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A Call To Recommitment

We Recommit Ourselves To Remembering Our Past

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A Call To Recommitment

Prayer

O Lord God, whose mercy is from everlasting and whose truth shall endure to all generations, we acknowledge with shame and trembling that we are "not worthy of the least of all the mercies and of all the truth which You have shown Your servant[s]." We are unworthy because we have sinned: we have often failed to do what You would have us do, done what You would have us not do, failed to go where You would have us go, gone where You would have us not go, remained silent when You would have us speak, and spoken when You would have us remain silent. Forgive us, O Lord, our many transgressions according to Your lovingkindness, for "against You, You only, have [we] sinned and done this evil in Your sight."

Although we are worthy of none of the things for which we ask, yet we do not despair, O Lord; for we acknowledge with deep gratitude and full assurance that You have washed us clean in the blood of the Lamb, whose spotless life and innocent death have made Him the "propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only but also for the whole world." By raising Your Son from death, You have declared before all men that this is so; and in Your Word You have promised "that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life."

Grant to us, dear Lord, as Your individual children and as the Church of the Lutheran Confession, the continuance of Your grace, so that we may strive ever more zealously to do Your will and daily rededicate ourselves to Your cause. Hold us up that we may not falter along the way that lies before us, guide us in the paths of Your Truth that we may not stray from the fold, guard us that we may "be saved from this perverse generation," protect us from an evil and unbelieving death, and grant us a glorious entrance into the mansions of eternal rest. All this we ask with firm confidence and faith in the merits and atoning death of Your Son, Jesus Christ, whom we wholeheartedly acknowledge and confess to be our only Savior and Lord. Amen.

We Recommit Ourselves to Remembering Our Past.

What has passed is gone; it is behind us; it is history. History need not be forgotten, however, nor should it be. Especially among us, who recognize history as "His Story," will there be great benefit in remembering how our gracious God worked in us and through us and among us to establish a church body which, like none other, confesses and clings to the Triune God as the only true God and to the whole of His holy Word, verbally inspired and therefore inerrant, as the sole authority and norm for faith and life. Especially among us, therefore, should none think of our history as a church body apart from our gracious and merciful God with whom we have to do. If anyone fails to give glory to God, he also deserves to be eaten by worms and die (Acts 12:20ff.).

Others have remembered the past over the years, and their writings surely would be of interest and benefit to those who, because of their youth or for other reasons, were not involved in the demise of the Synodical Conference (SC) and the rise of the Church of the Lutheran Confession (CLC). These would best be read in their entirety for the sake of completeness and continuity. Parts of them will be cited here in review of the first twenty-five years of our existence. Some of these writings are:

"*Mark ... Avoid*," *Origin of the CLC*, prepared by Paul F. Nolting, authorized by the Coordinating Council of the CLC and approved by the Praesidium and the Board of Doctrine.

Ten Years of Grace, an essay written by M. J. Witt and presented to the 1970 convention.

A History of the CLC, written by C. M. Gullerud in 1978 and presented to the CLC Teachers' Conference.

This Is Your Church, originally written by Gilbert Sydow and published by the Board of Education in 1981 "to provide our children with a history of the" CLC.

Our Anniversary Memorial to the Lord, an essay written and delivered at the 1984 convention by Egbert Albrecht, focusing particularly upon the twenty-fifth anniversary of ILC.

Reflections/Projections, by various writers, originally appearing at various times during our twenty-fifth anniversary year as bulletin inserts and now in booklet form.

Most, if not all, of the above are available from the CLC Book House. Besides these, there are many items in past issues of the *Lutheran Spokesman* and the *Journal of Theology*, some purely historical and others that necessarily touch on matters of history while they may focus upon matters of doctrine.

Early Beginnings

God in His grace and through His holy Word has convinced us that there is nothing more precious than the salvation He has given us in connection with His Son, Jesus Christ. By the same means He has engendered a love for Him in our hearts which, in turn, has responded with the resolve to be obedient to that Word in all things. It was because that Word was being violated by the synods of the SC--they were continuing in a fellowship which God forbade--that caused us to separate from the church bodies with which we were formerly affiliated. These separations were precipitated especially by the convention actions of the Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod (WELS) in 1953, 1955, and 1956. I attended the 1955 convention in Saginaw, not as an expenses-paid delegate, but as a concerned Christian. Because I remained with the synod until April of 1960, however, I did not participate in most of the meetings that took place during the previous four years. For this reason, I am obliged to rely upon others who have written about the early beginnings.

