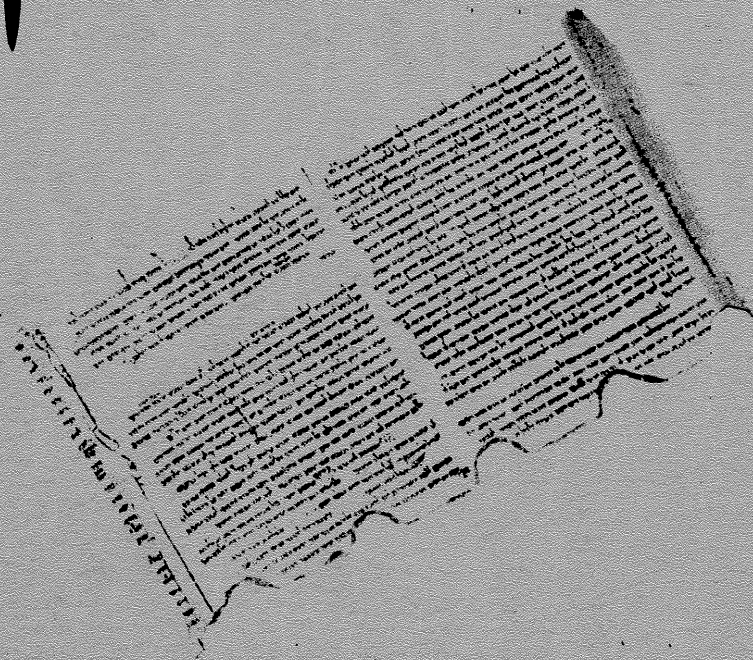




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## FOREWORD

This issue of the Quarterly consists of two papers that were delivered at a pastoral conference at Rock Dell Lutheran Church, Belview, Minnesota, on May 26-27, 1981. This conference consists of Circuits 5 & 7 of the Evangelical Lutheran Synod.

The first paper is an exegesis of Acts 20:17-35 by Prof. Juul Madson, who teaches New Testament at Bethany Lutheran Theological Seminary. The other is a practical paper on the new morality which is so prevalent in our society and which calls for a proper application of Law and Gospel on the part of a pastor. The writer, Pastor Norman Madson, serves the Norseland and Norwegian Grove Lutheran churches, rural St. Peter, Minnesota.

There is also a report and analysis of the recent convention of the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod by the editor, who was one of the observers from the ELS to the St. Louis convention.

Pastor Adolph Harstad, one of the patriarchs of the ELS, continues his translation series of articles on the history of the Norwegian Synod. These are of special interest to us since the roots of the Evangelical Lutheran Synod go back to this church body. The current article covers the year 1914, just three years before the merger of the three Norwegian Lutheran church bodies. By this time the craze for merger was so great that nothing could stop it. The voices of the minority, which contended that there was not doctrinal unity, were largely ignored. We thank Pastor Harstad for these interesting articles and we also take this opportunity to wish him and his wife, Martha, our congratulations and the Lord's richest blessings on the occasion of their golden wedding anniversary which was recently celebrated in Tacoma, Washington. They have been blessed with ten children, all of whom were present on this joyous event, except their one son, Adie, who is a missionary in Africa.

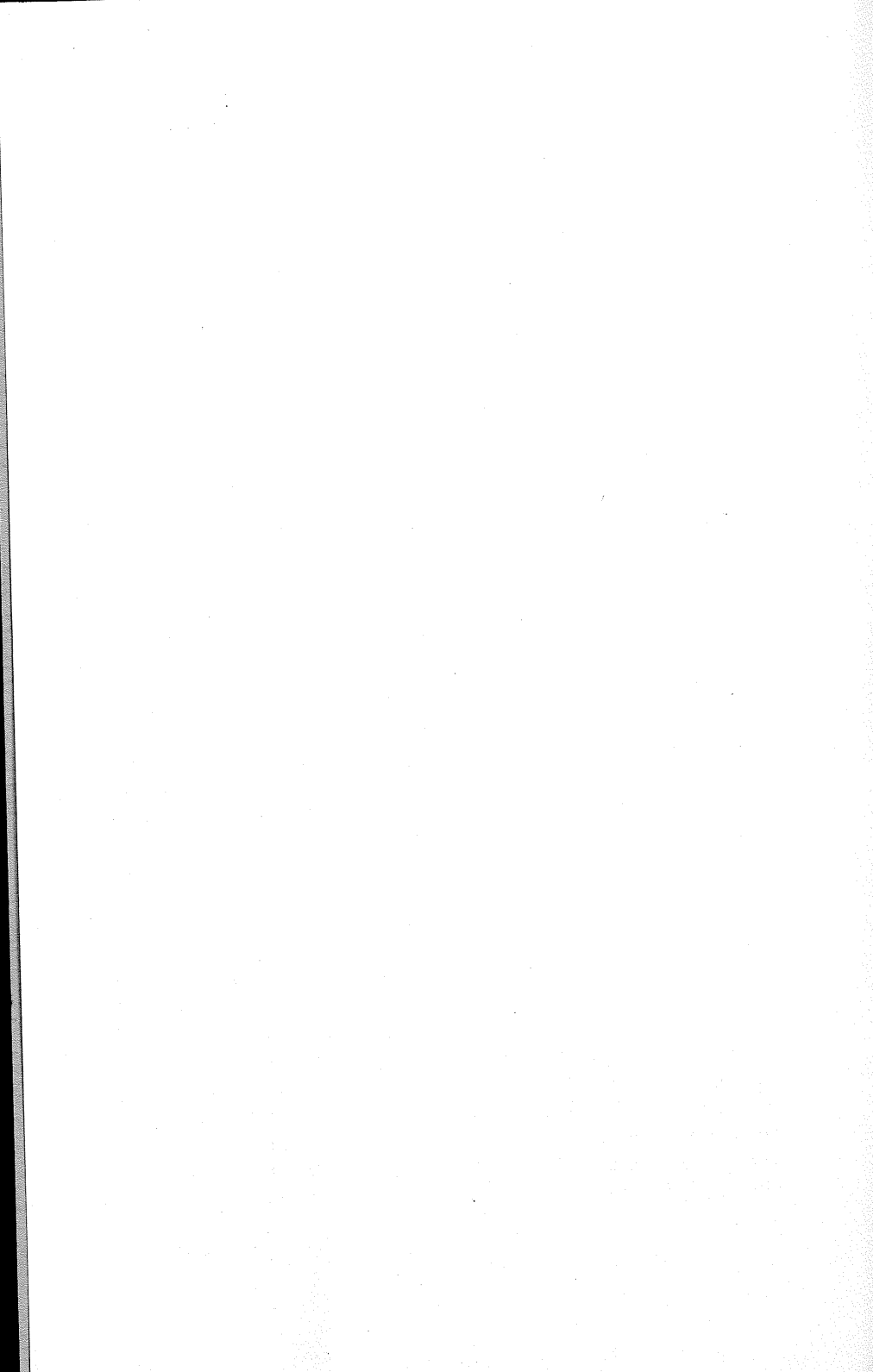
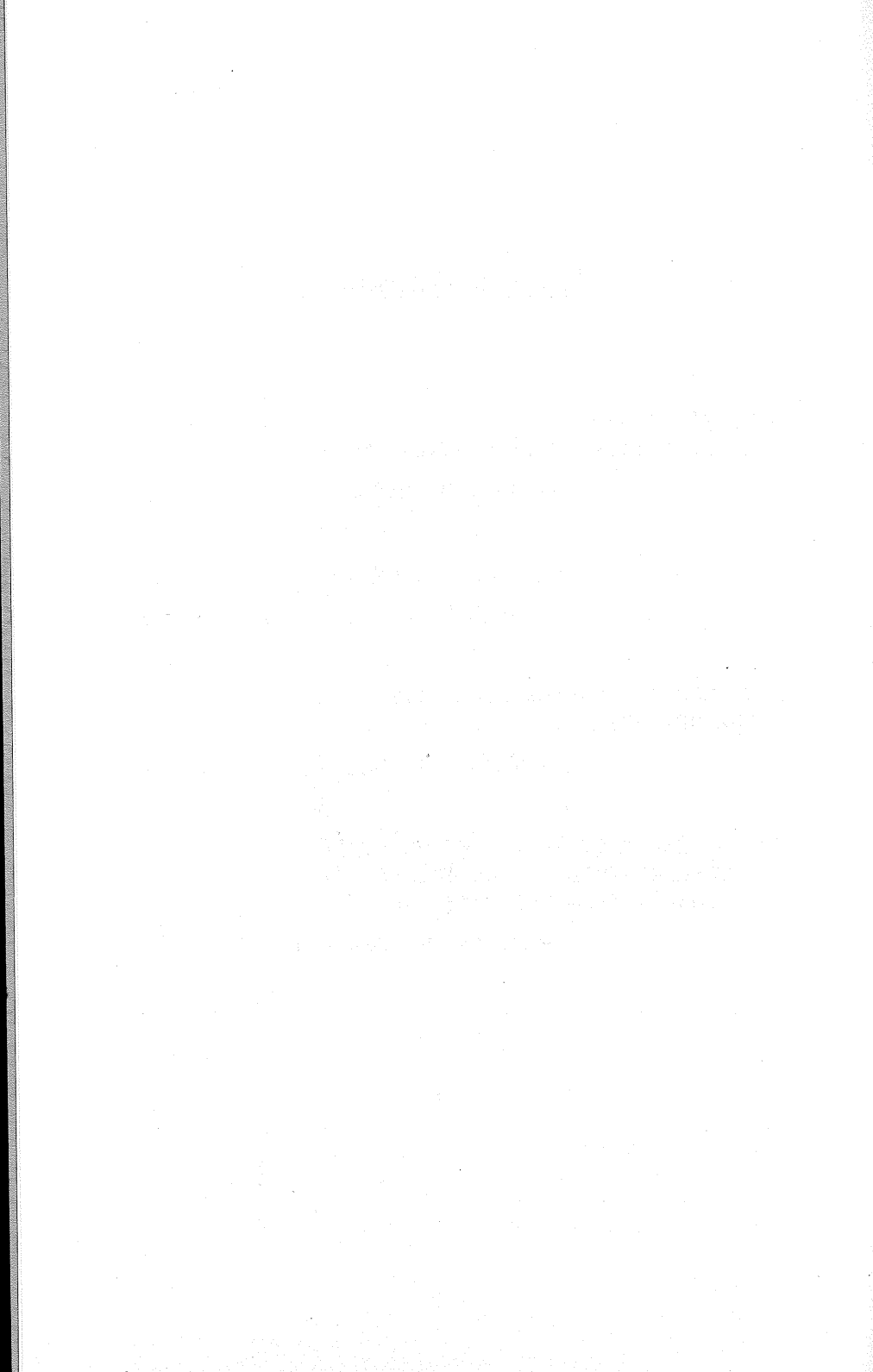


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## ACTS 20: 17-35

### An Exegetical Presentation

The Apostle Paul is nearing the end of his third missionary journey. This third journey has been devoted chiefly to the work at Ephesus. Now, after a brief swing around the horn to Macedonia and Greece and back to Macedonia again, he is returning to Jerusalem by a ship that is sailing down the eastern side of the Aegean Sea. In the company of eight representatives of the various congregations from which he has made a collection for the saints at Jerusalem Paul has, obviously because of the press of time, chosen to bypass Ephesus, for he wants to spend Pentecost in Jerusalem. If one wonders why Paul did not himself sail to Ephesus and thus shorten by two days the time required to bring the Ephesian representatives to Miletus, he ought to consider, among other things, that the vessel on which Paul sailed was not necessarily at his command. Nevertheless, while he doesn't have time and/or opportunity to visit the city in which three years of his labor have established a Christian company of believers, his solicitude dictated at least some final personal contact with them: he will send for the elders to meet him at Miletus!

Verse 17: Ἀπὸ δὲ τῆς Μιλήτου πέμψας εἰς Ἔφεσον μετακάλεσατο τοὺς πρεσβυτέρους τῆς ἐκκλησίας. -- And from Miletus by sending (couriers) into Ephesus he summoned the elders of the church. And when they had come to him he said to them:

Ephesus was some 30 miles distant from Miletus, where the ship bearing Paul and his party had moored. This distance meant a good day's journey each way

by foot, so the ship would have to remain in port for at least that long a time. Whom Paul sent off to Ephesus with his request is not stated, though it is surely not difficult to imagine that the messengers were some of the number of his company, perhaps the Asians mentioned in verse 4. The participle πέμψας is used circumstantially and may be construed either as being temporal or, preferably, as signifying means, i.e., "by sending (a delegation) to Ephesus he summoned..." Μετεκαλέσατο in the middle voice connotes the reflexive idea, namely, that Paul summoned to himself these elders of Ephesus by means of the messengers whom he had sent. Those whom he summons are termed πρεσβυτέρους a not unfamiliar term from the Septuagint. The term applied to Christian ministers appears first in Acts 11: 30, where Paul and Barnabas are said to have brought the διακονίαν (here the collection) from Antioch to the πρεσβυτέρους in Jerusalem. The terms recurs in Acts 15: 4. 6 & 22, where the πρεσβύτεροι are apparently distinguished from the ἀπόστολοι. Because Paul later refers to these πρεσβύτεροι τῆς ἐκκλησίας as ἐπίσκοποι, we shall take up the matter of these terms at that point. These representatives of the Ephesian church are obviously in some capacity of leadership.

Verse 18: ὡς δε παρεγένοντο πρὸς αὐτὸν εἶπεν αὐτοῖς, Ὑμεῖς ἐπίστασθε ἀπὸ πρώτης ἡμέρας ἀφ' ἧς ἐπέβην εἰς τὴν Ἀσίαν πῶς μεθ' ὑμῶν τὸν πάντα χρόνον ἐγενόμην, -- You know from the first day on which I set foot in Asia how I was with you the entire time,

When these elders had arrived, he addressed them in the words that follow in verses 18-35. This speech has been variously divided; the division by Alford is simple: 1) He reminds the elders of his conduct among them (18-21); 2) he announces to them his final separation from them (22-25) and 3) he earnestly commends to them the flock committed to their charge (26-35).<sup>1</sup> This address is



different in style and content from all the other speeches in Acts. It is the only example in Acts of an address to an audience of Christians, apart from Peter's speech in 1: 16ff and the speeches in Chapter fifteen.<sup>2</sup> It is certainly in character with the writings of Paul, examples from which may come to mind to any reader acquainted with the latter.

At the beginning of the address one manuscript, Codex Bezae (D), and some early versions have the vocative ἀδελφού, probably because it is a natural expectation that Paul use some word of address. There is little doubt that he considers them brethren, so the insertion of this word would not materially affect the content of Paul's speech. His assertion that they have knowledge (ἐπίστασθε) of his manner of life among them, and his appeal to this knowledge, leads one to think that he may thereby be recognizing the presence of religious enemies in Ephesus against whom the testimony of these elders would be sought. Even though Paul considers it a small thing to be subjected to the judgment of men (I Cor. 4: 1ff), yet he is willing to open his life to the scrutiny of friend and foe alike, the life he had lived among them from the first day he set foot in Asia.

What he recalls for them is πῶς (how, in what manner) he had been with them the entire time (accusative of duration) of his sojourn in their midst. Three years in the company of a man like Paul would permit one to learn something about him.

