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Ein Prediger muss nicht allein *weiden*, also dass er die Schafe unterweise, wie sie rechte Christen sollen sein, sondern auch daneben den *Wölfen wehren*, dass sie die Schafe nicht angreifen und mit falscher Lehre verfuehren und Irrtum einfuehren.

Luther.

Es ist kein Ding, das die Leute mehr bei der Kirche behaelt denn die gute Predigt. — *Apologie, Art. 24.*

If the trumpet give an uncertain sound who shall prepare himself to the battle? — *1 Cor. 14, 8.*

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zu besitzen. Weil sie rein menschlich richtet, V. 15, erkennt sie weder ihre eigene Finsternis noch das rechte Licht. Darum verwirft sie Christi Selbstzeugnis. So machten es die Juden. Fauler Entschuldigungen. Mutwilliges Wertwerfen.

b. Das Selbstzeugnis Christi ist unbedingt zuverlässig und absolut entscheidend. a. Im gewöhnlichen Leben kann man ein Selbstzeugnis in Frage ziehen. Das darf man aber nicht bei Christi Zeugnis, V. 14; denn er ist der wahre und wahrhaftige Gott. Christus hat seine Gottheit völlig bewiesen. Wer sein Zeugnis nicht annimmt, straft Gott Lügen. Die ewige Wahrheit ruft uns zu: „Ich bin das Licht.“ Das wollen wir annehmen; daran wollen wir festhalten, wenn der Teufel uns mit Zweifeln zusetzt. b. Aber damit wir um so fester werden, bezeugt auch der Vater dieselbe Wahrheit. Christi Zeugnis ruht auf „zweier Menschen Zeugnis“, V. 16—18. In unserm Zeitalter, wo unsere ganze Denkweise nur mit bewiesenen Tatsachen operieren will, wo die christliche Religion oft als eine auf subjektiven Erfahrungen gegründete Theorie verstanden wird, wollen wir uns fest und immer fester an das Selbstzeugnis Christi halten. Das ist der zuverlässige Leitstern in das ewige Licht. Amen.

J. E. Maher

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## Intersynodical Documents

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To let the pages of this journal serve as repository for important documents, we herewith reprint: 1. The report of the Missouri Synod Committee on Lutheran Union, including the *Declaration of the American Lutheran Church Representatives*; 2. The report of Committee No. 16 of the Missouri Synod convention (St. Louis, June, 1938) with respect to the above-mentioned report and the action of Synod; 3. The resolutions of the American Lutheran Church passed at Sandusky, Ohio, touching the union question; 4. The resolution of the United Lutheran Church of America pertaining to this subject.

### 1. Report of the Missouri Synod Committee on Lutheran Union

The Committee on Lutheran Union herewith respectfully submits its report.

Your Committee held six meetings with the representatives of the honorable American Lutheran Church, Dr. C. C. Hein, the President of the A. L. C., recently deceased (whose place was taken by his successor, Dr. E. Poppen), Dr. M. Reu, Dr. P. H. Buehring, Rev. J. Lehmann, Rev. K. Hoessel, and Rev. A. G. Bergener. In these meetings chiefly the Minneapolis Theses and the *Brief Statement* of the Missouri Synod were thoroughly discussed. As the result of these discussions the representatives of the American Lutheran Church now present the following statement, to understand which it will be necessary to compare the *Brief Statement* of our Synod.

### Declaration of the Representatives of the American Lutheran Church

Having carefully discussed with representatives of the honorable Synod of Missouri, in a number of meetings, and on the basis of the Minneapolis Theses, the Chicago Theses, and the *Brief Statement of the Doctrinal Position of the Missouri Synod*, the points of doctrine that have been in controversy between us or concerning which a suspicion of departure from the true doctrine had arisen, we now summarize what according to our conviction is the result of our deliberations in the following statements:

#### I. SCRIPTURE AND INSPIRATION

a. The Bible (that is, the canonical books of the Old and New Testaments) is the Word of God, His permanent revelation, aside from which, until Christ's return in glory, no other is to be expected.