In search of mutual encouragement and edification, seven pastors, one teacher, and several laymen gathered for a free conference at Lyons, Nebraska, in October 1957. At this meeting it was mutually agreed that, because of twenty years of confused thinking in the SC, there was a need for an article to be drawn up on the doctrine of fellowship. This was the initial move toward the framing of the document we now know as *Concerning Church Fellowship*. This document was carefully revised and amended at

successive meetings until it has reached the final form as we have it today.

By December of 1957, when another free conference was held at Mankato, Minnesota, about 12 congregations and pastors, one professor, and a number of teachers had withdrawn from synods in the SC. Again, this meeting was held for mutual strengthening of the participants, whose major concern was that a clear and simple confessional statement should be the basis for any organizational form that might follow. It was decided here that there was need also for a statement on "The Church," since conflicting statements had arisen in the SC over the years. Also at this meeting provisions were made for the support of the Japan mission whose pastor and members had severed relations with the WELS in January 1957.

Five of those 12 congregations were in the Pacific Northwest. These also held meetings for mutual edification by studying God's Word, one in Spokane, Washington, in November of 1957, and one in Opportunity, Washington, in January of 1958.

Another free conference was held at Cheyenne, Wyoming, in May of 1958. The *Lutheran Spokesman*, which came into being at this conference, reported: "They came from varied and far-flung sections of the country: The Northwest and the Southeast; from Wisconsin to Colorado. . . . They came from different synods, from different ethnic groups. . . . They knew that this meeting was of God, for it was dedicated to the task of keeping God's Word in its purity. Yes, the love for God's truth drew all to Cheyenne and was the common denominator of this group." Much time was spent in discussing and working out a confession on the issue of Church Fellowship. Also the work of missions was on the agenda with considerable time spent on the problems confronting the Japan Mission.

The next meeting was held about two months later in Spokane. It was here that a paper was delivered on Church and Ministry. Again, the document on Church Fellowship was discussed and revised. After this series of free conferences, when it became apparent in which direction things were going, the group called itself the "Interim Conference," by which it was known until the constituting convention in August 1960.

At the first meeting of the Interim Conference at Mankato in January 1959, 21 pastors, 7 teachers, 16 lay people and 4 seminary students registered as participants. The emphasis here was on missions at home and abroad, the two doctrinal documents, and especially Christian education. From the discussions it became evident that here the seed was sown for the eventual establishment of Immanuel Lutheran College, although the group thought it unwise to enter into joint action to do so until the work of framing a confessional statement was concluded. But the Lord has His ways to make things happen. Four men from the Mankato congregation formed an association for the purpose of founding a school to fulfill what everyone agreed was a most pressing need, and that September Immanuel Lutheran College was dedicated to the blessed work of training our youth.

A committee was appointed at the conference in Red Wing, Minnesota, in August of 1959 to write a constitution which would lead to the organization of a new church body. The meetings here were filled with zeal and enthusiasm, so much so that the neighbors

remarked about the loud and vigorous singing at devotions. The conference pledged its moral and financial support to the proposed new school at Mankato, discussed its mission program, heard and discussed the latest revisions of "Concerning Church Fellowship" and "Church and Ministry," evaluated the actions of the conventions of the Evangelical Lutheran Synod (ELS) and the WELS, and pledged "full support and encouragement to those who have severed or [are] in process of severing their membership in the above bodies in obedience to God's Word."

The last meeting of the Interim Conference was held at Mankato in January 1960. More work was done on the confessional writings and the constitution. The name, "The Confessional Lutheran Church" was suggested by a committee; further suggestions were to be referred to the constitution committee. Reports were heard from the mission committee, from the *Spokesman* staff, and from the heads of the departments of Immanuel Lutheran College. It was hoped that the committees that were editing the confessional statements would be able to complete their work to the extent that they could be formally adopted at the next meeting at Watertown, South Dakota.

One of our eminent historians summarized the early beginnings as follows: "Upon examining the records, reports and minutes of the above-cited conferences and meetings one is impressed with the careful and conscientious deliberations on the part of the participants as they, under God, were moving toward the establishment of a sound and Scripture-grounded church body which might serve as a truly united fellowship-assembly dedicated to the Lord's work in the widening field of activity which the Spirit of God was opening in those formative years. The meetings which brought together brethren of united mind and heart during days of trial and testing served to strengthen and comfort those who were in need of such healing balm from the Holy Word of God."

Formal Organization

Under Article II: Purpose, the constitution of the CLC states the following:
"This church body is organized and dedicated to serve the following scriptural purposes:

- A. To aid its members so that all things may be done decently and in order.
- B. To afford its membership additional opportunities for the proclamation of the Gospel and for the exercise of Christian stewardship in the service of the Lord Jesus Christ, in accordance with the commands and promises of His Word.
- C. To facilitate the exercise of true Christian fellowship and to help maintain the same through mutual strengthening and fraternal vigilance, in keeping with the will of God.
- D. To protect this fellowship against the encroachment of error and unionism through united testimony and doctrinal discipline."