Verse 19: δουλεύων τῷ κυρίῳ μετὰ πάσης ταπεινοφροσύνης καὶ δακρύων καὶ πειρασμῶν τῶν συμβάντων μοι ἐν ταῖς ἐπιβουλαῖς τῶν Ἰουδαίων -- serving the Lord with all lowliness of mind and (with) tears and (with) trials which befell me in the plots of the Jews;

The πῶς of verse 18 is now made more explicit by several phrases and clauses following. Δουλεύω τῷ κυρίῳ explains Paul's presence in their midst as "one being a slave to the Lord" (this verb regularly takes the dative of the person); he here declares that he had constantly manifested himself as a δοῦλος or slave of the Lord, one of his favorite designations for himself, as in Romans 1: 1 and Philippians 1: 1. The verb δουλεύειν as expressing service to God, aside from its use in Matthew 6 and Luke 16 ("Ye cannot serve God and mammon."), is employed only by Paul in the N. T., and by him six or seven times. In the use of the verb before us a prepositional phrase containing three nouns expresses even more clearly the nature of his service: with all lowliness of mind and (with) tears and (with) trials which befell me in the plots of the Jews. The single preposition is to be construed with all three nouns, thus unifying the entire expression.

Ταπεινοφροσύνη is a compound of ταπεινός, lowly, and φρήν, mind. Robertson, taking cue from Light-foot, notes that heathen writers use this word for a groveling abject state of mind, but "that Paul follows Christ in using it for humility, humblemindedness that should mark every Christian and in particular the preacher."<sup>3</sup> If one is truly a slave of the Lord, such lowly-mindedness will have to be present; if it seems like self-praise on Paul's part to say this of himself, let it be recognized that Paul through the grace of Christ had overcome the false pride that once gripped him; he laid his very life at his Master's feet.<sup>4</sup>

At the mention of tears (μετὰ δακρύων) we are not to suppose that Paul is referring to any tears that he shed for injuries to his person; these tears are in the δουλία τοῦ θεοῦ in which Paul is engaged; he was moved to tears, for example, by the obduracy

of his own people in the face of God's gracious visitation among them.<sup>5</sup> As for plots (ἐπιβουλαί, found only in Acts) of the Jews against him he may well have in mind things similar to the plot (ἐπιβουλή -- Acts 20: 3) against him in Corinth, the earlier trial before Gallio (chapter 19), and the attack which had led to his departure from Thessalonica. In Acts 19: 9 we also read of the hostility of the Jews in Ephesus that drove Paul from the synagogue to the school of Tyrannus. Here he does not expatiate on the plots, but they are easily imagined after reading his letters, especially II Corinthians 11 and 15: 31-32. Lenski suggests that Luke omitted them from his account of the work at Ephesus because he knew they would be mentioned here in the record of Paul's address.<sup>6</sup> These plots of the Jews constituted strong πειρασμό, testings or trials (from πειράω, or only πειράομαι in Koine) which befell (συμβάντων -- aorist active participle of συμβαίνω) this servant of God on his mission to the Gentiles.

Verse 20: ὡς οὐδὲν ὑπεστείλαμην τῶν συμφερόντων τοῦ μὴ ἀναγγεῖλαι ὑμῖν καὶ διδάξαι ὑμᾶς δημοσίᾳ καὶ κατ' οἴκους, -- how I in no respect shrank back from announcing to you and teaching you publicly and house to house any of the things that are profitable

The ὡς clause is again dependent on the introductory verb ἐπίστασθε (you know); Paul says that in knowing his manner of life they also know that he did not back off from declaring to them any of the things that were profitable or of advantage (τῶν συμφερόντων). The metaphor in ὑπεστείλαμην is especially meaningful for one travelling by ship, for as a nautical term it meant to reef the sails; thus it came to have the meaning of withdrawing oneself, cowering, shrinking, even dissembling (Hebrews 10: 38). Classed as a verb of hindering it readily takes the articular infinitive construction, also with the redundant μή, as here. Paul's

refusal to water down the truth, and thus avoid some unpleasantness, is shown in such references as verse 27, I Thess. 2: 5; Gal. 4: 16; II Cor. 2: 17 and 4: 2ff. This he did both publicly and privately, (δημοσίᾳ and κατ' οἴκους). His public preaching and teaching (ἀναγγεῖλαι καὶ διδάξαι) would include his discourses in the synagogue and in the lecture hall of Tyrannus, though we need not restrict our understanding of it to these occasions, and the more private instruction was carried out on home visits.

Verse 21: διαμαρτυρόμενος Ἰουδαίους τε καὶ Ἕλλησιν τὴν εἰς θεὸν μετάνοιαν καὶ πίστιν εἰς τὸν κύριον ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦν. -- testifying under oath to both Jews and Greeks the repentance toward God and the faith in our Lord Jesus.

The circumstantial or modal participle διαμαρτυρόμενος further explicates what Paul means by his foregoing statement that he is not a shrinking violet when it comes to the proclamation of the truth, for the middle deponent verb διαμαρτύρομαι has the solemn meaning of charging, warning, putting under oath, or, more likely, as here, bearing witness under oath to both Jews and Gentiles of the repentance toward God and the faith in our Lord Jesus Christ; the one article with these two nouns ties the two concepts together, even as these two elements appear in all of Paul's preaching, no matter what group of people he was addressing. Either noun might have been employed alone here; the conclusion of the two makes the concept clearer and more effective. Lenski states: "The entire Gospel is centered in the 'repentance toward God and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ.' Let no man violate what Paul here says by persuading himself that this repentance and this faith signify two brief doctrines, all else in the Bible being immaterial,

non-fundamental..... Repentance includes all of the law, and faith all of the Gospel, and these two comprise the Scriptures."<sup>7</sup> It may seem strange that Paul here mentions Jews before Greeks, especially since he was conscious of his having been appointed an ambassador of Christ to the Gentile world; yet Paul never shrank from approaching the people from whom he had sprung, nor does he ever lose his deep concern for their eternal welfare.

Verse 22: καὶ νῦν ἰδοὺ δεδεμεμένος ἐγὼ τῷ πνεύματι πορεύομαι εἰς Ἱερουσαλήμ, τὰ ἐν αὐτῇ συναντήσονται μοι μὴ εἰδώς, -- And now, behold, I myself proceed to Jerusalem bound in spirit, not knowing the things that shall befall me in it (Jerusalem)

Paul now turns from his past life among them to the present and the future. The introductory words καὶ νῦν ἰδοὺ mark that turn to the present and call attention to what he is about to say. Though he is not in fact yet a prisoner of the state -- however, he will be shortly -- he has already been bound (perf. pass. part. δεδεμένος from δέω) in his spirit. That τῷ πνεύματι here means Paul's spirit, rather than the Holy Spirit, seems most probable both from the context and from Paul's use of the expression elsewhere in the sense of his own spirit. (Cf. I Cor. 5: 3; II Cor. 2: 13.) The agent of the binding is not expressed, but the Apostle recognizes throughout that it is the Holy Spirit who shapes his course and therefore constrains his spirit. Robertson construes the τῷ πνεύματι as an example of the locative with verbs.<sup>8</sup> J. A. Bengel suggests: "Paul knew that he would be bound: and already he was affected in mind as one bound, nor could he think of anything else."<sup>9</sup>

The 2nd perfect active participle εἰδώς may well be construed as a concessive use of the circumstantial participle, thus: "although not knowing"

expressly what he is going to meet with in Jerusalem, or rather, "the things that will meet me" (τὰ συναντήσοντά μου) -- a rare occurrence of the future participle in the New Testament.

Verse 23: πλὴν ὅτι τὸ πνεῦμα τὸ ἅγιον κατὰ πόλιν διαμαρτύρεταί μοι λέγον ὅτι δεσμὰ καὶ θλίψεις με μένουσιν. -- except that the Holy Spirit is solemnly testifying to me city by city saying that bonds and troubles await me.

Πλὴν may be understood here as a preposition with the following noun clause as its object; this introduces one exception to Paul's lack of knowledge, namely, the Holy Spirit's repeated testimony that both imprisonment (δεσμός) and afflictions or pressures (θλίψεις) await him (μένω here and in v. 5 used in a transitive sense, though nowhere else in the N. T.). Up to this point the Lukan account in Acts has furnished us no such instance of the Spirit's testimony, though later, in chapter 21, Luke will mention one notable example, the symbolically expressed prophecy of Agabus. The use of the present tense in διαμαρτύρεται makes clear that this testimony is an ongoing thing, and that Paul is now being frequently alerted to some "future shock."

Verse 24: ἀλλ' οὐδενὸς λόγου ποιῶμαι τὴν ψυχὴν τιμίαν ἑμαυτῷ ὡς τελειώσω τὸν δρόμον μου καὶ τὴν διακονίαν ἣν ἔλαβον παρὰ τοῦ κυρίου Ἰησοῦ, διαμαρτύρασθαι τὸ εὐαγγέλιον τῆς χάριτος τοῦ θεοῦ. -- But I consider my life worth no mention (nor) precious to myself, so that I may complete my course and the ministry which I received from the Lord Jesus, to testify under oath to the Gospel of the grace of God.

The strongly contrasting conjunction ἀλλά introduces Paul's assertion that he is not unduly shaken

by what the Holy Spirit is saying concerning his future. The first clause appears to be a combination of two Greek idioms: οὐδενὸς λόγου ποιοῦμαι τὴν ψυχὴν ἑμαυτοῦ (I hold my life of no account) and οὐ ποιοῦμαι (ἡγοῦμαι in Phil. 3: 7. 8) τὴν ψυχὴν τιμᾶν ἑμαυτῷ (I do not consider my life precious to myself.) This is not an absolute expression, as though Paul were saying that his life was of no account or value to him at all. It is said in the perspective of his calling; he devalues his own life in the light of that greater purpose for which his life is to be expendable, the course of service for the Lord Jesus Christ. The two nouns, δρόμος and διακονία, are surely closely related here and could well be translated as a hendiadys, "the course of my service." God had given him both the course he was to run and the service he was to perform in that course. Paul is therefore not concerned about himself for his own sake, but rather sublimates whatever might have been his own personal goals in order that he might complete (τελειώσω introduced by final particle ὡς, though variant has τελειῶσαι with consecutive ὡς) the work that had been divinely commissioned him.

That ministry he expresses in an appositional phrase employing the same word, διαμαρτυρεσθαι, that appears in verses 21, 23 and 24, and in simplex form in v. 26; the course of service committed to him is that of testifying, as if under oath, to the gospel of the grace of God. C. K. Barrett finds all these expressions individually distinctly Pauline, but not their combination; he therefore unhelpfully suggests that Luke in recording this speech "improbably represent(s) words that Paul actually used."<sup>10</sup> But words are there for their meaning, and the words here employed surely square with Paul's many expressions of the message he had been sent to proclaim. The εὐαγγέλιον of the Apostle is nothing less than the message of ἡ χάρις τοῦ θεοῦ; for Paul they were synonymous. When apparently at the close of his ministry he writes

to his co-worker Timothy, he states the completion of what he here declares by way of purpose: τὸν δρόμον τετέλεκα (II Timothy 4: 7.)

Verse 25: Καὶ νῦν ἰδοὺ ἐγὼ οἶδα ὅτι οὐκέτι ὄψεσθε τὸ πρόσωπόν μου ὑμεῖς πάντες ἐν οἷς διῆλθον κηρύσσων τὴν βασιλείαν -- And now, behold, I know that no longer will you all see my face among whom I went about proclaiming the kingdom;

As Paul returns to the matter which he has introduced in v. 22, he reemploys the same introductory words, καὶ νῦν ἰδοὺ, in order to gain further attention of the Ephesian representatives for what is obviously a saddening note for those whom he has summoned for this farewell: all these elders, or even all their fellow members at Ephesus, are no longer to see Paul's face. Attempts to interpret this clause as meaning that not all, but only some would not see him again, run into difficulties, not least of which is the understanding of the elders themselves as expressed in v. 38. Many find difficulty with Paul's simple assertion that he "knows" (οἶδα) that their seeing him is at an end. Earlier, in v. 22, he has stated that he does not know (μὴ εἰδώς) at least the specifics of what is in store for him, yet the bonds and the troubles foretold by the Holy Spirit led him to the conviction that these Ephesian elders would not see his face again. ὄψεσθε, the future of ὁράω, with its object τὸ πρόσωπον, does make it clear that Paul is speaking of his physical presence as something to be denied them. The letters to Timothy seem to indicate that Paul, contrary to his expectations, was permitted to return to this area, and even Ephesus. Perhaps Richard Rackham's suggestion is worthy of consideration: "But St. Paul is thinking, not so much of a literal glimpse with the eye, as of the constant beholding of his face in a regular ministry. The prophecy is true in this sense that his practical work was over."<sup>11</sup>



The relative clause ἐν οἷς διήλθον κηρύσσων τὴν βασιλείαν is a reiteration, in different words, of the gospel of the grace of God in v. 24. As a herald he ran through the gentile nations proclaiming the kingdom of God, which begins here in grace and ends above in glory. "The Gospel involves a kingdom. Repentance is the entrance to a society, and faith is the principle of life in it. This kingdom had been proclaimed by St. Paul at Ephesus (19: 8), and the doctrine of the church is one of the great subjects of the Epistle to the Ephesians. So here also the idea of the church is presented in rich variety. It is the kingdom and ecclesia of God, the flock which is God's peculiar possession, and the inheritance of the saints."<sup>12</sup>

Verse 26: διότι μαρτύρομαι ὑμῖν ἐν τῇ σήμερον ἡμέρᾳ ὅτι καθαρὸς εἰμι ἀπὸ τοῦ αἵματος πάντων, -- because of which (proclamation) I testify to you on this very day that I am clean of the blood of all,

Because of Paul's faithful proclamation of the Gospel he can claim freedom from responsibility for the final destiny of all who heard him.<sup>13</sup> A close linguistic parallel is found in Acts 18: 6, where Paul says to the unbelieving Jews of Corinth: τὸ αἷμα ἡμῶν ἐπὶ τὴν κεφαλὴν ὑμῶν καθαρὸς ἐγώ. The adverbial διότι (a combination of διὰ and ὅτι) bases Paul's assertion of guiltlessness here on his claim that he had carried out the ministry which he received, for he has proclaimed the kingdom; this fulfillment of his duty will be more clearly spelled out in the γάρ clause following. μαρτύρομαι is in the N. T. a strictly Pauline word, having the meaning of calling to witness, whereas the more common μαρτυρέω means to bear witness. Paul does so on this very day (ἐν τῇ σήμερον ἡμέρᾳ; cf. Norwegian "den dag idag"), the day of parting from them, a day Paul expects to be final in their personal association. It is a big claim for any

preacher to make, but one that ought to be true of all, that he has so conducted his ministry that he may not fall under the condemnation spoken of through the prophet Ezekiel: "When I say to the wicked, 'You shall surely die;' and you do not warn him or speak out to warn the wicked from his wicked way that he may live, that wicked man shall die in his iniquity, but his blood I will require at your hand." (Ezekiel 3: 18) Blood is used by metonymy for the guilt involved in bringing about someone's death, here spiritual and eternal death. From this great stain Paul is καθαρός, that is, clean or pure; here the word is used with the preposition ἀπό plus the genitive form (ablatival idea of separation), though the idea may be expressed simply by use of the genitive without the preposition. Πάντων is to be understood in the sphere in which he is speaking, namely to the Ephesian elders in particular and the Ephesian Christians in general. Paul is aware of the fact that not all obey the Gospel call (Romans 10: 16); Jews had rejected it, Gentiles had declined it. But any rejection of that Gospel was not to be charged to his failure to proclaim it rightly, and the only real responsibility of a messenger of the Lord is that he proclaim His Word faithfully (Jeremiah 23: 28).