b. The Bible consists of a number of separate books, written at various times, on various occasions, and for various purposes. Their authors were living, thinking personalities, each endowed by the Creator with an individuality of his own and each having his peculiar style, his own manner of presentation, using at times even various sources at hand, Num. 21:14; Josh. 10:13; Luke 1:1-4. Nevertheless by virtue of inspiration, *i. e.*, the unique operation of the Holy Spirit, 2 Tim. 3:16; 2 Pet. 1:21, by which He supplied to the holy writers contents and the fitting word, 1 Cor. 2:12, 13, the separate books of the Bible constitute an organic whole without contradiction and error, John 10:35, and are rightly called the Word of God.

c. Since the Bible is the Word of God, it is the only source, rule, and norm for faith and life and the ever fresh and inexhaustible fountain of all comfort, strength, wisdom, and guidance, a means of grace, for mankind, John 5:39; Rom. 1:16.

#### II. UNIVERSAL PLAN OF SALVATION, PREDESTINATION, AND CONVERSION

A. We confess that there is an eternal divine plan of salvation according to which God before the beginning of time resolved to prepare salvation for all through Christ, Acts 2:23; 4:28; 1 Pet. 1:20; cf. 2 Cor. 5:18, and to communicate the salvation prepared for all mankind to all men through Word and Sacrament, Luke 14:16-24; Matt. 11:28; John 12:32; 1 Tim. 2:4-7. To this end it is His purpose by His Word to work in all men true repentance and creatively to produce saving faith in them, 2 Cor. 4:6; Eph. 2:10; 1 Pet. 1:23, not irresistibly but in all cases with the same seriousness and the same power, Luke 14:23; Is. 55:10, 11. To this end He also purposes to justify those who have come to faith, to preserve them in faith, and finally to glorify them, 1 Cor. 2:7; 1 Pet. 1:5; which, however, does not exclude, but rather includes, that those who have come to faith must at all times work out their own salvation with fear and trembling, Phil. 2:12; Heb. 3:14; Col. 1:23. To this universal plan of salvation, revealed in Christ and proclaimed in the Scriptures, all Christians must adhere.

B. We confess that in addition there is an eternal election, or eternal purpose, of God, according to which we declare with Paul that the fact that we have come to faith and will finally be saved is due to nothing

whatever in ourselves nor to anything whatsoever that we have done or not done, omitted or not omitted, with natural powers or with so-called "powers of grace bestowed upon us," here in this life, but solely and alone to this eternal election, or eternal purpose, of God, 2 Tim. 1:9; Eph. 1:3-6; Rom. 8:28-30.

C. Concerning the relationship of the universal plan of salvation and the eternal election to each other we declare the following:

1. Only when both are maintained with equal emphasis, will the full Scripture truth be expressed.

2. According to Scripture the eternal election took place solely by grace, for Christ's sake, and by way of the universal order of salvation, and it is carried out in time in the same manner.

3. When Scripture speaks of this eternal election, it, as a rule, takes its position in time, after men have come to faith, and in presenting this doctrine, Scripture addresses itself only to believers.

4. Whenever Paul speaks of eternal election, he does so with a feeling of unspeakable gratitude for the grace experienced or for the purpose of consoling believers in all manner of tribulation, but in no case implying that God had considered him and the rest of the believers better than the others and had elected them unto faith on that account or that his election is due to a grace of God that exists exclusively for the elect.

5. The eternal election of the believers unto sonship is not founded upon a second, different will of grace but upon the identical universal will which God earnestly entertains regarding all men.

6. Beyond these truths Scripture teaches nothing concerning the relation of the universal plan of salvation to the eternal election. For that reason all attempts to combine the two and thus to explain why some come to faith and salvation and others do not are human constructions, which should be avoided. As such a well-intended but nevertheless human construction we consider the statement of the old dogmatists, made under peculiar circumstances, when they said that the eternal predestination took place *intuitu fidei*. It is true, if the term "election in view of persevering faith (*intuitu fidei finalis*)" is interpreted in this manner only, that God has decreed from eternity to give on Judgment Day — for the sake of the merits of Christ imputed to them — the crown of glory to those whom He Himself by His grace has brought to faith and has kept in faith unto the end, then such an interpretation expresses indeed a truth clearly revealed in Scripture. It is also true that the Scripture doctrine of election includes as the final step the glorification of the elect. But Scripture and the Confessions do not say that the eternal election, or predestination unto the adoption of children, took place *in view of faith*. Hence, for the sake of clarity in doctrinal presentation this terminology should be avoided.