Those who had been meeting together during those early years, seeking out people of the same mind and heart for mutual encouragement and fellowship, met again at Watertown, South Dakota, at what was to become the organizing convention of the Church of the Lutheran Confession. Statements such as the above were discussed article by article, point by point, carefully scrutinized, honed and polished until the constitu-

tion was finally adopted on the afternoon of Friday, August 12, 1960. Those who were present were given the opportunity before the afternoon was over to record their individual acceptance of the constitution by signing their name to it. Eighty-nine names were recorded and filed with the secretary.

Vital to the constitution and the church body are the items included under Article III: Confession. For this reason much time was devoted to the discussion of the three confessional statements: *Concerning Church Fellowship*, *Theses on the Relation of Synod and Local Congregation to the Holy Christian Church*, and *Theses on the Ministry of the Keys and the Public Ministry*. Two doctrinal essays were presented, whose Scripture-based content served to guide the thinking of the delegates and lead them to discuss gainfully the reports of the committees that had been working with these documents for some months and even years. *Concerning Church Fellowship* was adopted unanimously; the report of the committee working with the theses on Church and Ministry, likewise, with the provision that formal confessional documents concerning these doctrines be prepared and adopted at the next regular convention.

Encouraging were the reports of the committees on missions, publications and ILC. New congregations had been organized, others were able to secure property, and one congregation had opened a new Christian Day School. The convention resolved that the newly-organized CLC would assume responsibility for ILC and made provision in the constitution for a board that would supervise running it. The convention at Watertown resolved to accept a committee recommendation to start a theological journal, with the seminary faculty and others whom they might appoint serving as editorial staff. It was also here that the first CLC Teachers' Conference was announced; it was to be held at Jamestown, North Dakota, in the latter part of October.

Not all of the work could be completed at the Watertown convention. *Concerning Church Fellowship* had been accepted unanimously, but it was felt that the doctrinal statements on Church and Ministry needed more work. Furthermore, the convention tabled action on articles of the constitution and by-laws. The delegates decided, therefore, to continue the convention on January 24-26, 1961, at Sleepy Eye, Minnesota, in order to complete the work of organizing the CLC. The recessed convention was held as planned in what is normally the coldest week of Minnesota's often severe winters. The meetings at Watertown and Sleepy Eye should be considered a unit.

An important essay dealing with excommunication and termination of fellowship was delivered and discussed at Sleepy Eye, giving valuable insight and direction to the delegates with regard to our Scripture-based separation from former affiliations. In order to complete the work of organization, much time was devoted to electing officers, boards and committees, much as we still have them today. The articles and by-laws of the constitution that had been tabled were adopted. The *Lutheran Spokesman* and the *Journal of Theology* became official publications of the church body, the former retroactively to its first issue in June 1958. The convention report listed 34 congregations, 67 pastors and professors, 21 teachers, and six seminary students as charter members of the CLC. Eight more congregations and three more pastors were added as charter members at the Spokane convention in 1962.

Under the Lord's blessing, mission activity had increased considerably since the first meeting of the Interim Conference, although monetary assistance was very small because the 36 contributing congregations no doubt had financial problems of their own. Receipts for the third and fourth quarters of 1960 were just over \$15,000. Nevertheless, progress was being made. The convention resolved to take over the entire financial responsibility for the Japanese Mission and allocated funds for the support of about 10 other mission congregations and Immanuel Lutheran College at Mankato.

Between Watertown and Sleepy Eye, in September 1960, 350 people from 10 congregations gathered in Mankato to dedicate the new Immanuel Lutheran High School building. At Sleepy Eye it was reported that 84 students were enrolled who were being instructed under sometimes very difficult conditions by five full-time and four part-time hard-working and dedicated teachers. Because there were no dormitories then, most of the students were housed in the private homes of members of Immanuel Congregation. At the recessed convention, the Board of Directors of ILC offered to transfer the physical plant to the CLC at cost. The offer was accepted with gratitude to the founders and supporters of ILC for making it possible to provide for the educational welfare of our youth and for workers in the public ministry of the Church.

Much more than doctrinal and organizational concerns was involved in the formation of the CLC. *This is Your Church* has these comments:

"Getting started called for a great deal of personal effort and sacrifice. Many congregations were small, for in separating from their former synods they often gave up church property and had to begin congregational life with little or nothing--no buildings nor furnishings. They used make-shift arrangements and worshiped in homes, basements, store-fronts, or whatever was available and served the purpose. . . .