Verse 27: οὐ γὰρ ὑπεστειλάμην τοῦ μὴ ἀναγγεῖλαι πᾶσαν τὴν βουλήν τοῦ θεοῦ ὑμῖν. -- for I did not reef my sails in reporting all the counsel of God to you.

This verse is an extension as well as an echo of verse 20. The conjunction γὰρ presents this verse as a reason for Paul's being clean from the blood of all, that he not only was a messenger of God, but also that he was a messenger who proclaimed all God's counsel. Again employing the phrase οὐ γὰρ ὑπεστειλάμην τοῦ μὴ ἀναγγεῖλαι (cf. v. 20), he now explains that the τῶν συμφερόντων consist of

πασα ἡ βουλή τοῦ θεοῦ. Bruce points out that the earlier phrase is to be understood in the light of the latter, for Paul had something else in mind with expediency or profitability than do most people.<sup>14</sup> Βουλή is the offspring of βούλομαι and signifies will or resolve or purpose. It is a Lucan word which he employs at least six times in reference to the plan and will of God, albeit primarily in reporting the speeches of others, as in 2: 23. What Paul here declares is not at odds with his statement to the Corinthians: "I determined not to know anything among you save Jesus Christ and Him crucified." (I Corinthians 2: 2) By the latter confession, as Franz Pieper says, "he simply teaches that the forgiveness of sins gained by the reconciling death of Christ is the center of the entire Christian doctrine."<sup>15</sup> Later Pieper says: "Everybody knows that Paul also taught the Law most powerfully; he showed at length that both Jews and Gentiles are all under sin (Romans 3: 9) and that all the world is guilty before God (Romans 3: 19). Everyone also knows that Paul taught, at great length and most earnestly, sanctification and good works; he demands that 'they who have come to faith in God be careful to maintain good works,' that they be 'zealous of good works' (Titus 3: 8. 14; 2: 14.)"<sup>16</sup>

It may well be that with "all the counsel of God" Paul especially has in mind the catholicity of the Gospel message, that the Gentiles are fellow-heirs, fellow-members, fellow-partakers in Christ Jesus (Cf. Eph. 3: 1-12). Lenski rightly points out that it is one thing for someone to disclaim such bloodguilt as Paul does in v. 26, and another thing for him to back it up as Paul did;<sup>17</sup> for not only does he here state that he proclaimed all the counsel of God, but the account of his ministry recorded in Acts and his own writings bears testimony to the truth of that assertion. And because of that faithfulness his following exhortation comes with the

greater impact. Paul would deal with himself first and then with others; he would ask others to do only what he has asked of himself.

Verse 28: προσέχετε ἑαυτοῦς καὶ παντὶ τῷ ποιμνίῳ, ἐν ᾧ ὑμᾶς τὸ πνεῦμα τὸ ἅγιον ἔθετο ἐπισκόπους, ποιμαίνειν τὴν ἐκκλησίαν τοῦ θεοῦ, ἣν περιεποιήσατο διὰ τοῦ αἵματος τοῦ ἰδίου. -- Be concerned about yourselves and all the flock among which the Holy Spirit appointed you bishops to shepherd the church of God, which He obtained for himself by payment of His own blood.

The verb προσέχετε may in form be either present indicative or present imperative, but the whole context calls for the latter. The full phrase of the idiom would call for τὸν νοῦν as the object of the verbal action, with the dative expressing that to which attention should be given, but the expression came to be used elliptically with the same meaning. Now that Paul has fulfilled his part in ministry to the people of Ephesus, the responsibility rests with the presbyters whom he has summoned for the very purpose of this instruction. Here, then, in this verse is the distillation of Paul's continuing pastoral concern for the sheep whom he now has to leave. And if those who now have the responsibility are to carry it out effectively, they have to begin with themselves -- προσέχετε ἑαυτοῦς.

This ongoing concern for and proper attention to themselves (emphasized by the linear force of the present imperative) should spill over into care for those who have been entrusted to them by the Holy Spirit himself. The word τὸ ποιμνιον, diminutive of ἡ ποιμνη, though never used by Paul in his epistles (He does infrequently employ related words) reminds us vividly of the figure of speech so beautifully employed by our Lord in His public ministry and by the prophets before Him, that is, before His

ministry in the flesh. The imagery is picked up again in the infinitive ποιμαίνειν that soon follows. The latter means to shepherd, with all that that concept entails; it is not to be restricted to feeding, but includes also leading, guarding, etc. A shepherd in the Scriptural mold does not fulfill his duties merely by providing fodder, though that aspect of the work is surely not to be minimized.

What is thus to be the concern of these leaders is the ἐκκλησία τοῦ θεοῦ, this ποιμνίον, which He has made His own possession (περιποιήσατε -- aorist of the one complete act) by the payment of a big price, the blood of Jesus Christ, which is here declared to be the blood of very God himself. (The several variants at this point, chiefly θεοῦ, κυρίου and a combination of these two, seem best explained on the basis of the first reading being the original.) We are not told by what specific means these people had been selected for their respective offices, but Paul does assert that, whatever the means, it was the Holy Spirit who was responsible for their position as ἐπίσκοποι.

Those whom Paul is addressing are the πρεσβύτεροι whom he has summoned from Ephesus (v.17); these are now called ἐπίσκοποι; they are really also called ποιμένες (shepherds), for Paul says that their duty is to be shepherds (ποιμαίνειν). This infinitive is best taken as infinitive of purpose, stating the purpose for which the Holy Spirit has made them bishops, though there are some who suggest making it an imperatival infinitive after a major punctuational break.<sup>18</sup> It would be difficult from this passage to posit any essential difference between elders (πρεσβύτεροι) and bishops (ἐπίσκοποι) -- or even shepherds (ποιμένες), for that matter, though that term is not used.

L. Coenen, while recognizing that the position of bishop was very likely to be distinguished from that of apostle and prophet, nevertheless contends that it was probably synonymous with that of shepherd and elder (ποιμήν and πρεσβύτερος). We summarize his study of ἐπίσκοπος and πρεσβύτερος as follows: Ἐπίσκοπος from Homer's time was used to describe a deity as one who keeps watch over a country or people, in particular over the keeping of treaties and the markets, but from the same time it was used as a title for men having responsible positions in the state, and later was extended as a term to religious communities. In the Septuagint it is used mostly for forms of the root paqad, originally meaning to take care of. Sometimes it was used for baqar, to investigate closely. Ἐπισκοπέω is found 150 times in the LXX, while ἐπισκοπέω is found only five times. Ἐπισκοπέω is also used for God's loving watchfulness over and solicitous care for the land, His people, and individuals. In the New Testament, words from this word group appear much more infrequently, with ἐπίσκοπος appearing only five times, one of these in reference to Christ (I Peter 2: 25). He concludes that the duty of pastoral oversight was originally a duty binding on all members, but that a change to a special office of oversight comes in Acts 20: 28.<sup>19</sup>

Herman Beyer in Kittel's Dictionary finds the term ἐπίσκοπος not used as denoting a closely defined office in the LXX, but being freely used in many ways. For the New Testament he likewise makes note of Christ's being called ἐπίσκοπος in I Peter 2: 25, then turns to the use of the word for men who are leaders in the religious community. Commenting on the verse before us, he says:

In Luke's introduction the Ephesian leaders are called πρεσβύτεροι. But Paul says to them: "Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to

all the flock, over which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers (bishops), to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood." It is significant 1. that all the πρεσβύτεροι without exception are called ἐπίσκοποι. They are elders in status (not in virtue of their age but in virtue of their position and accreditation), and they are bishops in responsibility. It is also significant 2. that this responsibility is described in terms of ποιμαίνειν, as in I Peter 2: 25 and 5: 2ff, though ἐπίσκοπος is preferred to ποιμήν. It is significant again 3. that there are several ἐπίσκοποι in the one congregation, none of which takes precedence. It is to be noted 4. that their calling to be bishops comes from the Holy Spirit. This does not exclude either election (cf. Ac. 1, 21ff; 6, 3ff.) or appointment by an apostle, possibly Paul himself (Ac. 14, 23). The decisive point, however, is the work of the Holy Spirit on which the sending and authority of their episcopate rest. Finally, it is important 5. that according to the context their task consists in a watchful and solicitous (both ideas are contained in ἐπισκοπεῖν) direction of the congregation on the basis of the redeeming work of Christ to which alone the community owes its existence.<sup>20</sup>

In I Timothy 3 and Titus 1 the qualifications for those who desire this office are spelled out, and those qualifications only serve to highlight the spirit of concern which such incumbents are to have for themselves and for those who are entrusted to their ministrations. What impresses itself upon one in this Acts passage is that the primary point of these designations is service, even as Christ made it clear that this is the essence of true discipleship (Matt. 20: 26).

Verse 29: ἐγὼ οἶδα ὅτι εἰσελεύσονται μετὰ τὴν ἄφιξίν λύκοι βαρεῖς εἰς ὑμᾶς μὴ φειδόμενοι τοῦ ποιμνίου, -- I know that after my departure there shall come among you rapacious wolves not sparing the flock,

The following three verses point up the special need for Paul's exhortation to the elders or bishops about shepherding the church. Paul speaks of his ἄφιξις, a word that has given exegetes some puzzlement because it is obviously derived from a word which means to arrive, ἀφικνεόμαι, while it obviously in many passages, even in classical Greek, has come to mean departure.<sup>21</sup> The fact that Paul is now speaking of his immediate departure and then of the future appearance of "wolves" lends itself very readily to this later concept of ἄφιξις as departure. After Paul's departure there will enter in literally heavy wolves, and we who use the term "heavy" to designate the bad character in a play, will understand. Wolves are predatory animals, and Paul is concerned about their possible depredations here; the expression μὴ φειδόμενοι, not sparing, is a form of litotes or understatement, for the wolf is bent on destruction.

Verse 30: καὶ ἐξ ὑμῶν αὐτῶν ἀναστήσονται ἄνδρες λαλοῦντες διεστραμμένα τοῦ ἀποσπᾶν τοὺς μαθητὰς ὀπίσω αὐτῶν. -- and from you yourselves there shall arise men speaking distorted (ideas) in order to drag away the disciples after them.

The argument that has arisen over the source(s) of these wolves and whether they will all wear sheep's clothing or not, is resolved at least in part by Paul's clear statement that from the midst of the Ephesian congregation -- or even from the midst of those who are now the duly appointed bishops -- this enemy will arise. It is difficult enough when the enemies who attack are from the



outside, but when they are from among those who have been counted as friends, they are doubly dangerous, for the sheep (and the shepherds) are much more loath to classify them as enemies. Sad to say, these false teachers are able to draw away disciples not in spite of their distorted and twisted (δυστραμμένα) ideas, but by means of them.

Verse 31: *δὺὸ γρηγορεῖτε, μνημονεύοντες ὅτι τριετίαν νύκτα καὶ ἡμέραν οὐκ ἔπαυσάμην μετὰ δακρύων νουθετῶν ἕνα ἕκαστον.* -- Wherefore keep awake, remembering that for a three year period I did not cease admonishing each one with tears night and day.

Because of the reality of rapacious wolves, they who serve as ἐπίσκοποι are to be Gregorys, they are to stay awake (γρηγορεῖτε -- late present imperative from the second perfect ἐγρήγαρα of ἐγείρω, to arouse). That watching is to be given incentive by their memory of how Paul constantly for three years did not cease in his efforts to remind, instruct and warn the Ephesians. If eternal vigilance is the price of civil liberty, it surely is for the spiritual liberty of the sons of God.

Verse 32: *καὶ τὰ νῦν παρατίθεμαι ὑμᾶς τῷ θεῷ καὶ τῷ λόγῳ τῆς χάριτος αὐτοῦ τῷ δυναμένῳ οἰκοδομῆσαι καὶ δοῦναι τὴν κληρονομίαν ἐν τοῖς ἡγιασμένοις πᾶσιν.* -- And now I commend you to God and the word of His grace which is able to edify you and give you the inheritance among all the sanctified (people).

When Paul handed over the reigns of responsibility here in Ephesus, he used the same word which the Son of God used from the cross in committing His spirit to His Father, παρατίθημι. That Father also has a Word of grace for such as are commended to Him. That word is able to edify, that is, build

up both shepherds and sheep and bestow upon them the inheritance which is already the full enjoyment of those who are sanctified, i.e., in heaven. That hope bound Paul very closely with those whom he was now about to leave.

Verses 33-35: ἀργυρίου ἢ χρυσοῦ ἢ ἱματισμοῦ οὐδενὸς ἐπεθύμησα· αὐτοὶ γινώσκετε ὅτι ταῖς χρεῖαις μου καὶ τοῖς οὖσιν μετ' ἐμοῦ ὑπηρέτησαν αἱ χεῖρες αὐταί. πάντα ὑπέδειξα ὑμῖν ὅτι οὕτως κοπιῶντας δεῖ ἀντιλαμβάνεσθαι τῶν ἀσθενούντων, μνημονεύειν τε τῶν λόγων τοῦ κυρίου Ἰησοῦ ὅτι αὐτὸς εἶπεν, Μακάριόν ἐστὶν μᾶλλον διδόναι ἢ λαμβάνειν. -- Gold or silver or clothing I coveted from no one; you yourselves are aware of (the fact) that these hands served my own needs and (served) those who were with me. Regarding all things I showed you that by thus laboring you ought to attend to the weak and to remember the words of the Lord Jesus, that He himself said, Blessed is it rather to be giving than to be taking.

These verses were not included in the assigned section for study. They are often given short shrift, as they will be now. But from Paul's own life and ministry they are an appeal to his successors to perform their office in the spirit of service advocated by our Lord in the saying here recorded, but even more impressively demonstrated in this that He "though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, that ye through his poverty might be rich." (II Corinthians 8: 9)

## NOTES

1. Henry Alford, The Greek Testament, Longmans, Green, and Co., 1899, Vol. II, p. 227.
2. F. F. Bruce, The Acts of the Apostles, Eerdmans, 1965, p. 377.
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4. R. C. H. Lenski, The Interpretation of the Acts of the Apostles, Lutheran Book Concern, 1934, p. 834.
5. Compare Luke 19: 41 and Christ's tears over Jerusalem.
6. Lenski, p. 835.
7. Lenski, p. 836.
8. Robertson, p. 523.
9. John Albert Bengel, Gnomon of the New Testament, Sheldon & Co., 1860, Vol. I, p. 886.
10. Charles K. Barrett, "Paul's Address to the Ephesian Elders," from God's Christ and His People, Edited by Nervell and Meeks, Universitetsforlaget, Oslo, 1977, p. 112.
11. Richard Belward Rackham, The Acts of the Apostles, Baker 1964, p. 390, footnote 3.
12. Rackham, p. 392.

