In joint expressions of faith that are public, as, for example, public worship, prayer together in public, going to the Lord's Supper together, you would have to judge the other person on the basis of this confession of church membership, which is a public confession. To disregard this public confession would only create offense and confusion. Whoever is a member of a persistently erring church body needs to be avoided in all joint public expressions of faith.

What About Private Personal Relationships to Others?

But now such a person from an erring church body is with you in your home, or you are in his home. From your private contact with him you know that he confesses trust in Christ as his Savior from sin, that he confesses himself to the Scriptures. It is apparent that his membership in the false church body is the result of a still weak faith which does not fully understand the seriousness of the errors, or it is clear that he actually does not share the errors at all. In this case you have more to go by than the confession of his church membership; there is also his own personal confession before you. And since now in your private personal relationship to him public offense and confusion is not involved, you may well ask yourself: Is this perhaps one of those of whom the Word of God tells you: "Him that is weak in the faith receive ye, but not to doubtful disputations" (Rom. 14:1)? Is this a smoking flax that you are not to quench? Thus, in your private relations where public offense is not involved, you may on the basis of a man's confession recognize him as a brother in Christ with whom you may then also join in prayer, and that includes table prayer.

Not a Set of Rules, but Guiding Principles

We see then that Scripture does not give an absolute yes nor an absolute no as the answer to our question. And it does not set up a detailed set of rules that tells you exactly what you must do under every circumstance. But it does give the principles that are to guide you; it does say that you are to take note of the confession of those who come to you and want to be acknowledged as fellow Christians. If that confession shows them to be persistent errorists, you are to avoid joint expressions of faith with them. If that confession shows them to be brethren, in some cases still weak brethren (and in private relations a personal confession may reveal him to be that in spite of doubtful church connections), you may engage in joint expressions of faith for your mutual encouragement.

ECUMENICAL NEWS

Polish Lutherans Deny Catholic Talks Planned

Warsaw ---(LWF)--- Lutheran church leaders here repudiated the suggestion in a recent Roman Catholic press report (quoted in Lutheran Sentinel) that the two confessions in Poland might be on the verge of entering upon a common exploration of Christian unity.

Church council officers of the Evangelical Church of the Augsburg Confession issued a statement that they are "unable to take seriously the present efforts toward unity made by the Roman Catholics" in this country "as long as the Roman Catholic Church has not made good the damage it inflicted on our Church after the war. "

Until such restitution is made, they said, "the atmosphere is not right for establishing ecumenical contacts and conversations" and they cannot have confidence in the

"ecumenical plans" of the Roman Church.

The statement was prompted by reports concerning a meeting last September of Lutheran and Catholic churchmen.

After the meeting Dr. Zygmunt Michalis, a theologian who was identified as the leader of the Lutheran representatives, was reported by a Catholic paper to have said, among other things, that while the "Mariology cult" in the Roman Church still separates it from Protestants, the latter "often unjustifiably ignore Mary's role and this should be remedied."

Such comments filled Evangelical leaders with "concern and anxiety", their statement said, noting that Dr. Michalis did not have any authority to speak on behalf of his Church and that his views were "purely personal". (From the NLC News Bureau, 11/14/61.)

The Norwegian council last May voted 14-9 against having even a consultative status in the World Council's new Commission and Division of World Mission and Evangelism which will take over the functions of the IMC.

The IMC assembly sent a special greeting to the dissenting council "recalling with appreciation the long association" of the two organizations and expressing the desire that their fraternal relationships may be maintained.

At the World Council assembly, when integration was finally sealed, four of the five delegates of the Church of Norway were present and voted for the proposal. Afterward, they said that their Church had not instructed them how to vote on the question.

The delegates voiced regret that integration would signalize withdrawal of the Norwegian Missionary Council from the official ecumenical connections it has had for some years in the IMC. They expressed hope, however, that ways would be found to keep open the lines of communication with other Christian agencies.

Not all the societies composing the Norwegian council are Lutheran, but Lutherans were ranged on both sides in the integration debate, which extended over many months.

Among the major societies, the Norwegian Missionary Society favored consultative status in the new WCC commission, while the Norwegian Lutheran Mission and the Norwegian board of the international Santal Mission opposed any relationship.

Norwegians Undisturbed by Russian Entry in WCC

New Dehli--(NLC)-- Delegates of the Norwegian Lutheran Church at the Third Assembly here of the World Council of Churches said they foresaw no strain on their Church's ties with the WCC as a result of the latter's acceptance of the Russian Orthodox Church into membership.

While acknowledging that the action had been opposed in some Norwegian Lutheran quarters, they said such a position was not shared by the Church's leadership in general.

Recently the weekly of the Norwegian Home Mission, For Fattig og Rig, advocated that the Church of Norway withdraw from the World Council if the Russian Orthodox Church was admitted.

The paper not only attributed to the Russian Church "peculiar theological views" but also accused it of being bound by the powers in the Kremlin and of having taken the side of oppressors.

It quoted a statement made a number of years ago by the late Bishop Eivind Berggrav, a former WCC president and head of the Church of Norway: "In the Soviet Union there is a Church which has placed itself entirely at the service of the godless propaganda of the state. By our visits and by sharing in the fellowship of this Church, we are on the verge of treachery."

The Russian Orthodox Church, by far the largest of 23 applicants granted World Council membership at the assembly here, claims that it is completely free from government interference.

Archbishop Nikodim Rostov, head of the office of Foreign Church Relations of the Moscow Patriarchate, said at an assembly press conference following the Church's admission that the Russian constitution separates Church and state and gives citizens of the Soviet Union confessional freedom.

Several internationally known Lutheran leaders hailed the membership application of the Russian Church when it was first announced several months ago.

Among them were Dr. Franklin Clark Fry of New York, president of the Lutheran World Federation; Bishop Hanns Lilje of Hannover, Germany, his immediate predecessor in that post; Dr. Kurt Schmidt-Clausen of Geneva, executive secretary of the federation; and Dr. O. Frederick Nolde of New York, a member of the LWF Commission on International Affairs.

All were here when the application was approved--Dr. Fry as chairman of the WCC Central Committee, Bishop Lilje as a Central Committee member, Dr. Schmidt-Clausen as the LWF's fraternal delegate, and Dr. Nolde as director of the ecumenical Commission of the Churches on International Affairs. (The NLC News Bureau.)

HAPPY NEW YEAR!

FOOTNOTE to article on pp. 18&19, initialed "GER"

According to information received from one well acquainted with what transpired at the St. John's Lutheran church-trial at Bowdle, South Dakota, The Lutheran SPOKESMAN should not be so ready to criticize the resolution adopted by our ELS convention last August, which fact was touched upon in the above initialed article. It seems that two different men of the CLC persuasion were, on the witness stand, led to acknowledge that the basis for a pastor's call changed when he, but not the congregation he was serving, withdrew from the synod to which both belonged. These two witnesses conceded that for a pastor to leave a church-body, while the congregation he had been serving remained in it, would create an impossible situation.

That being the case, one would have to say that for a pastor to resign from a synod while the congregation does not, really leaves all concerned no alternative except to recognize that the relationship they formerly enjoyed is no longer the same, which then is another way of saying that the pastor's call is automatically up for review --- and that was just the point of our ELS resolution. One cannot refrain from asking, How can a pastor with a good conscience serve a congregation that still wishes to remain with the synod from which he for conscience reasons had resigned? -- (Ed.)