"Pastors were also affected by the lack of money, for many congregations could not pay adequate salaries nor provide parsonages. Quite a few pastors had to find secular employment to support themselves and their families and often had to live in inexpensive rented quarters or even in church basements. . . .

"In order to get to the many meetings that were held, those who attended had to pay their own way. Some used all their vacation time from secular employment for church purposes. Being careful with time and money became an urgent necessity. For some, going to conferences meant loading a car and driving day and night to the place of meeting. . . .

"To paraphrase the apostle Paul: 'We are what we are by the grace of God.' As the CLC came into existence, individuals were brought to certain convictions by the power of the Holy Spirit working in the Word. But the Holy Spirit does more. The psalmist says of the Lord: 'He setteth the solitary in families.' The individual believer is not left to abide sorrowfully alone."

Thus we have seen how the gracious Lord of His Church provided a safe refuge for those whom He had moved to the conviction to remain faithful to His will and Word at all costs. We believe also that all of the successes and joy we have experienced since our beginnings are due solely to His patient guidance, providence and protection. May we never forget and ever praise His lovingkindness. We now turn to some of the more prominent happenings that have come to pass in and through the Church of the Lutheran

Confession since its early beginnings and its formal organization. A methodical listing of dates, names and places could become a very uninteresting and perhaps tiring exercise. It would seem to be more profitable, therefore, to review the past in a topical manner rather than in chronological order. The following is a humble effort to recount some of the more salient events of the past three decades. Some events and their attendant details surely will stand out for some of us as being more noteworthy than others. If anyone has a desire to supply what appears to him to be an omission of great importance and interest, he is by all means invited to do so. The compilation of all of the events of each of our congregations and of all of the activities of each of our boards would already fill a book of considerable size. Perhaps it is time, if there should be a desire for such a book, for someone to undertake the task.

Doctrine

It was because of a difference in the doctrine of church fellowship as it was being promoted in synods of the SC that the Church of the Lutheran Confession came into being. The Lord God had given the founders of the CLC the grace to recognize "the little leaven" that threatened to dim and hide the truth of the gospel. It was for this reason that so much time and effort were spent in formulating a document that would spell out in unequivocal language what Scripture says regarding the subject with particular reference to the termination of church fellowship. While the matter is settled for us, having become a plank in our confessional platform, the topic has been the subject of several meetings with representatives of our former affiliations. Within a year after the Wisconsin Synod finally severed relations with the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod (LCMS) in 1961 by virtue of a majority vote, correspondence began between the presidents of the WELS and the CLC. This was followed by a series of meetings that continued until the summer of 1972, after which no further meetings were scheduled and Wisconsin expressed regret "over the failure . . . to reach agreement on the doctrine under discussion."

Prior to the 1986 convention, meetings between pastors of the Pacific Coast Conference and some pastors of the WELS gave rise to an expression of agreement called "The Separation Principle of Church Fellowship." In June 1987, sub-committees of the doctrinal commissions of the two church bodies met to set up an agenda for a future meeting at which discussion of the fellowship principle would be resumed. Meetings continued with representatives of the WELS and the ELS as time and circumstance permitted until the WELS Commission on Inter-Church Relations stated in a letter, dated August 8, 1990: "We do not believe there was a real difference between us in doctrine but a difference in regard to the question: Has Missouri been conclusively shown to be persistent in its error?" Since the justification for conducting these more recent meetings had been removed by this denial of a difference, our Board of Doctrine was encouraged "to terminate the present discussions with the representatives of the WELS/ELS, unless such discussions address this specific doctrinal difference from the outset." No doubt, the next scheduled essay will treat these matters in much greater detail.

There were other testings, too, doctrinal disagreements that arose among members of the CLC and that called upon our membership to delve into God's Word for solutions and to allow for time and opportunity for full discussion by all concerned. These

testings pertained to such matters as "The Kingdom of God," "The Third Use of the Law," "The Polygamy Question in Connection With the Practice to be Followed in the Nigerian Mission Field," "The Matter of Involvement in Unionistic Fraternal Life Insurance Organizations," "The Status of Those Who Hold Membership in AAL/LB With Regard to Communion Attendance," "The Role of Women in the Church," "The Divine Call and Termination of the Call." There has never been an indication to ignore any of these problems. We turned to the Word for solutions. When agreement was reached, we rejoiced that the Holy Spirit had shown us the way. When agreement could not be reached, we were saddened by the departure of those who felt constrained to leave our fellowship. Perhaps the most disruptive device of the devil was the change in the policy of fraternal benefit societies that involved our members in the promotion of error. After long hours of discussion in conventions, conferences and congregations whereby the membership was made aware of the unionism involved, we as a body resolved to "'all speak the same thing,' and obedient to instruction and admonition in the Word of our Lord, in an evangelical manner eliminate the leaven of unionistic fraternal benefit societies from our midst." Again we were saddened when some left our fellowship with the charge that we were legalistic and others with the charge that we were not being faithful to the gospel.