13. Barrett, p. 113.
14. Bruce, p. 380.
15. Francis Pieper, *Christian Dogmatics*, CPH 1950,  
Vol. I, p. 139.
16. Pieper, Vol. II, p. 513.
17. enski, p. 841.
18. Bruce, p. 380.
19. Brown, New International Dictionary of N. T.  
Theology, Zondervan, Vol. I, pp. 188ff.
20. Kittel, Theological Dictionary of the N. T.  
Eerdmans 1964, pp. 599ff.
21. Bruce, p. 381.

--- J. B. Madson

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For the pastoral office in this country, and to get along with (these) people without sacrificing love or the truth, one needs not only a certain measure of grace and talent, but also an unusually sanctified temperament. -- The Notebook of a Colonial Clergyman (H. M. Muhlenberg) p. 37.

## THE LC-MS ST. LOUIS CONVENTION 1981

### Report and Analysis

Fellowship between the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod and the American Lutheran Church began and ended with the presidency of J.A.O. Preus. The vote to declare fellowship in 1969 passed by 84 votes, the vote being 522-438; in 1981 the St. Louis convention terminated that fellowship by 96 votes, 590-494. It might be debatable to what extent Dr. Preus was responsible for the ALC fellowship (remember his words at Denver "I can live with it"), but there is no question that he was instrumental in terminating that fellowship, though he gave the impression in his presidential message that he could also live with continued fellowship with the ALC, should the convention decide to do so.

Preceding the resolution to break was a Preamble which called attention to the many things that the two church bodies have in common, particularly this that the constitutions of both synods bind themselves to the Holy Scriptures and the Lutheran Confessions and that both churches are formally committed to the central doctrine of the Reformation -- justification by grace through faith in Christ. Believing that true doctrinal unity existed between the two churches when fellowship was declared, the Preamble pointed out that the doctrinal differences between them had become increasingly pronounced during the twelve years that fellowship had been in effect. Some of the doctrinal problems include the inspiration, inerrancy, and authority of the Holy Scriptures; the meaning and implications of confessional subscription;

the nature and basis of fellowship; the ordination of women to the pastoral office; membership in ecumenical organizations such as the World Council of Churches; and varying practices regarding anti-Christian organizations. Because of a growing disagreement in these doctrinal areas, the LCMS convention in 1977 declared itself to be in a state of "fellowship in protest" and authorized its representatives to the ALC/LCMS Commission on Fellowship to distribute in the coming biennium a clear and documented statement on the existing area of doctrinal disagreements between the two church bodies. This Statement of Doctrinal Differences was distributed to all LCMS congregations in January 1981 and subsequently has received wide distribution throughout the ALC. However, the 1981 report of the LCMS representatives on the Commission on Fellowship stated that the discussions had not resolved the differences that led the LCMS to initiate "fellowship in protest" in 1977. The Preamble goes on to say:

The decision facing the LCMS is complicated by the fact that the two church bodies have quite different convictions about the implications of our doctrinal differences for church fellowship. For the ALC, fellowship between the Lutheran church bodies is a rather basic relationship reflecting a somewhat minimal agreement in the Gospel and the Sacraments; in this view, doctrinal differences are to be tolerated both within and between Lutheran church bodies, and are therefore not divisive or disruptive of altar and pulpit fellowship. However, for the LCMS altar and pulpit fellowship between church bodies is the deepest and closest possible relationship precisely because it is based on comprehensive agreement in the Biblical and Confessional doctrine of the

Gospel and in all its articles, and in the right administration of the Holy Sacraments. In the LCMS view, doctrinal differences cannot be tolerated either within or between church bodies and are by their very nature disruptive and divisive of altar and pulpit fellowship.

The Preamble concluded that the essential facts are these: (1) both the ALC and the LCMS acknowledge that they have doctrinal disagreements; (2) the church bodies have not been successful in resolving their doctrinal differences in spite of twelve years of doctrinal discussion, including four years of fellowship in protest; and (3) for the LCMS, such doctrinal differences are disruptive of altar and pulpit fellowship.

The chairman of the Floor Committee on Church Relations introduced Res. 3-01 which called for the LCMS to declare that it was no longer in pulpit and altar fellowship with The American Lutheran Church. He pointed out to the delegates that they were not discussing cases of casuistry that arise, nor were they talking about the fellowship of faith, nor of the excommunication of the American Lutheran Church, nor was the committee proposing that discussions with the ALC be eliminated. He also reminded the delegates that the 1979 convention had resolved that if progress had not been made in achieving agreement, it would result in the breaking of the fellowship.

The discussion on the floor was spirited, though lacking was the bitterness which characterized the 1973 New Orleans and the 1975 Anaheim conventions where there were disruptions and walk-outs. The tenor of this convention was much better. The moderates, though, pulled out all the stops. An amendment was introduced which read, "Resolved,

that the above declaration does not bind the conscience of those congregations and pastors who believe that there is sufficient consensus toward their continued practice of altar and pulpit fellowship at this time." During the discussion an amendment to the amendment was proposed to eliminate the word "pulpit" from the amendment. Both were voted down.

After the vote had been taken to sever fellowship one of the delegates who voted with the majority moved to reconsider since the vote was so close. One thing should be mentioned in this connection and that is that in his presidential address Dr. Preus reported that on June 14 (just a few days before the convention) he had received a letter from Dr. David Preus (his counterpart in the ALC) that he (David) was going to recommend to the church council of the ALC which was scheduled to meet June 22-26 the following: "That the ALC Church Council invite the LCMS to join in encouraging widespread regional and local consultations regarding the continuance or non-continuance of altar and pulpit fellowship between the two churches, such consultations to precede any action to terminate fellowship between our churches." In his reply on June 19, Dr. J.A.O. Preus said that the recommendation "is most welcome to us." Then he went on to say in his message: "If we in this convention decide to accede to the request of the Church Council of the ALC that fellowship not be broken and that discussions be held, then this calls for the finest kind of churchmanship on our part." Again: "It could be a very interesting and exciting experience for us in thousands of locations around the country really to talk forthrightly with other Lutherans relative to the differences between our respective churches and our own understanding of the Scripture and the Lutheran Confessions. It is very evident that



Missouri does not want to go into isolation in which under the pretext of being afraid of unionism or contaminating ourselves we simply withdraw from all discussions with all people with whom we are not in total doctrinal agreement."

This caught members of the CTCR off guard and some were visibly upset over this unexpected twist. The ALC Council had rejected such a proposal two years ago from Missouri, but now just a few days before the convention they were willing to have multilevel discussions. It was definitely a last-minute ploy to delay the break. The moderates were quick to pick this up. In a substitute motion one of the whereases stated that "since the Church Council of the ALC had recently invited the LCMS to join in widespread local and regional consultations regarding continuance of fellowship and our own synodical president has responded that such multilevel discussions are most welcome (emphasis ours) that therefore be it "Resolved that we continue our present fellowship relationship with the ALC until such discussions are concluded and recommendations acted upon." This motion was voted down 611-474.

The vote to reconsider the original motion was brought up the next day and after listening to a number of options and hearing from President-elect Bohlman, who spoke against reconsideration, the delegates declined to reopen discussion of Res. 3-01. Fellowship with the American Lutheran Church had been severed. Resolution 3-01 also called for trust and understanding, patience and love, in dealing with situations where congregations and pastors were involved in joint fellowship efforts and the same resolution called for LCMS congregations and pastors "to provide responsible pastoral care to individuals of the ALC" and also "to pursue doctrinal discussions with the ALC

with the prayer that the Lord of the Church will send His Holy Spirit to guide and bless those discussions, to enable both church bodies to reach agreement in doctrine and practice and thereby hasten the day when the two church bodies can enjoy God-pleasing altar and pulpit fellowship."

With the adoption of Res. 3-05 the LCMS decided to continue its membership in LCUSA. Synodical representatives on the Council were asked "to continue to provide Scriptural and Confessional witness to the doctrinal and ethical issues confronting Lutheranism in America" and the Board of Directors were asked to continue to evaluate the cost of membership in the Council in relation to benefits received and avenues for services provided.

Bishops James Crumley (LCA) and David Preus (ALC) were introduced after the fellowship vote had been taken. Their remarks must have been embarrassing to the conservatives. Both of them took the occasion to berate Missouri for her fellowship action. Crumley, who spoke first, referred to "the historical accidents" that have separated Lutherans and said that "it was high time to rise above them." He referred to the divisions in the Lutheran Church as "scandalous" and reported that the LCA was "filled with joy at the imminent prospects of closer relationships with other denominations" and he mentioned the Episcopal, Reformed Methodists, other Protestant denominations as well as Roman Catholics.

Bishop David Preus had a listening audience among the 494 who voted against the break and he took the opportunity to thank them. He expressed the regret that the LCMS would not be walking with the ALC on the path of merger with the LCA and the AELC. He referred to "the overwhelming doctrinal

agreement" among the Lutherans, mentioning in particular the Trinity, justification by faith, the work of the Holy Spirit in bringing people to faith, and the authority of Holy Scripture. He acknowledged that there were some differences but that they could be debated without being divisive, and he compared matters such as inerrancy and ordination of women to slavery and usury, which were debated and peacefully resolved years ago and he expressed the hope that these other matters could also have been resolved in time. He felt badly that Missouri had decided to go into isolation.

In evaluating the St. Louis convention we must acknowledge that it is truly remarkable that a church body the size of Missouri took the action that it did in terminating fellowship with the ALC. It just isn't theologically fashionable to sever fellowship in this ecumenical age when the cry for union is getting louder by the day. The CTCR must be given credit for doing its homework and presenting the fellowship matter in a clear and convincing manner. However, the closeness of the vote spells problems for Missouri. There were 494 delegates who voted against the break. How will they react? It is no secret that many in Missouri share the position of the ALC on church fellowship and it would be naive to think that unionistic practices will now cease. One delegate at the convention told us that the synodical resolution was not binding upon him because only local congregations could make these decisions and he said that his congregation would continue to practice fellowship with the ALC, and he lives in a district where he will probably get away with it. If that attitude is widespread (and it certainly must be in liberal districts) then it is going to be virtually impossible to carry out discipline and if discipline is not exercised the punch of Res. 3-01 will be

softened and in time it could be meaningless, because everybody would be pretty much free to do as they please. At New Orleans in 1973, Missouri said that "false doctrine cannot be tolerated in the church of God." At St. Louis she said "that doctrinal differences cannot be tolerated either within or between church bodies and are by their very nature disruptive and divisive of altar and pulpit fellowship." Those are good words and we hope and pray that Missouri will be given the strength and courage to carry through.

While we rejoice over the fellowship action it would be naive on our part to jump to the conclusion that now all is well and that we can soon resume fellowship with Missouri. We broke with Missouri in 1955 over church fellowship. While the break with the ALC is a big step in the right direction, that does not automatically mean that we are in agreement with Missouri now on the doctrine of fellowship itself. History reminds us that Missouri tolerated the signers of the forty-four, even though their statement was called false doctrine. In 1944 at its Saginaw convention, Missouri made the distinction between joint prayer and prayer fellowship, something which she had not done previously because she considered that distinction to be unwarranted. Her position on fellowship permitted her to join the NLC and later LCUSA and she entered into fellowship with the ALC when there was not full doctrinal agreement. Nor must we forget Theology of Fellowship Part II which our ELS rejected in the 1960's. At this point it is difficult to determine just what Missouri's doctrine of fellowship is.

Another unresolved issue is membership in LCUSA. The St. Louis convention resolved to retain its membership in it. The ELS declined to participate in

meetings leading to the organization of LCUSA because the proposed organization was predicated on the recognition of one another as brethren without agreement in doctrine. Still another road-block to fellowship is woman suffrage. We were pleased to note that there were several overtures before the convention and the CTCR was requested to complete the assignment given to it at the Dallas convention, namely to restudy this whole matter. We can only hope that this study will lead Missouri back to its former scriptural position on the role of women in the church.

Then there are some off-tune voices being heard in Missouri on the doctrine of justification. The St. Louis convention urged the CTCR to make a study of the doctrine of justification which gives proper expression to all the aspects of what the Scriptures teach on this matter. In the meantime the members of the Synod are to uphold and honor the Synod's position on justification as expressed in the Brief Statement.

It is certainly our sincere prayer that these matters may be resolved in a God-pleasing manner and that we may have an opportunity to discuss these issues and bring our witness. The convention did pass a resolution requesting meetings with the ELS and WELS, to engage in doctrinal discussions. If and when we receive this invitation we will surely give it our prayerful consideration. In view of the fellowship break and especially if there is a determined effort to exercise discipline in Missouri, the climate might just be right for a fruitful discussion of the issues that stand between us. This grant us, dear Father in heaven!

-- Wilhelm W. Petersen

## HOW SHOULD A PASTOR DEAL WITH THE NEW MORALITY?

The topic assigned me for this conference is in the form of the question that heads this paper: "How should a pastor deal with the new morality?" When I heard of this assignment last fall, the first thing that popped into my mind was the question asked by "The Preacher" of the Old Testament: "Is there anything whereof it may be said, See, this is new?" And we know how he answered his own question: "It has been already of old time, which was before us." And so, when we speak of the "new morality" it is in one sense a misnomer. Because, the things that we usually consider as being part of the "new morality" -- living together before marriage, extra marital sex, abortion, homosexuality, lesbianism -- are really not "new" but are as old as the fallen world itself. The "new morality" is really the "old pagan immorality." It is an old dead skeleton dressed up in some bright new clothing.

What makes it "new," I suppose, is that voices within the visible Christian community have in the last decades been speaking favorably of an ethic, or moral standard, that is not really Christian but pagan. Joseph Fletcher's Situation Ethics (Westminster Press, Philadelphia, 1966) is a leading example of such a voice. The author of this book was formerly Dean of St. Paul's Cathedral, Cincinnati, and later on became Professor of Social Ethics at the Episcopal Theological School, Cambridge, Massachusetts. Here, mind you, is a supposed Christian theologian proposing with regard to moral standards things that are clearly and undeniably opposed to the moral standards set forth in the Bible.