### III. THE CHURCH

In connection with the doctrine of the Church the question debated was whether it is permissible to speak of a visible side of the Church

when defining its essence. We declare that to do so is not a false doctrine if by this visible side nothing else is meant than the use of the means of grace.

#### IV. THE OFFICE OF THE PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION OF THE MEANS OF GRACE

The office of the public administration of the means of grace is a divine institution. The power to forgive or retain sins, to preach the Law and the Gospel, has been committed by Christ not to an individual person, as Peter and his so-called successors, nor only to the twelve apostles nor to a special order, but to all Christians, Matt. 16:19; 18:18; John 20:19, 20; to be compared with Luke 24:33-36. In order to have one in its midst who exercises this power publicly, in its name and by its order, the Christian congregation calls a capable person. By the call the congregation erects the office of the public administration of the means of grace in its midst. Ordination is the confirmation of the call; it is not a divine but a commendable human ordinance.

#### V. THE DOCTRINE OF SUNDAY

That which is contained on this point in the *Brief Statement of the Doctrinal Position of the Missouri Synod* is *publica doctrina* among us.

#### VI. THE DOCTRINE CONCERNING THE LAST THINGS

##### A. *In General*

When considering the question concerning the Antichrist, the future conversion of Israel, the resurrection of the martyrs, and the millennial reign of Christ, the fact must not be overlooked that we are dealing here with the correct understanding of prophecy and fulfilment, that this understanding is not always easy, and that even in the days of Christ the believers had an entirely different conception of the fulfilment of Old Testament prophecy in many points than actually occurred but that nevertheless the fulfilment coincided exactly with the prophecy. We are certain that the same will be the case with respect to the New Testament prophecy. Not only will the great events which even now stand out clearly and unmistakably in the prophecy of Jesus and His apostles—the return of Christ, the resurrection of the dead, the final Judgment, the passing away of the old world and the creation of the new heaven and the new earth, the twofold termination of all history in eternal life or eternal damnation—find their realization, but even the individual details will be fulfilled, though the latter perhaps in a manner entirely different from that which some of the faithful expect on the basis of their understanding of Scripture. However, since all New Testament revelation constitutes a unity, nothing should be taught concerning the subjects named in our introductory sentence that would involve a negation of the following truths:

1. That as Christians we must at all times be ready for the return of Christ;
2. That as Christians we are bound, until the return of Christ, to the use of the means of grace and to the way of salvation revealed in the Gospel;

3. That the Church on earth, until the return of Christ, will continue to be a kingdom of the cross.

B. *In particular* we confess the following:

1. In regard to the Antichrist we accept the historical judgment of Luther in the Smalcald Articles (Part II, Art. IV:10) that the Pope is the very Antichrist (German: "der rechte Endechrist oder Widerchrist"), because among all the antichristian manifestations in the history of the world and the Church that lie *behind us in the past* there is none that fits the description given in 2 Thess. 2 better than the Papacy, particularly since the denial of the fundamental article of the Scripture on the part of the Papacy, *viz.*, the justification of the sinner by grace alone, for Christ's sake alone, by faith alone, constitutes the worst perversion imaginable of the very essence of Christianity and inevitably carries with it the dissolution of every God-pleasing moral world-order.

The answer to the question whether in the *future that is still before us*, prior to the return of Christ, a special unfolding and personal concentration of the antichristian power already present now and thus a still more comprehensive fulfilment of 2 Thess. 2 may occur, we leave to the Lord and Ruler of the Church and world history.

2. With reference to the question concerning the conversion of Israel, which some find indicated especially in Rom. 11:25, 26, we declare with Dr. Walther that to assume such a conversion "must not be regarded as a cause for division" (Milwaukee-Kolloquium, p. 156).

3. With reference to the assumption of a physical resurrection of the martyrs, which some find indicated in Rev. 20:4, we declare that we are not ready to deny church-fellowship to any one who holds this view, merely on that account, since we cannot consider the argument that this assumption violates the analogy of Scripture as cogent (cf. Matt. 27:52, 53) and since the representatives of this opinion do not assume a rule of the martyrs here on earth but hold that they go directly to heaven and rule there with Christ.