In spite of the sad experiences that often accompany such testings, the fact that we were forced to search the Scriptures in order to find solutions to the problems and to assure ourselves that our convictions in these matters rest firmly on God's Word can only serve to our good. This is the only source upon which we can rely to decide the doctrinal issues that arise from time to time. It is God's Word that we need in order to keep us united in confession and strong in the faith. Let us never depart from it.

Missions

To us as individuals and, therefore, to us as a church body the Lord has given the directive to take His gospel and carry it to the ends of the earth. This is our great privilege as children of God and heirs of eternal salvation. There is no one who will say that we have done all that we could to spread the message of salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ. One of the reasons we gather at conventions and conferences and congregational meetings is to hear reports of what the Lord has accomplished through our efforts in various areas and to encourage and exhort and spur each other on to greater and more dedicated involvement in this soul-saving undertaking.

When the CLC was but a fledgling with severely limited resources, our cords didn't stretch very far. For a time we had all we could do to support our newly-acquired school and to care for the needy congregations in our own country. Even so, many of the pastors and missionaries were forced to find secular work in order to supplement their meager salaries. Yet, relative to our resources, more was accomplished than many ever dreamed possible. Our bountiful Lord always provided the means to fulfill the needs as they arose. To God alone be glory! At the first annual convention, the delegates resolved to assume the financial responsibility also for the Japanese mission. From the records it appears that no less than ten home missions were being supported at any given time. In fact, it is estimated that about half of our congregations were mission stations at one time. Some of these have grown to become flourishing and sometimes

large congregations, such as: Redemption, Lynnwood; Holy Cross, Phoenix; Grace and Berea, Twin Cities; Gethsemane, Spokane; Messiah, Eau Claire; and others. As these congregations became self-supporting, the Board of Missions was able finally to reach out with the light that God had entrusted to us to other groups that needed help or were searching for God's truth. Some have come and gone, and many of us will not even remember their names: Christ, Montevideo; Trinity, Broomfield; Bethlehem, Neenah; Grace, McIntosh; Grace, Carlsbad; Redeemer, Tucumcari; Servant of Christ, Los Angeles; Emmaus, Portland; and others. Yet, the seed of the gospel has been sown in these locations, and who but God knows how many souls have been rescued from the fires of hell and have not departed from the Lord.

The Japanese mission, which came to us early in our history, left us at the time of "The Third Use of the Law" controversy; however, the Lord was already opening doors in other directions. A dedicated layman from California had been sending materials to Nigeria which prompted several individuals to ask whether ILC could accept students to train for the ministry. A visitation team was sent to explore the field. The Board of Missions reported to the 1974 convention: "As of this date 27 congregations in Nigeria (some 2,000 souls) agreed with the limited doctrinal presentation of our representatives and requested us to serve them with the truth of the Gospel." Thus the Nigerian Church of the Lutheran Confession (NCLC) came into being. The convention resolved to bring one of the Nigerian members and his family to ILC for training and to authorize the calling of a resident spiritual advisor as soon as possible. The latter was not to become a reality until some 10 years later. In the meantime, the number of souls in the NCLC dwindled to only 12 churches by the time the CLC was able to send its called foreign missionary into the field. Even the student we trained in the States did not keep his promise to serve in the NCLC. With the advent of the missionary, an intensive program of instruction was begun by means of conventions, seminars, and visitations to strengthen and educate the pastors and congregations in the Word. With the establishment of a Bible Institute, the NCLC was beginning to train future pastors and leaders. The ILC-trained student returned to the NCLC and was ordained on Easter Sunday, 1987. Our first missionary accepted a call in the United States after serving in Nigeria for four years. Another man was called to fill the vacancy and began work in Nigeria in January 1991. Via the *Mission Newsletter*, he told us that at the end of that year the second and largest class of men had completed their studies in the Bible Institute and accepted calls into the field. Because of a power struggle resulting in the defection of seven congregations, there remain only five congregations and 11 preaching stations, but contacts have been made with another independent Lutheran group in the area and regional instruction classes have been held in response to their requests for guidance in the Word. A third man has now been called to replace the second, but because of the unstable political situation in Nigeria, he has not been able to enter the field. We wait upon the Lord to show us what to do and when to do it.