Fletcher repeatedly makes it clear that he does not accept the Bible as the authoritative Word of God, neither does he accept the Scriptural standards of morality. He states that he rejects "all 'revealed' norms or laws but the one command -- to love God in the neighbor." (p. 26) He goes on to say that "the situationist enters into every decision-making situation fully armed with the ethical maxims of his community and its heritage, and he treats them with respect as illuminators of his problems. Just the same he is prepared in any situation to compromise them or set them aside in the situation if love seems better served by doing so." (p. 26) According to Fletcher, if a lie is told unlovingly it is wrong, evil; if it is told in love it is good, right." (p. 65) A constant theme of his is this: "Only one thing is intrinsically good, namely, love; nothing else at all." (p. 65) With regard to pre-marital or extra-marital sex, Fletcher says: "If people do not believe it is wrong to have sex relations outside of marriage, it isn't, unless they hurt themselves, their partners, or others." (p. 140) Briefly, his ethic philosophy is this" "In short, is there any real 'law' of universal weight? The situationist thinks not." (p. 146)

How widely Fletcher's type of situation ethics has taken hold, even in liberal Lutheran circles, is demonstrated by statements like the following, which appeared in a Lutheran Youth Publication some years ago: "After all, who is to say whether or not something is really right or wrong? What's wrong for somebody else may be perfectly all right for me, so how can anyone draw a dividing line? Well, if no one else is able, justifiably, to tell us exactly what is included under 'right' and under 'wrong,' then there is only one solution left -- each of us must make up his own mind." (SPIRIT, February, 1967)

The breakdown of morals in our 20th Century society can also in large part be attributed to the influence of the humanistic philosophy that pervades the land, and which all the time is growing in prominence, especially in the field of public education. We quote at length from the Humanist's Creed, The Humanist Manifesto II:

We affirm that moral values derive their sources from human experience. Ethics is autonomous and situational, needing no theological or ideological sanction. Ethics stems from human need and interest. To deny this distorts the whole basis of life. Human life has meaning because we create and develop our futures. . . . We reject all religious, ideological, or moral codes that denigrate the individual, suppress freedom, dull intellect, dehumanize personality. . . . In the area of sexuality, we believe that intolerant attitudes, often cultivated by orthodox religions and puritanical cultures, unduly oppress sexual conduct. The right to birth control, abortion, and divorce should be recognized. While we do not approve of exploitive, denigrating forms of sexual expression, neither do we wish to prohibit, by law or social sanction, sexual behavior between consenting adults. The many varieties of sexual exploration should not in themselves be considered 'evil.' Without countenancing mindless permissiveness or unbridled promiscuity, a civilized society should be a tolerant one. Short of harming others or compelling them to do likewise, individuals should be permitted to express their sexual proclivities and pursue their life-styles as they desire."

If that is the philosophy that is being advocated by more and more teachers and professors at many



public high schools, colleges, and universities, and it is, is it any wonder that many of our young people are being drawn away from Biblical moral standards that they have learned at home and in the church?

Carl E. Braaten, in an article written for DIALOG entitled Sex, Marriage, and the Clergy, refers to three significant events in America in the last forty years that have paved the way for the sexual revolution that is now under way. He writes: "When thousands of GI's hit college campuses in the 1940's, after tasting the ecstasy of Paris, Hamburg, Rome, and Hong Kong, prevailing sexual mores were jolted. In the first years of the 1960's, when the birth control pill was made available for general consumption, the movement for family planning, which struggled for acceptance in the 30's, was home free. Relationship between men and women would never again be the same. The liberation of women from a variety of perceived bondages was clearly tied to liberation from the biological reproductive function. The final, decisive plank was nailed to the platform of sexual liberation when the Supreme Court of the United States struck down all restrictive abortion laws in 1973, making abortion on demand the practical reality all across the land."

Whether Braaten is right or wrong in his analysis of what provoked the sexual revolution, the fact remains that the sexual revolution is upon us, and the fruit it has borne, and is bearing, is not good. In 1980, more than a million teen-age girls became pregnant, and of those 38 percent, or 380,000, had abortions. Teen-age pregnancies account for 46 percent of all illegitimate births. Nearly 600,000 babies are born each year to girls between ten and eighteen; teen abortions average 400,000 a year --

31 percent of all abortions. It is very clear that for more and more the sex act has been separated from pro-creation and tied very strongly to pleasure only.

In our society today pre-marital sex and extra-marital sex are considered the norm, and there are great pressures placed on all young people to engage in sex before marriage, to terminate unwanted pregnancies by abortion, to live together outside of marriage. And these pressures come from many directions -- the mass media, the popular literature and films of the day, the influence of the peer group, and just the general decadent moral climate that permeates the whole of society today.

Clare Booth Luce, in an address to the IBM "Golden Circle Conference" in the spring of 1978, entitled "Is the New Morality Destroying America," has some sobering things to say about the problems facing our country in the matter of moral breakdown.

"There is no doubt that what most Americans mean when they speak of the 'new morality' is the 'new sexual morality' which holds that 'anything goes' between consenting adults in private -- and that almost anything also goes in public. The English critic, Malcolm Muggeridge, had America muchly in mind when he wrote, 'Sex is the ersatz, or substitute religion of the 20th Century.'

"The social results of this new American ersatz religion are best seen in statistics, most of which you can find in your Almanac. Today 50 percent of all marriages end in divorce, separation, or desertion. The average length of a marriage is seven years. The marriage rate and birth rate are falling.

The number of one-parent families and one-child families is rising. More and more young people are living together without the benefit of marriage. Many view the benefit as dubious. Pre-marital and extra-marital sex no longer raises parental or conjugal eyebrows. The practice of 'swinging,' or group sex, which the ancients called 'orgies,' has come even to middle class suburbia.

"Despite the availability of contraceptives, there has been an enormous increase in illegitimate births, especially among 13-15 year-olds. Half of the children born last year in Washington, the nation's capitol, were illegitimate. The incidence of venereal diseases is increasing. Since the Supreme Court decision made abortion on demand legal, women have killed more than six million of their unborn, unwanted children. The rate of reported incest, child molestation, rape, and child and wife abuse, is steadily mounting. . .

"Homosexuality and Lesbianism are increasingly accepted as natural and alternative 'life styles.' 'MS,' the official Women's Lib publication, has proclaimed that 'until all women are Lesbians, there will be no true political revolution.' By the same token, of course, until all men are homosexuals, the revolution will be only half a revolution. In passing, the success of the Lesbian-Gay revolution would end all revolutions -- by ending the birth of children.

"But the most obscene American phenomenon of all is the growth of commercialized sex and hard and soft-core pornography. In the last decade, hard-core film and print porn, which features perversion, sadism, and masochism,

has become a billion dollar business. It is a business that is not only tolerated, but defended by the press in the sacred name of 'freedom of the press.' One would find it easier to believe in this noble reason for defending the filth that is flooding the nation if the newspapers did not reap such handsome profits from advertising and reviewing porn. In my view, newspaper publishers who carry X-rated ads are no better than pimps for the porn merchants. Billy Graham may have been exaggerating when he said, 'America has a greater obsession with sex than Rome ever had.' But he was not exaggerating very much.

"Now when we examine the 'new' sexual morality, what do we discover? We discover that the new sexual morality comes perilously close to being the old universal sexual immorality, whose appearance has again and again portended the decline of and fall of past civilizations."

After such a thorough outlining of America's moral problems, one would have wished the speaker to have directed her listeners back to the Bible standards of morality as an answer to the problem, rather than the citing of Goethe's deathbed advice to the world he was departing: "Let every man keep his own household clean and soon the whole world will be clean."

As pastors who are faced with dealing with the effects that the "new morality generation" has on our parishioners, we should remember that we do still have that "more sure Word of prophecy" that we can take heed unto -- the Word of an unchanging God, the Word that is "profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly

furnished unto all good works." II Timothy 3:16b-17

We should not as pastors be surprised that also our members are influenced by the ways of the world in the matters of the "new morality" philosophy. For, even though, they are children of God by their faith in Christ Jesus, they are also still very much flesh and blood, and so easily swayed by the things of this world that appeal to flesh and blood. So, while it is a distressing thing for a pastor to learn that 17-year-old Susie is on the "pill," 18-year-old Mary is contemplating an abortion, 19-year-old John has moved in with his girlfriend, and 55-year-old Bob and Ruth are calling it quits after thirty years of marriage, because they aren't experiencing a "meaningful" relationship any more, yet a pastor will not be too surprised by any and all of such happenings, because that's just the way our sinful world is. And we know that the Devil works hardest on those of this world who have been trained in the school of the Holy Spirit, and he will succeed all too often in getting them to leave the paths of the Lord and to follow the degenerating pathways of this world. And while we know full well that our people are to be, as the Bible puts it, "in the world, but not of the world," yet, because of the weakness of the sinful flesh, they are all too often both "in" the world and "of" the world. In dealing with the "new morality" of our present generation it is well for us as pastors to recognize that the "new morality" is just another ploy of the Devil, and that his ploys are always aimed at Christian people, as well as others -- and even more so.

Does this mean that as pastors we simply throw up our hands in despair and say: "It's a rotten world we live in; who can combat it?" No, we do not. We meet the "new morality" with the Word of God and with prayer. God's Law must be set forth in all its clarity in respect to the very things

in which the "new morality" advocates are leading people astray. God's Word does have a message for 17-year-old Susie who is on the pill so that she can engage in sex before marriage "safely." To Susie the Bible says: "Fornication, and all uncleanness, or covetousness, let it not be once named among you as becometh saints." Ephesians 5:3 "Abstain from fornication." Acts 15:20 God's Word does have a message for Mary who is contemplating an abortion, because she doesn't want the child she is carrying when she isn't married. To Mary the Bible says: "Thou shalt not kill." Exodus 20:13 God's Word does have a message for John who has chosen to by-pass marriage, but at the same time wants to partake of the privileges that only marriage allows. To John the Bible says: "Let marriage be held in honor by all. Fornicators and adulterers God will judge." Hebrews 13:4 God's Word does have a message for Bob and Ruth who have decided to end their marriage of 30 years in a divorce court. To them the Bible says: "What God hath joined together let not man put asunder." Matthew 19:6 Simplistic answers to complex problems? I suppose. But the Bible's guidelines for Christian living are simple. The guidelines for living that the "new morality" prophets set forth are complicated and complex.

For those pastors throughout our land who have been trained in liberal seminaries, where the Bible has not been viewed as all that authoritative, it would be more difficult to handle the "new morality" situation on the basis of Scripture. One who has written at length on this subject, has described it well when he says:

"One is especially not going to say 'Thus saith the Lord,' when one knows he should not know what the Lord says. After all,

only the old-fashioned authoritarian, arrogant Herr Pastor of the past, those who make good senior pastor material, ever would come down so heavy-handed as all that. From the first college course in the scriptures to the last seminar on exegesis in seminary, we all learned how complex the Bible really is. Who knows when we have the real words of Jesus? Who can really explain the Sitz im Leben and know just how we dare apply this word today? When is it Heilegeschichte and when is it Horsesgeschichte? If I cannot know the will of the Lord after all that study of the scriptures, how can I possibly understand the complexities of society to know how the message out to be applied . . .

"Another good pastoral move, having mentioned love often enough so that there is no danger of being thought a legalist, is to describe as many events as possible as celebrations. Then smile from ear to ear, and teach and preach in such a way that nobody comes up with a heavy bag of guilt. Guilt -- what a dirty word that is. Guilt -- that God-given sense of disharmony which arises within when one acts contrary to what he believes -- must be done away with. Guilt is washed away by eroding those standards for behavior which produce it. The law is abolished so that each man and woman can do what he or she sees to be right in his or her own eyes. Responsibly, of course. In the new jargon, we learn to be comfortable with ourselves and feel good about ourselves.

"Pastors confronted with all this often want to become messianic counselors. Unable to know the will of God or read the complexities of society, one can at least do some good to someone. Counseling is in, prophetic

utterance is out. The prophetic nerve of the church has been cut; and the land and the church are parched with thirst.

"Too many crises have been attacked from a counseling perspective -- we can solve everything if we can just get enough counselors and enough people into counseling. If it continues, the populace will indeed be divided into kinds: The counselors and the counselees. Often it may be hard to tell which is which . . .

"People want and need some answers. Are there no alternatives to pat answers? Is there no alternative to the sloppy cheap grace we have been so prone to offer, lest we be offensive? Are there really no answers with enduring depth about love, fidelity, premarital sex, adultery, and divorce? If not, we may as well admit it and urge our people to read PLAYBOY, where certainty reigns supreme . . .

"There is little honest struggle with problems, little seeking of truth, if all we have to say is how we feel about a given issue.

'I feel this way, how do you feel? And you can be sure that I will respect your feelings; you've got as much right to your feelings as I have.' That outlook never gives anyone the courage to say, 'This is right; that is wrong.'

(DIALOG)

As pastors we are not, of course, the "police-men" of our people. It is neither our business nor responsibility to do "detective" work to determine who of our members are on the "pill," "shacked up," or having an abortion. It is our business to preach and teach the Word of God, rightly dividing the word of truth for our people. This means that we are to



present the Law, so that it convicts of sin, and brings low the haughty and proud spirit. But it means also to present the Gospel of forgiveness in Christ, so that the troubled in heart and mind are assured and comforted.

The fact that we are not policemen or detectives, however, does not mean that we as pastors are to hide our heads like ostriches in the sand. When it has been brought to our attention that our members are living in open violation of a command of God, we must as pastors deal with the situation on a personal basis.

Since one of the most common situations of our day is that of young couples living together before marriage, what shall a pastor do when such is brought to his attention. He can't just ignore it. The matter has to be dealt with. We would like to share with you a letter that a certain pastor wrote to a young girl who had moved away from the home congregation, and had become involved in a "live in" situation with her boy friend. (The names have been changed to protect the innocent)

"Dear Julie:

Today your Dad took me out to lunch, and as we were driving home from the restaurant, he told me that there was something he had to talk to me about because it was really bothering him. I could tell during the lunch hour that there was something on your Dad's mind, and I suspected that he wasn't just taking me out to lunch for the sake of taking me out to lunch. You know, of course, what was bothering your Dad, Julie. He and your mother are very upset and down in the dumps over the fact that you recently have moved in with your fiance, when the two of you are

not yet married. Julie, your parents have just cause for being disturbed. As your pastor, I too am very saddened by what you are doing. What you are doing in this matter is totally wrong. I know that what you and your fiance are doing has become a very common thing in our day, but that doesn't make it right. Sometimes Christians like yourself can be swayed into doing things that are wrong, and then silence their conscience by saying that it can't be so very wrong if so many are doing it. Julie, we never want to be guided in our life as Christians by what "the majority" are doing, nor by what society sets up as being allowable and OK.

What we are dealing with here, Julie, is the matter of the Sixth Commandment. When a young man and a young woman decide to live together, acting like man and wife, but by-passing the laws of marriage, that's fornication or adultery. Not only are we breaking state laws when we do this, but what is more important is that we are breaking the Law of God. And as young Christians we do not want to be found doing that. In your Catechism instruction you learned the Sixth Commandment. Remember what it says, Julie: "You Shall Not Commit Adultery." What does this mean? "We should fear and love God, so that we lead a chaste and decent life in word and deed, and that husband and wife each love and honor the other." One of the questions and answers you learned when studying this Commandment was this: "Why has God given us the Sixth Commandment?" Answer: "God has given us the Sixth Commandment as a safeguard of marriage and the proper relation between the sexes." Another question

was this: "What is marriage?" Answer: "Marriage is the life-long union of one man and one woman into one flesh, entered into by mutual consent and promise." Still another question was this: "Who instituted marriage?" Answer: God Himself instituted marriage as the creation, and has given it His blessing." This Bible passage was listed: "Let marriage be held in honor among all." Hebrews 13:4 We are not honoring marriage, Julie, when we start using the privileges of the married before we actually are married.

Julie, you and your fiance must reconsider what you are doing, and remedy the situation. Either discontinue right away your present living-together arrangement, or else actually get married. You cannot as conscientious young Christians continue in what you are doing. Have you ever seen your father cry? It isn't a very pleasant thing to see a big strong man like your father break down and cry. That's what he did today when he spoke to me about this matter.