4. With reference to the thousand years of Rev. 20 we declare with Dr. Walther (Milwaukee-Kolloquium, p. 157) that "it is not possible to say with absolute certainty either that the thousand years have already been fulfilled or that they still lie in the future." If they should still lie in the future, nothing must be taught concerning the then existing Church on earth that would contradict the limitations stated under VI, A.

With the other points of doctrine presented in the *Brief Statement of the Doctrinal Position of the Missouri Synod* we are conscious of being in agreement. We also believe that in regard to the points touched upon in Sections I—IV the doctrines stated in the *Brief Statement* are correct. However, we were of the opinion that it would be well in part to supplement them in the manner stated above, in part also to emphasize those of its points which seemed essential to us. With reference to Sections III and VI, B, we expect no more than this, that the honorable Synod of Missouri will declare that the points mentioned there are not disruptive of church-fellowship.

If the honorable Synod of Missouri will acknowledge Sections I, II, IV, V, and VI, A, together with the statements following after VI, B,

concerning our attitude toward the *Brief Statement*, as correct and declare that the points mentioned in Sections III and VI, B, are not disruptive of church-fellowship, the American Lutheran Church stands ready officially to declare itself in doctrinal agreement with the honorable Synod of Missouri and to enter into pulpit- and altar-fellowship with it.

At the same time we recognize it as our duty to do what we can to bring about the acceptance of these doctrinal statements by the bodies with which we are now in church-fellowship.

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At our last meeting with the representatives of the honorable American Lutheran Church we made this statement:

"As to further steps to bring about church-fellowship between the two bodies, we, the representatives of the Missouri Synod, submit the following:

"1. The establishment of church-fellowship between the American Lutheran Church and the Missouri Synod will depend on the action taken by both bodies with reference to the *Brief Statement* and the *Declaration of the Representatives of the American Lutheran Church*.

"2. The establishment of church-fellowship between the American Lutheran Church and the Missouri Synod will depend also on the establishment of doctrinal agreement with the aforementioned *Brief Statement* (Missouri Synod) and the *Declaration* (A. L. C.) on the part of those church-bodies with which the American Lutheran Church is in fellowship.

"3. It is understood that, as far as the Missouri Synod is concerned, this whole matter, including the *Declaration of the Representatives of the American Lutheran Church*, must be submitted for approval to the other synods constituting the Synodical Conference.

"4. We deem it advisable that, until church-fellowship has been officially established, the pastors of both church-bodies meet in smaller circles wherever and as often as possible in order to discuss both the doctrinal basis for union and the questions of church practise."

The representatives of the American Lutheran Church agreed to these four points.

We now respectfully suggest that Synod pass a resolution approving these points and that it also (either now or at a future meeting) state its position on the *Declaration of the American Lutheran Church Representatives*.

When we survey the discussions in which we have been engaged with the commission of the honorable American Lutheran Church, we feel we must thank God for what has been accomplished, and it is with heartfelt gratitude to Him that we render this report.

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Your Committee likewise held two meetings with representatives of the honorable United Lutheran Church of America to see whether the obstacles preventing the establishment of pulpit- and altar-fellowship between the two bodies and their cooperation and eventual union could be removed. The colloquents for the U. L. C. A. in the first meeting were Dr. F. H. Knubel, the President of the U. L. C. A., Dr. C. M. Jacobs, Dr. H.

F. Offermann, Dr. H. H. Bagger, Dr. P. H. Krauss, Mr. E. F. Eilert, Mr. J. K. Jensen, and Mr. E. Rinderknecht. At the second meeting the representatives of the U. L. C. A. were the same men, except that Mr. E. F. Eilert was not present while Dr. Clarence Miller, a member of the commission, this time was in attendance. At the first meeting the topic with which the discussions began was Lutheran solidarity. After this the chief topic of the conference was entered upon, the doctrine of the inspiration of the Holy Scriptures. The *Brief Statement* of our Synod, treating of this doctrine in its opening paragraphs, was made the starting-point. In the course of the conference a paper was presented by a member of the U. L. C. A. commission treating this doctrine. Much to our regret no agreement was reached.