The Lord opened another door for us through yet another layman who had spent a number of months in South India teaching the people basic agricultural techniques. There he met with an independent Lutheran pastor who had left his former affiliation for reasons of religious liberalism and church politics. As time passed, other pastors and congregations followed. When the Board of Missions was made aware of their request for spiritual guidance, it sent a visitation team to explore the field, to consult with the head pastor,

and contact a number of the other pastors. The team found that about 3,600 souls were being served by about 20 pastors. On the basis of the team's report, the Board authorized the purchase of a Mission House as a residence for the head pastor and as a meeting place for the Church of the Lutheran Confession of India (CLCI). Recognizing the need for further instruction as the pastors and people in the CLCI grow in faith, the 1984 Convention recommended that a man be called as missionary to India as soon as feasible. A man accepted the Lord's call, but he never entered the field because the request for a visa was denied. (When the call was expanded to include any foreign field, the missionary began to do the Lord's work in Nigeria.) In seeking to assist the CLCI in the training of future pastors and leaders, the head pastor's son began a course of training at ILC. Upon completion of his training, he returned to become a most valuable assistant to his father. He continues to work on his dream of establishing both a pastoral training program and a Christian Day School for the orphans and other CLCI children. Presently there are about 30 congregations and 8,000 members in the CLCI.

About 400 miles to the southwest, the visitation team met with another independent Lutheran pastor who was serving about 300 souls in that area. He also has shown that he is determined to share the Word of Life with as many of his countrymen as possible. His advertising in newspapers in his region did much to promote a Bible correspondence course that had been prepared by one of our stateside pastors and had met with excellent response. The Christians in this part of India chose for themselves the name, "Bharath Evangelical Lutheran Church (BELC), which now numbers about 2,000 souls. The pastor, in addition to preaching and pastoring, teaches daily in the Martin Luther Bible School (High School and College Age), oversees a small orphanage (10 children), and is writing and translating catechism, hymnal, and liturgical materials into several dialects.

Recent reports indicate that the Christians in both of these areas of India are being subjected to growing forms of persecution, not only from the Hindus, but also from other "Christian" churches in the area. Let us, who are relatively free from the problems that our brothers and sisters in Christ are made to endure for His name's sake, storm the gates of grace in their behalf and beseech the Lord that He may keep them in the faith unto their end. By the way, if the statistics are accurate, there are more souls of our fellowship in India than there are in the CLC. It is also interesting to note that the budgeted amount for the two mission groups in India amounts to only \$9,000.

After one of our men, whose God-directed conscience caused him to seek our fellowship, gained extensive experience working with the Hmong in the Twin Cities area, the opportunity arose for him to explore some reported mission opportunities among various refugee camps in Thailand. In May 1989, funds were made available from the MDF so that he could spend a month pursuing contacts in these refugee camps. There were some encouraging results. Early this year another visitation team traveled abroad for the purpose of visiting the brethren of the NCLC, the CLCI, and the BELC. Part of this trip included the investigation of mission possibilities in Thailand and China. We await the reports of the men who represented us in these foreign lands.

There is another aspect of the work in India that needs to be mentioned, and that is Project Kinship (Kids in Need--Source of Help for India's Poor). This project was begun in order to help the leader of the CLCI support seven orphans who had lost their

parents in a hurricane. The Board of Missions decided to ask a committee to contact the Ladies' Aids and other groups or individuals who might be willing to take an active role in this labor of love. The response was overwhelming! Eighty-seven people offered to support an orphan for at least a year; 56 offered their support of the project in general; and four others offered to help build an orphanage. In June of 1983, the president of the CLC decreed that the committee continue with the orphan project under the supervision of the Board of Missions. The 1984 Convention set the guidelines for Project Kinship, notable among which are these: The project is to be a project under the Mission Development Fund (MDF); an estimated budget is to be submitted to the each convention for approval; any new phase of the project involving the expenditure of funds must be approved by the convention; the Kinship Committee is authorized to circularize the CLC for the program; monies needed to administer the project should be derived from extra-budgetary offerings. In 1986, the goals of Project Kinship were spelled out: "The long range goal of Project Kinship is to provide the CLCI with a 100-child orphanage in Nidubrolu, India, and to assist, as much as possible, in the ongoing costs of the program." In the period of only a few years, the orphanage has been built next to the Mission House, the adding of a second story to the building is already being considered, and eight acres of land have been acquired for the raising of crops to help support the orphans and the needy pastors of the CLCI. At present about 25 otherwise homeless children reside at the orphanage. The Lord certainly has blessed this humanitarian effort with the generous responses of our people.