Hoping to hear from you, I remain

Your Pastor, who is concerned about you,"

Today that young woman has gotten married. Whether or not she followed her pastor's advice to discontinue the "live in" situation prior to her marriage, I do not know. That she is today sorry for the grief that she brought both God and her parents by her actions, we can only hope for. That she is now living under God's plan for husband and wife we rejoice over.

Knowing the great pressures that our young people live under today because of the lowered

standards of society, we must as 'shepherds' of the flock be loving, patient, and understanding. At the same time that we are all those things, we must also be Scriptural, firm, and determined to lead the members of our flock on a pathway through life that is pleasing to the Lord.

Because the "new morality" is the "in thing" for our present generation, pastors will have to address the matter in sermons, Bible classes, and discussion groups. In dealing with the subject we must not only be ready to condemn what the "new morality" sets forth, but we should be just as prepared to impress upon our people how good and lovely it is to live under a God-ordained morality.

These are not easy times for pastors and parishioners. And as the days of this degenerating world hasten on, we can only more and more ask with the Apostle: "Who is equal to the task?" May we be given grace to answer that question with the same Apostolic Word: "Unlike so many, we do not peddle the Word of God for profit. On the contrary, in Christ we speak before God with sincerity, like men sent from God." II Corinthians 2:16b-17 (NIV)

SOLI DEO GLORIA

-- Norman A. Madson

Circuits 5 & 7 Pastoral Conference, Evangelical  
Lutheran Synod  
Belview, Minnesota  
May 26 & 27, 1981

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## OUT OF HER PAST -- THE EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN SYNOD\*

### THE NORWEGIAN SYNOD IN 1914

The Thirty-First Regular Convention of the Norwegian Synod was held in Sioux Falls, South Dakota, in St. Olaf Congregation, Rev. S. M. Orwoll, pastor, beginning Wednesday, October 14, 1914, at 10 a.m. The entire first day, October 14, was designated as a day of celebration of the Twenty-fifth Anniversary of the Lutheran Normal School in Sioux Falls. There was a program consisting of musical numbers as well as an address in Norwegian by the Synod's president, Dr. H. G. Stub, whose topic was Christian Education. Also, President O. P. Vangsnes spoke in English on "The Future of the Lutheran Normal School." Greetings were brought by the various educational institutions of the Synod as well as by Concordia Teachers College.

The real convention began on Thursday, October 15.

#### THE PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

President Stub delivered his synodical message on the basis of John 17:20 - 26:

Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on Me through their word, 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. And the glory which Thou gavest Me I have given them, that they may be one, even as We are one: I in them, and Thou in Me, that they may be made perfect in one,

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\*Installment VI

and that the world may know that Thou hast sent Me, and hast loved them as Thou has loved Me. Father, I will that they also whom Thou hast given Me, be with Me where I am, that they may behold My glory, which Thou hast given Me; for Thou lovedst Me before the foundation of the world.

O righteous Father, the world hath not known Thee, but I have known Thee, and these have known that Thou hast sent Me. And I have declared unto them Thy name, and will declare it, that the love wherewith Thou hast loved Me may be in them and I in them.

On the basis of this text, Dr. Stub said, we understand that Christ means, first and foremost, an inner oneness in faith, in hope and love, a oneness of spirit, thus the oneness that finds its expression in the one holy, universal Christian Church on earth. Jesus' intercessory prayer pertains thus to the Church, the communion of saints. Then, He said that this oneness shall now show itself outwardly. And He states that the outward oneness shall follow upon the inner oneness in faith. It shall not be a unionistic oneness. He asserts that one should be on guard against two errors: 1. That Christ in His High Priestly Prayer wants only an inward oneness, and not an inward oneness that will show itself outwardly. 2. The other error holds that the idea that we shall become one outwardly nullifies the requirement of God's Word that agreement in the doctrine of the Gospel and the administration of the Sacraments must precede the outward oneness and union. Then Dr. Stub quotes various commentaries which express the fact that inner unity shall show itself also outwardly in fellowship. And finally he brings quotations from men "of our own Synod." Professor Wilhelm M. H. Petersen (Professor at Luther Seminary, 1894-99) said: "Thus Jesus wants also to

find a oneness that shows itself outwardly, which the world can see. This shall, of course, not be brought into being by sinful unionism." And Dr. J. Ylvisaker writes: "Christ shows us clearly that He not only has in mind an inner oneness in faith, hope, and love, because that does not manifest itself before the world, but He wants also an outward oneness as an expression of the full union in the same mind and the same judgment. I Cor. 1:10. That the church should be rent asunder into bodies and parties that are in opposition to each other is not according to God's good will, but is a bitter fruit of sin."

And he closed as follows:

I have tried to unfold the mighty truths that are contained in Jesus' High Priestly Prayer. It is now up to us to take these truths to heart and apply them. They shall find their application in the individual, in the congregations, and in the church body. If that is done, then there will indeed arise fervent prayers to the end that the prayer of our Lord and Savior concerning the unity of the spirit in faith, in confession, and in life, so that the world may come to believe that Jesus is God's Son and the Savior of the world, may become a reality. And when earnest, fervent prayers concerning this arise to the throne of grace, then, by the power of God's promises, a true oneness among the Norwegian Lutheran Church people will and must be the fruit thereof. Lord Jesus, let this happen! Amen.

#### THE PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Dear Brethren:

Last year our Synod held a special convention in Minneapolis, June 11 - 18. Chiefly the union matter required this type of meeting. This year the Synod is holding its Thirty-first Regular



Convention. Ordinarily it would have been natural for the Synod to hold its large general convention in the Twin Cities, since these are the center of the Norwegian population in general, and also in particular of the Norwegian church people. Then one could expect a more full representation of the many congregations of the Synod at a convention in the Twin Cities. The general convention should therefore have been held there and at the time that is usually set for these large meetings and the most convenient for the members of the church body in general, namely, in the month of June. However, two things were decisive in the matter of holding the convention in Sioux Falls and at this time of the year, October 14 and subsequent days. One was the fact that our Lutheran Normal School this year celebrates its Twenty-fifth Anniversary, and this was counted as such an important matter that the Synod should accept the invitation that St. Olaf's Congregation in Sioux Falls had issued to the Synod to hold its meeting here about the 14th of October, 1914. Also, because of the 100th anniversary in Norway this year, it was felt that many of the Synod's pastors and members would be taking part in the festivities in Norway at that time (June). The president of the Synod, among others, was elected to represent the church body at the festivities in Norway according to invitation from the Norwegian government.

Since the church body thus celebrates its general convention in connection with the 25th anniversary of the normal school, this meeting should have a festive character. There should be a spirit of festivity during the deliberations. This convention has a two-fold character: Important matters pertaining to the life of the church body will be considered, and there is also

the jubilee in connection with the history of the Christian school in our church body. This should be unto true and lasting blessing.

### The War in Europe

In the meantime, we cannot look around about and point to the things in our church body that require our attention and sympathy without first gathering our thoughts about the War in Europe, the largest and bloodiest war that history knows of. The great powers of Europe, the nations which have been regarded as the bearers of culture and also as so-called Christian nations, Greek Catholic, Roman Catholic, and Protestants, both Reformed and Lutheran, not to mention also heathen Japan, stand against each other in mixed confusion with the purpose of crushing each other.... To begin with we can only express our deepest grief and horror over it that we have to live to see such a harrowing spectacle which bears witness to it that sin is the ruin of people and that the human heart is always the same, and that no culture is a guarantee against the horrors of war. No, only in Christ's kingdom on earth is the prophetic word fulfilled that "they shall beat their swords into plowshares and their spears into pruning hooks; nations shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more." Isaiah 2:4.... May the Lord have mercy upon the people and the countries.

### The Union Matter

The president repeated the history of how the matter of union with the United Church and the Hauge Synod had gotten under way since the year 1905, how the Opgjør had been adopted in 1912 by the United Church and the Hauge Synod unanimously, and by the Synod with only 12 contrary votes. He said that Opgjør

rejects all synergism and Calvinism. Then he repeated the resolutions of 1913 which have appeared in the former presentation in this series (The Norwegian Synod in 1913, p. 7 and 8), both the majority report and the minority report. And it had been resolved that the majority report should be sent to the congregations to be considered by these. And the president was to be informed about how the congregations reacted to this report.

Pres. Stub said that the results were as follows,

EASTERN DISTRICT: Reports had come in from 99 congregations. Of these, 8 congregations have rejected the majority resolution. But one must notice that also within these 8 congregations at least three have declared that they are for union. One declares: "In the hope that the Norwegian Lutheran Church people in America may, by the leading of the Holy Spirit, reach full unity of faith and thereupon join together to one, Our Savior's Congregation declares itself entirely agreed with the minority report." Another declares: "Trinity Congregation does not wish to be understood as opposed to the union movement. It simply favors the more conservative and safer course proposed in the minority report." A third congregation declares that, while it accepts the minority report, it is "not against union." Eighty-six congregations have voted for the resolution adopted by the Synod, most of them unanimously.

IOWA DISTRICT: Eighty-eight congregations have responded. Of these, 11 are against. Of these 11, one congregation writes that its declaration does not mean that it is against union, but that there are other things which should be clarified before one begins to deal about union. There are 77 congregations who declared themselves for the majority report.

MINNESOTA DISTRICT: Responses were received from 113 congregations. Of these, 4 have declared themselves against the majority report. Most of the 109 remaining congregations have unanimously been for the majority report.... Three congregations said that the committee should first and foremost come to unity about the understanding of Opgjør. Four congregations stated that there should be no union or federation before there is more clarity than there now is, that these church bodies have the same right understanding of Opgjør which is under dispute.

NORTHWEST DISTRICT: Seventy-four congregations responded. Two of these declared themselves against the majority report; 72 in favor, most of them unanimously.

PACIFIC DISTRICT: Twenty-four congregations have reported their vote. Two of these have voted against the majority report. The other 22 have adopted the majority report unanimously except in one congregation where one voted against.

TOTAL: Congregations to the number of 398 have responded; 359 have declared themselves for the majority report, 27 against, but several of them with the declaration that they are not against union. Seven have accepted the majority report, but with a clause added; 5 have declared that they did not wish to vote now, but they have not voted against. According to the Constitution, all congregations who have not voted are regarded as having accepted when the time limit has run out.

The congregations constitute the church body, and according to the declarations there is thus an altogether enormous majority for the Synod's resolution of last year.

So this means that the committee of the Synod has not only the consent of the annual convention, but also of the congregations that it shall consider with the committees of the two other church bodies the question about a possible future union, either to one body or to a federation of bodies.

#### Dr. Stub and Prof. Kildahl Meet Together

But before the joint committee had its meeting, Prof. Kildahl and I came together for a meeting to consider points in Opgjør that some had objected to, because it was said that there was a different understanding of them. We were agreed concerning the following:

1. Point 1 of Opgjør does not speak of forms of doctrine, but only of the doctrine in the two forms.
2. In point 4 of Opgjør every doctrine is rejected which either on the one hand would rob God of His glory as the only Savior, or on the other hand would weaken man's feeling of responsibility over against the acceptance or rejection of grace. With the words, "sense of responsibility over toward the acceptance or rejection of grace," it is not said -- the words do not say it either -- that a man stands in the same relationship to the acceptance as to the rejection of grace, since indeed the acceptance flows from an entirely different source than the rejection. That a man accepts grace, which is the same as believing, is worked by God alone; that a man rejects grace is from man alone, or, in other words: In this man alone is the cause and for this man alone bears the blame. The following points in Opgjør corroborate this in that it ascribes the acceptance or faith to God alone, while the rejection of grace is ascribed to man alone ....
3. When point 6c speaks of the resistance which God removes in conversion in those who are

saved, then it is self-understood that it is God alone who removes all the resistance that hinders conversion.

I don't know how many thanksgivings came as a result of this declaration.....

At the meeting of the joint committee in Minneapolis from January 21 to 23, this declaration of Prof. Kildahl's and mine was reported, and the following resolution was adopted by the joint committee of the three bodies: "The joint committee expresses its joy over Dr. Stub's and Dr. Kildahl's common declaration anent the understanding of these points in Opgjør, and its thanks to God for this new witness to it that unity of spirit has, by His grace, been attained in the matters of faith treated in Opgjør."

At the same meeting the joint committee adopted the following: "The joint committee earnestly warns against unionistic and fanatical tendencies and churchly cooperation with Reformed and others who do not share the faith and confession of the conferring bodies. By 'fanatical' is not meant that people come together for common prayer and vigorous work for awakening and spiritual life. See the joint committee's report concerning Lay Ministries in the Church, accepted by the three bodies."

So the Norwegian Synod's Union Committee has fulfilled also the requirement of the minority report: "Since it has appeared that there are different understandings of certain points in the accepted theses, the committee is exhorted to deliberate with the committees of the other bodies about this, and seek to establish the right understanding of such points."

## Objections to Point 1 in Opgjør

The point in Opgjør to which some objected is point 1, because in the parentheses it said, "The so-called First Form of doctrine" and "the so-called second Form" of the doctrine of Election which is set forth in Article 11 of the Formula of Concord and in Pontoppidan's Sandhed til Gudfrygtighed (Truth unto Godliness), question 548. Now not only the union committee members, both those who authored Opgjør and those who now make up the union committee, have given the declaration that point 1 does not speak of forms of doctrine, but only of the doctrine in the two forms; but also the United Church and the Synod have, at least last annual meetings, resolved to strike the two parentheses in order, as decisively as possible, to establish that point 1 in Opgjør does not speak of forms of doctrine, but only of the doctrine in the two forms. Both bodies have thereby declared that they have the same understanding of this point.

As I have said several times and also pointed out especially in my report to the general convention last year, the only thing that should be done now regarding point 1 in Opgjør is to strike the question which Dr. Ylvisaker directed to the members of our committee and the answer that our committee members gave, because it is wrong in itself and causes much confusion. This is the question: Is there anything in point 1 that is essentially different from point 3? To this the committee members answered, "no." And they had the right to answer "no," according to the way they understood Dr. Ylvisaker's question, namely, as if there was something in point 1 that stood in contradiction to point 3. To this, one must answer, "no." This was apparently Dr. Ylvisaker's meaning with the question. But I would answer this question correctly, as the

words sound, and look at what is contained in points 1 and 3, then I must answer, "yes" to the question if there is anything in point 1 that is essentially different from point 3. And why that? Because there is the big difference between points 1 and 3 in that point 1 speaks, not of forms, but only of the doctrine in the two forms, while point 3 speaks exactly of the two forms.

Therefore Dr. Ylvisaker says in a speech before the Eastern District in 1912 (Report, p. 82) "Still more it helped me when I heard that in point 1 we have not accepted any form of doctrine, but only the doctrine which is included in the one or the other form. The doctrine which is contained in the second form is certainly that of Scripture and the Confessions; this we can't get away from." And in a speech last year at the Synod meeting (p. 78) he says among other things: "The first point in Opgjøret does not speak of form of doctrine, but only of doctrine. This is what is accepted without reservation, not any form or manner of presentation. This it is that now is to be established by the striking of the two parentheses." But if this is to be established, then that question and answer must also be stricken.