At the second meeting a paper was submitted by the U. L. C. A. delegation on "The Word of God and the Holy Scriptures." In addition, the doctrines of conversion and predestination were discussed on the basis of the *Brief Statement*. The theologians of the U. L. C. A. holding membership on this commission declared themselves in full harmony with the presentation of these doctrines in the *Brief Statement*. On the doctrine of inspiration, however, it was impossible for the two parties to come to an agreement.

We deplore very much that we cannot report a more favorable outcome for the negotiations on this fundamental doctrine, and we now respectfully ask Synod to declare whether the conferences with the representatives of the honorable U. L. C. A. are to be continued.

We might add that the President of our Synod, Dr. J. W. Behnken, attended the third meeting we held with representatives of the American Lutheran Church and the second with the representatives of the United Lutheran Church.

## 2. Report of Committee No. 16 of the Missouri Synod Convention

At the last synodical convention in Cleveland (1935) the appointment of a Committee on Lutheran Union was authorized. This committee, appointed by the President of Synod, has held six meetings with the representatives of the honorable American Lutheran Church.

As a result of these meetings the representatives of the American Lutheran Church accepted the doctrinal contents of the *Brief Statement of the Doctrinal Position of the Missouri Synod*, but in order to supplement and emphasize their position, the representatives of the American Lutheran Church made an official statement called *The Declaration of the Representatives of the American Lutheran Church*. The *Brief Statement of the Missouri Synod* together with the *Declaration of the Representatives of the American Lutheran Church* show the doctrinal position which the American Lutheran Church representatives accepted.

Your Committee finds in the position of the representatives of the American Lutheran Church:

a) First of all an agreement in the doctrinal statements concerning teachings disputed in the past or still in debate in some sections of the Lutheran Church of America, notably in the doctrines of inspiration,



predestination, and conversion, Sunday, and the office of the public administration of the means of grace. It is with great joy that we note that in the chief difficulty which separated our Synod from the constituent bodies of the American Lutheran Church, the doctrine of predestination, unanimity has been reached and that false teachings held by some Lutheran teachers have been repudiated. Concerning agreement in this doctrine the sainted Dr. F. Pieper declared thirty-five years ago in his *Die Grunddifferenz in der Lehre von der Bekehrung und Gnadenwahl*, p. 28: "If unanimity in this point can be attained, that is, if from the heart we refrain from seeking a rational answer to the question '*Cur alii prae aliis?*' 'Why some rather than others' (are elected), this is a sign that we are truly of one spirit. . . . A Lutheran Church in America thus united would have to become a great blessing for the Church of the whole world." It is similarly gratifying that concerning the Holy Scriptures the *Declaration of the American Lutheran Church Representatives* specifically and in opposition to some other Lutheran bodies emphasizes the verbal inspiration and the inerrancy of the Scriptures.

b) In some non-fundamental points concerning the doctrine of the Last Things the *Declaration of the American Lutheran Church Representatives* asks tolerance for certain teachings and interpretations which have been rejected in our circles.

1. This concerns particularly the doctrine of the Antichrist. With the Missouri Synod the *Declaration of the American Lutheran Church*, on the basis of the Scriptures and the Smalcald Articles, teaches that the Pope is the Antichrist; but the question as to whether the future will bring a specific unfolding and personal concentration of the present antichristian power is left to God.

While the Missouri Synod teaches on the basis of 2 Thess. 2:3-12 and in accord with the Smalcald Articles (Part II, Article IV:10) that the Pope is the very Antichrist for the past and the future, your Committee finds that the synodical fathers\* have declared that a deviation in this doctrine need not be divisive of church-fellowship. (*Lehre u. Wehre*, Vol. 19, 1873, p. 290; *Lehre u. Wehre*, Vol. 25, 1879, p. 35 ff.)

2. A second non-fundamental doctrine which the *Declaration of the American Lutheran Church Representatives* mentions is the doctrine concerning the conversion of the Jews. The American Lutheran Church representatives do not state that their Church teaches, in opposition to ours, that there will be a universal conversion of all Jews. They do state, however, that some find this doctrine indicated especially in Rom. 11:25, 26 and that the acceptance of a conversion of the Jews must not be regarded as divisive of church-fellowship.