For the past twelve years, the Board of Missions has supported an endeavor known as the "Video Tape Ministry." Literally hundreds of church services conducted by congregations in and around Eau Claire have been recorded and made available to several families who are living away from their home congregations and at a distance from any of our CLC congregations. Since the services coincide with the Sundays of the church year, an isolated family with a television set (and most have at least one) is able to worship remotely with people of like mind every week for the cost of a few pennies return postage. Most local libraries have VCRs for loan at no cost to the user. Mission congregations who have not the privilege of a "live" pastor in their midst every Sunday are able still to hold services every week. This may be an important consideration in some areas. Some of our pastors make use of the VTM for their own congregations when they are on vacation or absent for some other reason.

Christian Education

The need for Christian education became a topic of discussion already in the days of the Interim Conference. Discussion of an essay entitled, "There is No Excuse," emphasized how important it is for us to take upon ourselves the responsibility for educating our young, both in the elementary years when they are so susceptible to the evil influence of the world around them and in those years when they are beginning to think about and plan for their future vocation. Particularly, if as a church body we hoped to remain faithful to the fellowship principle, our young people could not attend schools of false-teaching church bodies. Besides, since the Lord has placed the task of preaching and teaching the gospel into the hands of believers, we need to train teachers and pastors who shall carry on the work. There must be others who will step into the gap and lift up the cross of Christ before the eyes of the world when those of us who are weak and

weary no longer are able to press forward. History has taught us that church bodies which failed to establish schools usually disappeared. The latest statistics show that the Lord has made is possible for 20 of our congregations to fulfill their dream of establishing and maintaining Christian Day Schools. The total enrollment at the end of 1993 was 538 pupils who were being taught by 36 full-time and 34 part-time teachers. The Mankato congregation also supports a Christian high school of 44 students with three full-time and two part-time instructors.

The early beginnings of Immanuel Lutheran College have already been recounted. The Lord so blessed our efforts to offer Christian education and professional training to our young people that it soon became evident that more space would be needed in order to carry on the work. Already in 1961 the convention selected an Expansion and Relocation Committee to confront the problem. As the needs arose the Lord provided. Late in 1962 the committee was made aware of the availability of the Ingram Estate in Eau Claire, Wisconsin, comprising 75 acres, a large mansion with an annex, a large stable-carriage house, a cow barn, and a custodian's house. At the special convention that was held a month later, the delegates resolved to purchase the property for a mere \$85,000 and move the institution to Eau Claire. Much work needed to be done before the school could be opened for business that fall. "When [the Lord] had made sure that the new campus was ours, He stirred up a mighty spirit throughout the Church of the Lutheran Confession for remodeling it to suit our needs." Volunteers from the membership of the CLC came out in force and remodeled the carriage house into classrooms and a boys' dormitory and converted the cow barn into the Seminary House. Changes were also made to the mansion to provide kitchen and dining space for the students, while the upper floors and the annex became girls' dormitories. Over the years other buildings were added to fulfill the needs as they arose: two classroom buildings (1965 and 1970), the field house in which you sit today (1970), a girls' dormitory (1976), a boys' dormitory (1981), and 11 professorages. Upon completion of the boys' dormitory, it was decided to remodel Northwest Hall for the purpose of housing the CLC Book House, the president's office, the business manager's office, the school secretary's office, a classroom, and offices for some of the professors. At the meetings this week we shall be considering yet another significant addition to our campus.

More important, of course, than the buildings are the student body and the faculty that use them. From the very first, in spite of the school's humble beginnings, the students were filled with a wonderful spirit of enthusiasm, joy and Christian fellowship. For the most part this spirit has continued to the present day. This is, no doubt, part of the reason for the continued increase in enrollment during the first 15 years of the school's existence. The peak was reached in the middle 70s when as many as 178 students attended classes on campus. Thereafter the enrollment figures dropped considerably until the present decade when, it seems, they have turned upward again. We can hope that this is happening because more and more of our parents, after comparing the philosophy of secular education with the Christ-centered instruction that is offered at ILC, are becoming convinced that this is the place for their children to be. In order that none be hindered from attending ILC because of rising costs in tuition, room and board, the "ILC Student Aid Fund" was inaugurated in 1986, providing loans and grants for those who needed them. Since that time nearly one-half million dollars in grants, loans, and scholarship have been distributed.

The kind of education our young people receive on this campus is unique partly because of the faculty which the Lord has given us over the years. Here, unlike anywhere else, we have instructors who in everything that they teach and do are committed to and bound by the Word of God and by the Confessions of our Lutheran Church. It is unique also in that the Lord, who has given us this precious jewel, has kept it under His protecting wing for all of its 35 years. Yes, even when He pruned the pines by means of a tremendous windstorm during the convention of 1980, He allowed only a small amount of harm to come to the buildings. Cars were demolished, but all human life was spared. Properly, the convention paused to give thanks to God for His merciful kindness.