#### The Two Forms of the Doctrine of Election

Dr. Stub then contended that both Pres. H. A. Preus and his son, C. K. Preus, in 1883 said that in the Lutheran Church there were two conceptions of Election which were expressed in the two forms which did not stand in conflict with the analogy of faith. He said:

Notice these words. And will anyone now undertake the responsibility for splitting the Synod, as was threatened in the last number of Kirkeidende, on account of a form of doctrine



which is not in conflict with the analogy of faith?

And what does the United Church say? The United Lutheran of June 21, 1913, says:

1. That the United Church at its meeting in Fargo unanimously and without reservation acknowledged the doctrine of Election which is included in the 11th Article of the Formula of Concord and in Pontoppidan's explanation, question 538.
2. That the United Church unanimously and without reservation acknowledges it as an historic truth that there are two forms of the doctrine of Election: The first is found in the Formula of Concord and the other is formulated and used by some of the best known men in the Lutheran Church -- and it is not formulated in opposition to the Formula of Concord, because these same men who had formulated it and used it had themselves signed the Formula of Concord and believed they were in full agreement with it.
3. The United Church unanimously and without reservation believed that the use of either of these two forms of Election -- within the framework of Opgjør -- should not disturb the fraternal relations between the members of the Synod and of the United Church.

Are not these two declarations, the one by Pres. Preus and his son, the other by the United Church, as alike as one egg is to another?

Now, in the meantime, what does Prof. August Pieper say in Theologisches Quartalschrift, published by the German Wisconsin Synod and edited by the theological faculty (Jan., 1914, p. 59)?

He declares the second form to be "divisive of church fellowship" "because it for some time has been forced upon the church through a false 'systematik' which mixes Law and Gospel, because it contradicts Scripture and falsifies the order of salvation.

The Intuitu fidei doctrine -- or the second form -- is rightfully accused of synergism and denial of the confession."

I ask, in the name of justice: What does the Norwegian Synod say about this to want to stand in brotherly relation with those who in the strongest language break the stick over our Synod, over the greatest part of the Lutheran Church which always has used the second form, but does not want to be agreed and united with those who teach the same as the Norwegian Synod has taught and teaches today?

Thus the Norwegian Synod and the United Church are agreed in this that the first paragraph of Opgjør does not speak of form of doctrine, but of the doctrine in the two forms. In order to establish this, the two parentheses, which in 1912 were a rock of offence, are stricken. What remains, then, as regards the objections of Article 1 of Opgjør? What is stated in it has always been the position of the Synod.

#### Paragraph 4 of Opgjør

With regard to paragraph 4, concerning weakening man's sense of responsibility in relation to the acceptance or rejection of grace, I refer to Dr. Kildahl's and my declaration in which the joint committee has declared that it agrees and, as admitted, no one has attacked this publicly, if one ignores an insinuation that has appeared in very recent times.

Finally, Kildahl's and my declaration includes the assertion and "It is God alone who removes all resistance which hinders conversion." Now I again ask: What more does one want? Is there the possibility for any human cooperation or working along in conversion since it is God alone who removes all resistance that hinders conversion? Also over this assertion the joint committee of the three bodies has expressed its joy. Again I ask: Does anyone in the Synod want to take upon himself the responsibility for splitting the Synod because it regards it as its Christian duty to stand in brotherly relations with a body which teaches thus as in our common declaration? Finally the joint committee agreed about the earlier cited resolution against unionism which also must be acceptable to every upright soul.

#### Federation or Union?

The committee that dealt in behalf of the church bodies found that there is not any different understanding of Opgjør between the bodies. Therefore the committee took under consideration its enlarged mandate. For longer time the question was discussed concerning federation of the bodies or union. But they found that federation would not improve the situation at the many places where a union of small congregations to one would be of incalculable blessing both for the congregations and pastors. Everyone would, as until now, be able to seek his own, and the pastors in the respective bodies would work under the same conditions as now. The financial situation would not be improved either. The efforts that are being made among German Lutherans exactly in the direction of union in order to escape the frictions that have caused so much bad were also brought out.

Finally the committee declared itself unani-  
mously for union as the only goal one should  
have in mind. After several days of delibera-  
tion they were agreed about the following:

## ARTICLES OF UNION

### *Preamble*

Hauge's Synod, the Norwegian Synod and the United Church must first and foremost, both individually and jointly, express a sincere and deepfelt gratitude to God, the Father of all mercy, who has not dealt with us according to our sins, but in grace has brought together that which for years has been separated, uniting us in the same faith and doctrine and evoked a desire to become one also in external matters.

In the next place, we are constrained to confess that during the long and bitter controversy there has been sinned in numerous ways. God requires in His Word that the truth shall be confessed and defended and that error shall be resisted, but frequently unjust accusations have been made by one party or another, and in the heat of conflict things have been done which are now mentioned with grief. Carnal weapons have often been used.

We have all sinned both against God and against one another. This causes our hearts grief, and for all these things we ask the forgiveness of God and of one another, and from the heart we forgive every brother his faults.

In the name of the Triune God we declare jointly and severally our sincere acceptance of the following:

### *Articles of Union*

1. The joint, unanimous and unreserved acceptance of the canonical books of Holy Scriptures as the

inerrant Word of God and of the confessional writings of the Norwegian Lutheran Church by the three bodies, we regard as the primary condition of union.

2. Furthermore, the joint reports adopted by the three bodies in 1912 and the "Madison Agreement," as an expression of our common understanding of the points of difference concerning doctrine in the past, must constitute a prerequisite for the union of these bodies and be maintained as such.

3. The three bodies promise one another in all seriousness to observe the rule not to carry on churchly cooperation with the Reformed and others who do not share the faith and confessions of these bodies.

#### 4. CHURCH RITES

A. With respect to church rites, we observe the principles set forth in the confessional writings of the Lutheran Church. These are briefly as follows:

a) To the true unity of the Church it is not necessary that the same church rites are observed everywhere, provided there is unity in doctrine (Augsburg Confession, Art. VII).

b) Therefore the Church of God has the right and authority everywhere and at all times, as far as these matters are concerned, to take such action as it may deem most serviceable (Formula Concord, Art. X).

c) But church rites and ceremonies which are not contrary to the Word of God and which have been in use for some time, promoting peace and good order, should nevertheless be observed everywhere and should neither be altered nor discontinued, except for good and sufficient reason (Augsburg Confession, Art. XV, and the Apology, Art. VIII).

B. In order that there may be general uniformity also in church rites, the Church recommends that the congregations follow the ritual of the Church of Norway in the modified form at present commonly used among us.

C. Public confession and absolution in connection with the Lord's Supper should be administered as determined by the congregations, either by declaring the forgiveness of sins to the individual by the laying on of hands or by a general declaration without the laying on of hands. Private confession and absolution shall be retained.

D. In order to avoid any and all misunderstanding in the matter, the conferring bodies declare that they recognize the Christian lay activity, as set forth in the articles of lay activity, and that they will cherish it. Consequently, it shall not be considered unchurchly practice or religious fanaticism for people to come together for prayer and the earnest promotion of spiritual awakening and spiritual life.

#### 5. CONCERNING DEBT

Each body must, before union can be consummated, pay its own debts.

#### 6. SEMINARIES

The Church shall establish and maintain one theological seminary. The present property of the United Church at St. Anthony Park and that of the Norwegian Synod in Hamline shall be used for the purposes of this institution. The arrangement of the two departments, theoretical and practical, and the division of the students between the two school buildings, shall be left to the theological faculty in consultation with the Board of Education of the Church. It is recommended that the time of the professors be divided as well as possible between

the two places where instruction is given. The Church shall establish and maintain a pro-seminary at the present Seminary of Hauge's Synod at Red Wing. In addition to being used as a pro-seminary, this school shall be used as far as the facilities permit as a normal school or the most prominent preparatory school of the Church for its colleges.

#### 7. TEACHERS

Teachers at the Theological Seminary shall be professors of theology serving as such at the time when the union is effected. Four (4) of these shall be from the United Church, four (4) from the Norwegian Synod, and two (2) from Hauge's Synod.

#### 8. THEOLOGICAL STUDENTS

Theological students who have been admitted to the respective seminaries of the three bodies shall by virtue of such admission be received as regular students by the Seminary of the united body.

#### 9. NORMAL SCHOOLS

The Church shall establish and maintain, until otherwise determined, two normal schools. These shall be, until the Church otherwise decides, Sioux Falls Normal School, Sioux Falls, S. D., and Madison Normal School, Madison, Minn.

#### 10. COLLEGES

The Church shall establish and maintain two standard colleges. These shall be Luther College, Decorah, Iowa, and St. Olaf College, Northfield, Minn. The operating expenses of these schools shall be defrayed from the proceeds of the endowment funds owned by these colleges, general school receipts, and annual appropriations by the Church.

#### 11. OTHER INSTITUTIONS OF LEARNING

The higher institutions of learning which are now connected with either one of the three bodies shall

continue their operation. In case the Church exercises supervision over them, they shall receive annual appropriations from the Church. The Board of Education may propose the amounts to be appropriated, but the Church itself shall decide how much each of these schools shall receive each year. Since Jewell College and Augustana College are owned by the Church, they shall be operated as the Church may determine.

#### 12. INSTITUTIONS OF MERCY

All institutions of mercy now owned by the various bodies shall continue their operation as hitherto until the Church may otherwise determine.

#### 13. MISSIONS

All missions now carried on by the respective bodies shall continue in the united body in accordance with plans and methods determined by the Church.

#### 14. THE PENSION FUND

The pension funds of the respective bodies shall be combined into one and the rules revised to conform with the requirements of such combination.

#### 15. PUBLICATION HOUSES

The bookstores and publishing houses of Hauge's Synod, the Norwegian Synod and the United Church shall be united into one concern, whose chief seat of business shall be Augsburg Publishing House, Minneapolis, Minn.

#### 16. EDITORSHIP

The church papers which are owned and published by the respective bodies shall be consolidated, and there shall be published one church organ in Norwegian and one in English and one Sunday school paper in Norwegian and one in English. In the editorship of the organs of the Church all three of the present



bodies shall be represented for the present. An editor-in-chief shall be elected for each organ.

#### 17. INCORPORATION

The united body shall be incorporated as soon as possible.

#### 18. PROPERTY

Proper action shall be taken to convey all the property owned by the respective bodies, so that it may become the legal property of the united body.

#### 19. MERGING

Merging of the three bodies into one shall in no way curtail the freedom and right of the local congregations to effect mergers or rearrange parishes.

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These Articles of Union were signed by M. O. Wee (Hauge Synod), I. D. Ylvisaker (Norwegian Synod), and Peder Tangjerd (United Church), secretaries.

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NOTE: The above articles were reported by the Union Committee under date of April 2, 1914. They were approved by the conventions of the three conferring bodies as follows: 1914 by the United Church unanimously and by the Norwegian Synod by a vote of 360 to 170; 1916 by Hauge's Synod by a vote of 165 to 40. See reports of United Church, 1914, pp. 214-15; Norwegian Synod, 1914, p. 139; Hauge's Synod, 1916, pp. 231-32.

Dr. Stub continued,

These things were then to be presented before the church bodies for consideration and adoption. The Hauge Synod, which met first this year, would not take the initiative in this matter, but deferred action. The United Church adopted these Articles of Union unanimously. It had its meeting in St. Paul, June 18-24, 1914.

If the Norwegian Synod adopts them, as I hope it will, then two years must pass before the constitution can be placed before the Synod, and then the whole thing must go to the congregations for acceptance or rejection. If anyone has proceeded carefully and slowly, it surely is the Union Committee. From several quarters it has been criticized because it went so slowly.

But it can't be denied that if our church people in general get the impression that we are not really in earnest in our union endeavors, then I am afraid that the church body will suffer incalculable harm.

If there are those in the church body who do not wish union, then it should have been stated from the beginning. If there are any who out of consideration for tradition or history have taken the stand that they do not wish union with the others, then it should have been brought forth.

Are some still of the opinion that we in the Norwegian Synod shall be at enmity especially toward the United Church, so they do not want to get together with them for different types of meeting and not even for pastoral conferences?

Clear lines should be drawn so that we know what we want. I hope and pray to God that this meeting may clear up many things and that we may be

able to agree about progress in the union matter. It is so great and, for our church body, so important a matter that the responsibility for retreating and reversal will fall heavy on those who must bear it.

Since the union matter is stated as the foremost matter and the joint committee's report to the church body is on hand, it is self-evident that this may be taken up at once for consideration. Thereby we will also gain this that it will be considered thoroughly. The Lord grant success!

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#### VOTE OF CONFIDENCE IN THE PRESIDENT

Judge Andrew Grindeland presented the following resolution:

Since it is a well-known fact that President Stub's motives and dealings in connection with the union matter have been made the object of grave suspicion and accusation -- both in the public press and privately -- the Synod wishes, out of concern for its own worthiness as a body, to declare that it disapproves of such conduct, and expresses its complete confidence in the president's honest purposes in his efforts in behalf of the union matter.

Hon. Andrew Grindeland was a delegate from the congregation of Rev. P. F. Kjolraug of Warren, Minnesota. Mr. Grindeland accompanied this resolution with the following argument (Printed in the English language, Report 1914, page 13):

Gentlemen of the convention,

I sincerely regret that it has become necessary to offer this resolution, but the sense of duty forbids silence.

If the Norwegian Synod is to maintain its dignity and good standing, it should act favorably upon this resolution.

While we are confronting the question of church union, the question in which today centers the interest of all Norwegian Lutherans of America, it becomes highly important what attitude we take as to the subject matter of the resolution.

While our able, faithful, and considerate president is engaged in the great cause of union, shall our attitude be to mistrust him, to give him our ill will and impugn his motives, or shall we give him our good will and our confidence and treat him with such respect and confidence as his high official position commands? Gentlemen of the convention, I offer this resolution in a kind and Christian spirit, having in view only the duty we owe to our worthy president, the duty we owe to ourselves, and the duty we owe to the welfare of our Synod. I appeal to your sense of justice to accept this resolution.

The resolution was taken under consideration at once. It was accepted by standing vote.

Pastor R. O. Brandt wished to have it added to the Minutes that he did not vote against the resolution because it was to be adopted without debate.

The president expressed his hearty thanks for the vote of confidence which was expressed in this resolution.

## CONSIDERATION OF THE UNION MATTER

This matter was considered at four sessions. The time of each speaker was limited to 10 minutes.

President Vangsnes moved that the Synod now take up the Union Committee's Report for consideration.

As a substitute motion, President P. A. Hendrickson moved:

Since there is a large number of lay people as well as many pastors and professors who nourish serious misgivings with regard to union at this time, it must be counted as the most serviceable and brotherly manner of procedure that we do not take further steps toward union with the other bodies on the present platform, but that there first should be done what can be done in order to convince and win our own people, and so to stave off division and preserve unity in our own body and in our congregations.

Therefore, I move:

1. That the Union Committee's Report be turned over to a Peace Committee whose purpose shall be to bring about unity in the Synod with regard to union and the requirements for the same.
2. This committee shall consist of an equal number of laymen as also pastors or professors. Both sides shall be equally represented and the members are to be appointed by the Synod's president and vice-president respectively. Both of these last named shall be self-appointed members of the committee.
3. This committee shall report to the Synod in two years. In the meantime its report shall be presented to the General Pastoral Conference.