While the Missouri Synod teaches on the basis of the Scriptures that we are not to look forward to a universal conversion of all Jews before the end of the world, your Committee finds that the synodical

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\* With reference to the term "synodical fathers": In this and the following paragraphs the synodical fathers are mentioned and quoted. This must not be understood in any way as if we were basing any doctrine on what the synodical fathers teach. We simply mention the fact that they considered some non-fundamental doctrines as not necessarily divisive of church-fellowship.

fathers have declared that such deviation in this doctrine need not be regarded as a cause for division. (*Lehre u. Wehre*, Vol. 14, 1868, p. 252.)

3. A third non-fundamental doctrine on which the *Declaration of the American Lutheran Church Representatives* reports is the "assumption of a physical resurrection of the martyrs." The *Declaration* does not state that this is the doctrine of the American Lutheran Church. It merely declares that, if any one teaches this physical resurrection, the American Lutheran Church is not ready to deny church-fellowship merely on that account.

In regard to this assumption of a physical resurrection of the martyrs before Judgment Day the Missouri Synod teaches that this is a misinterpretation of Rev. 20:4, since, according to the statements of the Scriptures and the confessional writings there will be only one resurrection, and that on Judgment Day. Your Committee finds that the synodical fathers have declared that this erroneous assumption need not be divisive of church-fellowship. (*Lehre u. Wehre*, Vol. 18, 1872, p. 74 ff.)

4. The fourth point in the teachings concerning the Last Things on which the *Declaration of the American Lutheran Church Representatives* reports is the thousand years of Rev. 20. This *Declaration* is willing to leave the time of the fulfilment of these prophecies (whether in the past or in the future) undecided. It demands of those who place the thousand years in the future that they profess the truth that the Church on earth, until the return of Christ for Judgment, will continue to be a kingdom of the cross and that all Christians should be prepared for the coming of Christ at any moment.

In regard to the fulfilment of these thousand years in Rev. 20 and the question as to whether they lie in the past or in the future, Synod has allowed the right of different interpretation of this passage, provided such interpretation is not out of harmony with the analogy of faith and no chiliastic associations are involved.

In all other parts of our teachings concerning the last times the American Lutheran Church representatives agree with us. Their *Declaration* repudiates chiliasm by emphasizing that the Church will continue to be a kingdom of the cross until the end and by asserting that "Christians must at all times be ready for the return of Christ."

c) In the fundamental doctrines discussed in the *Declaration of the Representatives of the American Lutheran Church* we note in connection with the doctrine of the Church that they declare it permissible to speak of "a visible side of the Church" when defining its essence "if by this visible side nothing else is meant than the use of the means of grace." While the *Declaration of the American Lutheran Church Representatives*, in accepting our *Brief Statement*, also accepts the doctrine of the Church as the invisible communion of the saints, it has been felt by some that, if this expression, "the visible side of the Church," were permitted to remain unexplained, it might give occasion for the fostering of false doctrine, such as the Romanizing teaching which represents the Church as an external religious or social institution. Your Committee finds that our synodical fathers conceded that the Word

and the Sacraments may in a certain sense be considered as belonging to the essence of the Church. Therefore a difference in this point need not be divisive of church-fellowship when this expression, "the visible side of the Church," is understood in the light of our Synod's pronouncement by Dr. Walther in *Das Buffaloer Kolloquium*, 1866, p. 9.

d) In regard to all other fundamental doctrines the Committee found itself in accord with the teachings of the *Declaration of the American Lutheran Church Representatives*. While the phraseology employed was sometimes not that which we use, we feel, especially in view of the explanations by our Committee on Lutheran Union, that these statements contain the truth as expressed in the Scriptures and our Lutheran confessional writings. We have accepted these statements as the sincere expression of the American Lutheran Church representatives.

After conducting many meetings and a number of public hearings, after reading various communications sent us in connection with Overture 513, and being confronted with the duty of recommending resolutions to Synod concerning the *Declaration of the American Lutheran Church Representatives*, your Committee submits the following resolutions:

*Resolved:*

1. That we raise our grateful hearts and voices to the Triune God, thanking His mercy for the guidance of the Holy Spirit by which the points of agreement have been reached and imploring His further guidance toward the consummation of the efforts to bring about church-fellowship between the Missouri Synod and the American Lutheran Church, even though we believe that under the most favorable circumstances much time and effort may be required before any union may be reached.