Publications

The *Lutheran Spokesman* is older than the CLC, having been launched at the conference in Cheyenne in May 1958. The first editor, reporting the conference's action, commented: "Hereby pastors and congregations will find opportunity to exhort one another in the Word." The first issue of 200 copies appeared in mimeographed form. After only a year the subscription list increased to 1,000. Today the number is near 2,500. This official organ of the CLC has supplied us with timely editorials, an abundance of spiritual meat for hungry souls, informative news reports about our congregations and missions, items of interest regarding synodical activities and inter-synodical meetings, announcements of conferences and conventions, changes of address, and the like.

A publication of a slightly different nature is the *Journal of Theology*, intended especially, but not exclusively, for those who are engaged in the teaching and preaching ministry. Many of the original 80 subscribers were laymen. Readers now number about 275, among whom are also those outside our fellowship. At first the *Journal*, which was inaugurated in 1961 as another official publication of the CLC, appeared five times a year but later became a quarterly because of the increase in the cost of printing and shipping. The first editor listed the aims of the *Journal*: to explain to interested parties the reason for the existence of the CLC, to touch on the questions in controversy from time to time; and "through the positive study of Scripture and its saving doctrines," to widen the range of interest, deepen the measure of understanding, enrich the store of knowledge, and cultivate the practical skills of its readers.

"Ministry by Mail" came into being early in the history of the CLC because of the need to supply our isolated members, who for reasons of distance could not attend regular church services, with sermons and other worship materials. Some contacts with people outside our fellowship have been made by this means. This program of weekly mailings took shape under the direction of the pastor at Sleepy Eye, Minnesota, and his congregation. At present 232 sermons are being sent out in bulk and 70 individually.

The *Directory* is published biennially, complemented by a list of roster changes in the following year. It includes the location and time of services of all congregations along with the name of their pastors; the congregations that have Christian Day Schools and High Schools along with the names of their teaching staff; the names, addresses, and telephone numbers of all pastors, professors and teachers; the names of the officers of the CLC; the personnel of the various boards and committees; information about our

publications, the Book House and ILC, including a listing of the faculty and the administration.

After the CLC decided in 1978 to establish a self-supporting Printing Division under the control of the CLC Book House and the Board of Regents of ILC, other publications began to appear, some on a regular basis and others as they were prepared for publication. The Printing Division was self-supporting as long as one does not factor in the cost of labor; for those who were involved in managing, maintaining and operating the equipment and producing the materials, first a special student at ILC and then a member of the faculty, volunteered their valuable services and accepted help from others when help was needed. This arrangement continued for about a decade when it became evident that we could no longer compete in today's market, even with volunteer help. We owe all of them the debt of our sincere gratitude for the work they have done on our behalf. Among the first publications to appear were the *Prospectus* and the *Proceedings* of the 1978 Convention. Other items that followed were: The *Journal of Theology*, Ministry by Mail, timely newsletters from the various CLC boards and from ILC, reports from the CLC Statistician, some of the essays that were delivered at conventions, our two doctrinal documents, the CLC Constitution, teaching materials for ILC, the *ILC Beacon*, and other CLC pamphlets as they were needed and authorized.

In conclusion, a summary statement by one of the writers of *Reflections/Projections* seems to be in place. In part he wrote:

"We believe that it was this same kind of motivation [Luther's wish to be faithful to his Lord Jesus Christ and faithful to his calling as a teacher of Bible truth] that brought about the formation of our church body in the late 1950s and the early 1960s. Lutheran Christians were concerned by the inroads the ecumenical movement was making in Lutheran circles. They saw their whole Lutheran heritage slipping away from them by compromises, concessions, and delays in dealing with what they knew to be contrary to Holy Scripture. . . . So in great distress and with fear and trembling they withdrew (or were forcibly removed) from the Lutheran synods and fellowships they had previously cherished. They did not know what the future held in store for them.

"But the work of preaching the Gospel had to continue. The work of supporting missionaries had to continue. The work of training pastors and teachers and the new generation had to continue. For these reasons the Church of the Lutheran Confession was organized. It was not an end in itself, but only the means to an end. . . .

"May our Lord help us see the folly of pursuing greatness for ourselves and the importance of faithfulness to our Lord and faithfulness to our calling whatever the costs may be."

From the same publication, a final Litany: "For these and all other undeserved blessings showered upon our Church of the Lutheran Confession . . . We Thank Thee, Lord.

The Twenty-first Convention
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Elton A. Hallauer