The basis for President Hendrickson's motion was the following:

1. That there are serious breaches within our body with regard to the union matter is apparent.
2. That the so-called minority is just as much in favor of union as is the so-called majority.
3. But the minority nourishes serious doubts whether a God-pleasing unity has been reached in the understanding of Opgjør.
4. Without such oneness neither our own Synod is benefited nor are the bodies we desire to unite with. Therefore, it serves the cause best that the Synod first be united within itself before further steps are taken.
5. Such internal unity is required. God's Word requires it. I Corinthians 1:10:

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.

The number of votes for President Hendrickson's motion was 173, while 327 declared themselves for the motion of President Vangsnes.

And so the Report of the Union Committee was before the Synod.

#### Report of the Union Committee

A joint meeting of the Union Committees of the Hauge Synod, the Norwegian Synod, and the United Church was held from Tuesday, March 31 to and including April 2 last in Minneapolis, Minnesota.

All the members were present. From the Hauge Synod Pres. M. H. Hanson, Prof. M. O. Wee and Pastors C. J. Eastvold, J. L. Lasseson and T. J. Oppedal; from the Norwegian Synod Pres. H. O. Stub, K. Bjorgo, J. Nordby, and O. P. Vangnes and Pastor I. D. Ylvisaker; from the United Church Pres. T. H. Dahl, Pastors N. C. Brun and S. Gunderson, Banker Tollef Sanderson and Pastor Peder Tangjerd.

Two sub-committees had met the preceding week. They presented a draught of stipulations for union and a constitution for an eventual united body. The joint committee took up the first of these and agreed on the following resolution as regards Stipulations for Union. (These are found on p. 62 under the heading "Preamble" to the Articles of Union. Then follow the Articles of Union, as given on pp. 62-67, Ed.)

The vote on the individual points in the Report of the Union Committee was to be by rising, and the vote on the entire Report by roll call.

Those who preferred to use the English language during the discussion had the permission of the Synod to do so. But when we look at the recorded speeches, we see that there were only two who spoke in English, and they were laymen. All the rest spoke in Norwegian.

#### Letters Addressed to the Synod

The 1914 Report of the Synod prints about 10 letters and messages to the Synod from individuals who were not present at the meeting, as well as from congregations. We wish here to quote a part of one such letter which at the close has no name, but states that it is from "A Humble Fellowworker in the Vineyard of the Church." Place and date are given as, "Velva, North Dakota, October 13, 1914."

It is an easy matter to sit in offices and in comfortable halls, and there philosophize about the faults of Opgjøret and the possible or impossible future of the church in the world of theory. In the meantime the clock strikes, time goes on, and eternity lies ahead. Our Lord and Savior admonishes us, saying: "I must work the works of Him that hath sent Me while it is day; the night cometh when no man can work." (John 9:4)

Just look over the wide spaces of the West. Behold, the harvest is great, but the laborers are few. Here in this vicinity God's Word has sounded forth about 30 years. Some churches have been built, and some people find their way to these houses of God; but the big crowd is only mammon worshippers. The youth offer their lives on the altar of folly. The newspapers announce dances in barns, in granaries, in houses. Indeed, the dance is what the young want, the only thing they think of. What can a pastor and caretaker of souls do when people live spread here and there, and, with all his efforts, he can preach only to those who are present at a few services in the course of a year. He drives 20 - 30 miles enveloped in a cloud of dust in the summer and in snowdrifts in the winter, in order to arrive at the appointed time on Sunday. He passes a Hauge church here and a United Church there. People meet each other on the way to church. Any care of souls at such places is entirely impossible because time is wasted on the long and difficult roads. Norwegian people who came from Norway long ago are almost the only ones here. They are still outside of any congregation. Why do they not join the congregation? In the two years that the Lord of the church has let me work here I have driven and driven around in



order to gather outsiders into our organized congregation. What have they to say against it? "We have lived here many years, but we cannot possibly be satisfied with the church situation here. Here is Hauge's church, the Synod, and the United Church -- three church bodies, they say. All three have the same teaching; but nevertheless they are separate, divided. All three bodies are on starvation allowance. One church body cannot build a religious school for the children, cannot rescue our young from the curse of the dance, and neither can the other, because we cannot get together. What lies in the way of establishing one Norwegian Lutheran congregation here? --then we could get church order to everything, and the pastor could give more of his time to the spiritual edification of the congregation."

Here, then, is the difficulty. There are already established congregations here. The members of the Synod will not go into a Hauge congregation or the United Church, and these other members object that since we cannot join with them, they cannot join with us either. And so the down-cast pastor drives the 20 - 30 miles in the cloud of dust and back again without having accomplished his mission. Do those who are outside of the congregation ask at all about the right understanding of Opgjør? Come out to the wide open spaces, you who have scruples and proclaim bad times if an organic union is effected. Come out and see and hear. I have worked here in a restricted neighborhood; but even now men who are members of the congregation and who live not far from my churches ask who I am and what my name is. Come out here and philosophize for the young at their dance racket concerning the dangers of church union.

Come out and deliver your lectures about having intuitu fidei in Opgjør to all those who are threshing on Sunday. Maybe you will soon have other thoughts and see the danger, not in Opgjør and church union with brethren in the faith, but the danger in discord and division; because a house divided against itself cannot stand.

We hope no one can truly point a finger at the Synod's pastors and say that they have wisdom enough but lack the right spirit. Oh that you could with open eyes see the crowds that long for a solution to this matter. "Bear ye one another's burdens and so fulfill the law of Christ." Gal. 6:2.

May the Lord of peace and glory fill your mind and thoughts during the meeting to the furtherance of His Kingdom and the eternal salvation of souls!

#### SELECTIONS FROM THE DISCUSSION OF THE UNION MATTER

Pastor J. A. Thorsen:

When I have asked for the floor, it is not that I have a desire to be involved in this matter, but because my conscience does not permit me to remain silent. I want to say in advance that when I speak as I do then this is not to put hindrances in the way of union, but in order to do what I can so that this important matter may be furthered in the right, God-pleasing manner.

Then Pastor Thorsen showed that Dr. Stub and leading men of the United Church understood Opgjør differently. While Dr. Stub said he found in Opgjør the doctrine that the Synod always had taught concerning Election and that Dr. Walther fought for

during the Election Controversy, leading men of the United Church write that they cannot agree with Stub in this. They say that the doctrine that is found in Opgjør is not the doctrine that Dr. Schmidt and others have fought against those many years. If individual men in the Norwegian Synod along with Dr. Stub say that they have not changed their stand, there are men in the United Church who say just as strongly that they have not changed.

Prof. O. E. Hove:

What church fellowship will we get into when we join with the United Church? The United Church bade the president of the Ohio Synod welcome at its annual meeting. And he has just recently published a writing about Election and Conversion in which he holds fast exactly to the false doctrine that the Synod fought against in the days of the Election Controversy. And the United Church resolved to practice cooperation with the Ohio Synod in a certain sphere. I don't see how we with a good conscience can enter into church fellowship with people who accept a doctrine that we have fought against, and thus we would separate ourselves from the Missouri Synod that has upheld the same stand as we.

Prof. C. K. Preus pointed out that we cannot accept the second form without reservation, but this Opgjør requires of us. We have never done this before. And can we permit it that the Gospel of Christ that our church preaches be called un-Biblical and un-Lutheran? Here you want me to thank God (Preamble to the Articles of Union) and this judgment has not been retracted.

Rev. M. Thorsen:

The antitheses in Opgjøret contain much that is Biblical. The antitheses against synergism are Biblical except that they should add that God removes all resistance, also the wilful resistance. They have said that man himself must remove the wilful resistance.

Dr. Stub:

Considerable has been said about postponing the union matter and that means postponing the vote concerning the Articles of Union which now lie before the Synod. Personally, I will say that if people had not agitated as some have and if they had not let us understand that they wished more time in order to keep up the agitation, something that I am convinced is to the harm of our church body, our congregations, our schools, and all our church work, I should not have anything against postponing the matter. But on the other hand, I will also ask: What profit is there in discussing these things any longer?

Here one in the assembly said: I repudiate the insinuation about agitation that the president came with. Several agreed with this.

Pastor J. Levorson contended that it is not fitting that one who has held to the truth of God's Word and has confessed that which is right should ask forgiveness of God and of one another, as is stated in the Preamble of the Articles of Union.

Pastor H. Bjornson:

Let us try to do what we can so that the Norwegian Lutheran Church may become a power here in our land. And that will, according to human reckoning, take place if we can unite that which is now divided into one body.

Attorney K. T. Dahlen, Representative from Rev. L. J. Jerdee's congregation in Minneapolis:

We came to the Jubilee Convention in Decorah in 1903. There was unity and all our business was in good order, even if the United Church declared war against the Synod all along the line. The Synod stood there and was not frightened. It held God's Word high, and said: "It is written." Exactly because the Synod has testified and has not let itself be moved, exactly therefore also many others have come closer to the truth. If the Synod now goes into a new church body, is there not danger that the testimony be buried under majorities?

On the list of speakers were the names of many pastors and representatives, and it was resolved that the floor should be given first to representatives who had asked to speak.

A laymen named R. A. Nestos, delegate from Rev. T. F. Gullixson's congregation in Minot, North Dakota, spoke in English. Part of his speech reads as follows:

As I have watched the work of the convention, as I have talked with the men who are here in control, as I have noted how domineering the majority is, and how disinclined to treat the minority with even the common courtesies of our business and political life, I am impressed with the fact that the spirit of Christian tolerance and brotherly love has been supplanted by a spirit of jealousy, personal pride, petty bickering, and even hatred, until the leaders are so busy hunting the mote in their brother's eye and magnifying that, that they wholly lose sight of and forget the beam in their own eye. The spirit controlling the proceedings here would

be deplorable even in a political convention, and is unworthy of a Synod meeting, where you should have a right to expect that the spirit of God would rule both thought and action.

If anyone doubts that this spirit is in control, let him remember the white-washing resolution passed on Thursday, or let him discuss with the majority leaders the possibilities of harmonizing the discordant elements within the Synod and hear their views on that, or let him remember how even the presiding officer in open meeting impugned the motives of the minority and then, when many minority members remonstrated against the unjust accusation, publicly questioned their veracity, and I am sure such doubter will say: I have seen and heard, and surely I must believe. Not only has this been commented upon by the minority, but many majority members who believe in fair play, and who believe that even in a church gathering the ordinary parliamentary rules of civilized society ought to be respected and followed, have deplored the present condition and condemned the methods pursued.

Attorney R. N. Nelson, delegate from Our Savior's Church, Madison, Wisconsin, Rev. H. M. Olsen, pastor, spoke in Norwegian. The following is a translation of only a part of his speech:

This is the first time I have been a delegate at a Synod convention, and I hope I shall never be that again, if I should experience what I have experienced here.

I say it in love and with all earnestness that it hurt me much that the president did not show the same mind toward those of whom he says that they had persecuted him as the Savior did on the cross. He said: "Father, forgive them."

It hurt me greatly to hear a pastor express

himself as our secretary did toward Professor Preus. And the manner in which the president expressed himself toward Professors Preus and Brandt and others -- that they did not want union, after they themselves have stood here and told the assembly that they are not against union, -- for my part I must protest against such expressions.

The most important question before us today is not union with other church bodies, but peace and oneness within our own body. Here the minority comes with a resolution requesting a peace committee, an olive branch of peace, so to speak. But that was swept aside and the answer is given that we don't want union. Why is there such haste with this union? Doesn't the union matter tolerate any more discussion? Can't it, after today, stand the light of day? Those who stand here and say that if there doesn't get to be union today, then there never will be, condemn their own cause. If they do not have more confidence in their cause than that, and if they do not trust God's blessing that shall follow after union more than that -- then it were better that the whole thing perish on the spot. Surely there can't be such haste with this.

Laurits S. Swenson, delegate from Our Savior's Congregation, Minneapolis, said:

There is no controversy as regards the desirability of union. The common grounds for union that do not pertain to doctrine no one makes objection to. The reasons that are named in the anonymous mission pastor's letter are applicable at all times. Both parties could have contended for them even during the Election Controversy in the 80's. The difficulties are of a different kind. Therefore I think we should not make haste.

It was resolved that President Bjorgo, Dr. Joh. Ylvisaker, President Vangsnes, and Prof. Hove should close the debate concerning the preamble.

Among many other things, Dr. Ylvisaker said:

Many may feel that they have become tired of the strife among us. Also I am tired and it is indeed admitted that I have had my share. The days in the service of the Synod have not exactly always been so easy. But I will nevertheless say both to myself and others that if we become tired so that we stop fighting for the honor of God, then we have become tired of being Christians.

Prof. E. Hove:

I am convinced of it that that which the Synod has fought for is important truths, that also the last thing about which there has been strife is a truth of practical meaning, because it rests on the doctrine that our salvation is by grace alone.

I am one of those who have not been able to find Opgjør satisfactory in all respects. And in consideration of what has been said here, I will say that my conviction about Opgjør has not been formed by any declaration of any German faculty or German statement. I had this opinion before I had opportunity to hear any other statements ..... But Opgjør will become an important historical document, and it is therefore of great importance that this document should not contain anything that is misleading or wrong.

The final vote concerning the Preamble in the Union Articles was 326 in favor of adoption, 162 against.

The 19 articles in the Report were all, one by one, adopted.



At the roll-call vote concerning the Union Committee's Report, 360 were in favor, 170 against.

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### The Next Convention

It was resolved that the Union Matter will not be considered at the Convention in San Francisco in 1915.

The two following resolutions in the matter of a Peace Committee were placed before the Synod:

#### I

1. A committee of six, three from each side, shall be appointed by the nominating committee. This committee has the duty of seeking a solution to the difficulties that now are present in our church body.
2. The Synod recommends to all congregations and pastors to cooperate unitedly and loyally toward carrying out the Synod's resolutions and likewise encourages all who directly serve the church body to keep themselves in line with the resolutions of the body.

D. G. Ristad, O. J. Kvale, G. Smedal,  
G. T. Lee, E. M. Stensrud

#### II

I move that a peace committee of 12 members be elected. Both sides in the church body shall be represented equally. The committee shall consist of a like number of laymen with regard to union and the requirements for the same.

In case of a vacancy, the side concerned shall fill the vacancy.

Pastors Lauritz Larsen and Paul Koren and delegates Andrew Jenson and H. Sampson are authorized to nominate the committee.

Laurits S. Swenson

Both of these resolutions were referred back to those who formulated them, and they were urged to agree about bringing in one resolution. This joint committee, then, reported the following to the Synod,

Convinced that there is unity in doctrine within the Synod, -- but since there now, sad to say, have arisen many difficulties within the church body that need to be settled, -- therefore a committee of twelve members shall be nominated, having the purpose of seeking to solve these.

The committee shall consist of a like number of laymen and pastors or professors. Both sides in the church body shall be equally represented. In case of a vacancy the respective side in the committee shall supplement itself.

This was adopted.

The members of this committee are: Pastors I. D. Ylvisaker, I. B. Torrison, Professors G. T. Lee, E. Hove, D. G. Rigstad, President P. A. Hendrickson, Misters Laurits S. Swenson, L. O. Thorpe, Albert Johnson, Andrew Grindeland, M. A. Wollan, Martin Olsen.

Adolph M. Harstad

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*(To be continued in Vol. XXI, No. 4)*