2. That Synod declare that the *Brief Statement* of the Missouri Synod, together with the *Declaration of the Representatives of the American Lutheran Church* and the provisions of this entire report of Committee No. 16 now being read and with Synod's actions thereupon, be regarded as the doctrinal basis for *future church-fellowship* between the Missouri Synod and the American Lutheran Church.

3. That in regard to the points of non-fundamental doctrines mentioned in the *Declaration of the American Lutheran Church Representatives* (Antichrist, the conversion of the Jews, the physical resurrection of the martyrs, the fulfilment of the thousand years) we endeavor to establish *full* agreement and that our Committee on Lutheran Union be instructed to devise ways and means of reaching this end.

4. That in regard to the propriety of speaking of "the visible side of the Church" we ask our Committee on Lutheran Union to work to this end that uniform and Scripturally acceptable terminology and teaching be attained.

5. That, since for true unity we need not only this doctrinal agreement but also agreement in practise, we state with our synodical fathers that according to the Scriptures and the Lutheran confessional writings Christian practise must harmonize with Christian doctrine and that,

where there is a divergence from Biblical, confessional practise, strenuous efforts must be made to correct such deviation. We refer particularly to the attitude toward the antichristian lodge, anti-Scriptural pulpit- and altar-fellowship, and all other forms of unionism.

6. That regarding the establishment of church-fellowship between the two bodies on this basis, Synod recognize the following points, which embody and augment the four recommendations of Synod's Committee on Lutheran Union:

a. The establishing of church-fellowship between the American Lutheran Church and the Missouri Synod will depend on the action taken by each body with reference to the *Brief Statement*, the *Declaration of the Representatives of the American Lutheran Church*, and the report of this Committee as adopted by Synod.

b. The establishing of church-fellowship between the American Lutheran Church and the Missouri Synod will depend also on the establishing on the part of the American Lutheran Church of doctrinal agreement with those church-bodies with which the American Lutheran Church is in fellowship.

c. As far as the Missouri Synod is concerned, this whole matter must be submitted for approval to the other synods constituting the Synodical Conference.

d. Until church-fellowship has been officially established, the pastors of both church-bodies are encouraged to meet in smaller circles wherever and as often as possible in order to discuss both the doctrinal basis for union and the questions of church practise.

7. That, if by the grace of God fellowship can be established, this fact is to be announced officially by the President of Synod. Until then no action is to be taken by any of our pastors or congregations which would overlook the fact that we are not yet united.

8. That for the purposes herein stated we recommend to Synod that the Committee on Lutheran Union be continued.

9. That we express our sincere gratitude to the members of the Committee on Lutheran Union for their diligent, painstaking, and conscientious work and bespeak for them continued blessing.

*Action of Synod:* After discussing this matter in four sessions, Synod adopted this report of Committee 16.

Relative to the report of the Committee on Lutheran Union as to its meetings with representatives of the United Lutheran Church of America Committee 16 reported:

WHEREAS, Our Committee on Lutheran Union has held two meetings with representatives of the honorable United Lutheran Church of America; and

WHEREAS, In these discussions the theologians of the U. L. C. A. holding membership on this commission declared themselves in full harmony with the presentation of the doctrines of conversion and predestination contained in the *Brief Statement of the Doctrinal Position of the Missouri Synod* but were not able to come to an agreement with our committee on the fundamental doctrine of inspiration; and

WHEREAS, Our committee asks Synod to declare whether the conferences with the representatives of the honorable U. L. C. A. are to be continued; therefore be it

*Resolved*, That, according to the Scriptural injunction 1 Pet. 3:15 (“Be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you”) and in the interest of Christian union with all those who are agreed in the doctrines of our Lutheran faith, Synod declare itself willing and ready to continue such conferences through its committee and on the basis of Scripture and the Lutheran Confessions if the representatives of the U. L. C. A. are ready to continue them; and be it further

*Resolved*, That Synod should take steps, especially through synodical publications, to help avoid any premature and unwarranted conclusions regarding the status of our relation with the U. L. C. A. These negotiations must not be interpreted as implying that Synod has changed its position in any of the doctrines discussed or that we are approaching doctrinal agreement with the U. L. C. A.

*Action of Synod*: These resolutions were adopted.

### 3. The Resolutions of the American Lutheran Church with Reference to Lutheran Union

#### A. Fellowship with the Synod of Missouri

The resolutions of the American Lutheran Church, adopted October, 1938, at Sandusky, O., with reference to this subject read as follows:

Since our Fellowship Commission and the commission of the Synod of Missouri have arrived at a doctrinal agreement and since the Synod of Missouri, assembled in convention at St. Louis, has unanimously accepted this doctrinal agreement; be it

*Resolved*:

1. That we raise our grateful hearts and voices to the Triune God, thanking His mercy for the guidance of the Holy Spirit by which the points of agreement have been reached.

2. That we declare the *Brief Statement* of the Missouri Synod, together with the *Declaration* of our commission, a sufficient doctrinal basis for church-fellowship between the Missouri Synod and the American Lutheran Church.

3. That, according to our conviction and the resolution of the Synod of Missouri passed at its convention in St. Louis, the aforementioned doctrinal agreement is the sufficient doctrinal basis for church-fellowship, and that we are firmly convinced that it is neither necessary nor possible to agree in all non-fundamental doctrines. Nevertheless, we are willing to continue the negotiations concerning the points termed in our *Declaration* as “not divisive of church-fellowship,” and recognized as such by the Missouri Synod’s resolutions, and instruct our Commission on Fellowship accordingly.

4. That we understand why the Missouri Synod is for the time being not yet ready to draw the logical conclusion and immediately

establish church-fellowship with our Church. We, however, expect that henceforth by both sides the erection of opposition altars shall be carefully avoided and that just coordination of mission-work shall earnestly be sought.

5. That we believe that the *Brief Statement* viewed in the light of our *Declaration* is not in contradiction to the Minneapolis Theses, which are the basis of our membership in the American Lutheran Conference. We are not willing to give up this membership. However, we are ready to submit the aforementioned doctrinal agreement to the other members of the American Lutheran Conference for their official approval and acceptance.

6. That, until church-fellowship has been officially established, we encourage the pastors of both church-bodies to meet in smaller groups in order to discuss both the doctrinal basis for union and the question of church practise.

7. That we humbly pray to the Lord of the Church that He might guide the course of both church-bodies so that we may be led to the establishment of full fellowship as an important contribution to the unity of our dear Lutheran Church in America.

8. That we commend our commission for its painstaking and thorough work and hereby accept and ratify the report with sincere appreciation and thanks.

#### **B. Fellowship with the United Lutheran Church**

The illness of representatives of both the United Lutheran committee and our own did not permit a satisfactory meeting (the United Lutheran Group lacking a quorum and asking permission to consult the absent members of their committee). So far three meetings have been held during the last four years. In the first two meetings perfect agreement was reached in two disputed matters, while in a third point only partial agreement has been attained.

We are fully conscious of the fact that we live in a time when a united front of Lutheranism in our country is of the utmost importance, but we are also convinced that a united front avails little and is not pleasing to God unless it is based upon unity in doctrine and accompanied by Scriptural practise. For this reason and on account of the fact that the negotiations during the last three years showed, under the blessing of God, a marked progress, and since we believe in the guidance of the Holy Spirit, who is ever to lead His Church into all truth, be it

##### *Resolved:*

1. That with gratitude to God and His Holy Spirit we take recognition of the repeated desires that have been expressed for fellowship between the United Lutheran Church and the American Lutheran Church and for the great progress which has been made towards such fellowship since conferences between our respective commissions have been held.

2. That we therefore instruct our committee to resume negotiations with the official committee of the United Lutheran Church without delay

in the interest of removing difficulties, doctrinal and practical, which may now exist.

3. That here again we humbly implore the Lord of the Church to guide us, His servants, in our efforts to strengthen the walls of Zion and to make our Church more useful in service and more worthy of His blessing.

#### **4. The Resolutions of the United Lutheran Church with Reference to Lutheran Union**

The United Lutheran Church of America, according to press reports, at its convention October, 1938, in Baltimore, Md., adopted this resolution, submitted by its Committee on Lutheran Relationships:

*Resolved*, That this Commission on Relationships to American Lutheran church-bodies be continued to deal with and confer with similar commissions from other Lutheran church-bodies upon all matters that may lead to closer relations and organic union.

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The declaration on the Word of God and the Scriptures submitted by the same committee and adopted by the United Lutheran Church of America, was printed in the preceding issue of this Journal.

