

Nicollet, Minn. August 21, 1959.

A REPORT IN QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

1.

QUESTION: What did the Wisconsin Synod, at its recent Convention in Saginaw, Michigan, decide about its relations with the Lutheran Church - Missouri Synod?

ANSWER: The Synod decided, by majority vote, to continue in fellowship relations with the Lutheran Church - Missouri Synod, and to continue the discussions being carried on by a committee of each Synod concerning the issues that divide us, "until agreement in doctrine and practice has been reached, or until an impasse is reached and no such agreement can be brought about."

2.

QUESTION: Does this action of the Synod mean that the unscriptural policies and practices of the Lutheran Church - Missouri Synod (against which our Synod has protested during the past twenty years) have been put aside and discontinued?

ANSWER: No, it does not mean that. For the Convention also admitted that "many offenses of the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod, which have brought about the troubled conditions in the Synodical Conference, have not been removed and have been aggravated by the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod's reaffirmation of their position on Scouting ....."

3.

QUESTION: Is Scouting the only offense of the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod which is continuing and has been aggravated (made worse)?

ANSWER: No. At its San Francisco Convention in June the Lutheran Church - Missouri Synod not only reaffirmed its wrong position on Scouting, but also its false doctrine of Antichrist. It also declared that the Common Confession is to be one of the confessional statements of the Church that must guide its pastors and teachers in their teaching and preaching. And by encouraging the work of its Armed Services Commission, it reaffirmed its offensive Chaplaincy practice.

4.

QUESTION: Why, then, did our Synod determine to continue in fellowship relations with the Lutheran Church - Missouri Synod, and what reasons did it give to justify such continuance?

ANSWER: The reasons given were that "the Missouri Synod Doctrinal Unity Committee has shown a receptive attitude toward our testimony;" that the Missouri Committee has with our Committee approved a correct statement on Holy Scripture and one on the doctrine of Antichrist; and that disciplinary action has been taken against certain professors in the Missouri Synod accused of teaching error.

5. QUESTION: Are these things really so, and are they good?

ANSWER: We may believe them to be true, and find in them cause for thanksgiving. We can and should rejoice whenever ANY Christian church body does or says something that is in accord with the Truth. But it must be noted, for instance, that a correct doctrinal statement on Antichrist was accepted only by the Doctrinal Committee, and not acted upon by the Synod. Instead, the Convention at San Francisco reaffirmed the false doctrine of Antichrist adopted three years ago. Doctrinal discipline may be in action against certain false teachers within the Missouri Synod. But we have seen no public retraction or correction, thus far, of their errors. It should also be remembered that our Synod has never raised public charges against the errors of individuals within the Missouri Synod. Our Synod has only protested public offenses against pure doctrine and practice caused by the Missouri Synod itself, and approved by it. Which of these has been admitted, corrected or set aside?

6. QUESTION: Do the good things that are listed, insofar as they have really taken place, justify our Synod in continuing in fellowship relations with the Lutheran Church - Missouri Synod?

ANSWER: Again we must repeat what our Synod itself said at its Convention, namely, that "many offenses of the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod ..... have not been removed and have been aggravated .....". Because of these same offenses, our Standing Committee on Church Union told the Convention of our Synod, held four years ago, in 1955: "In our dealings with our sister synod (Missouri) we have been earnestly endeavoring to heed the Scriptural exhortations to patience and forbearance in love. "We have, however, arrived at the firm conviction that, because of the divisions and offenses that have been caused, and which have until now not been removed, further postponement of a decision would be a violation of the apostolic injunction of Romans 16:17(I beseech you, brethren, mark them which cause divisions and offenses contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned; and avoid them.)" This statement of our Committee on Church Union, made in 1955, was true and correct. It was scriptural. However, the Convention of 1955 refused to follow that direction; and the Synod has refused to follow it ever since.

7. QUESTION: What has been done about this?

ANSWER: In the past four years, many members of Synod have tried in every way to admonish the Synod to obey the

clear Word of God that deals with this matter. More than fifty pastors, teachers and professors of Synod, including your own pastor, as well as some congregations and lay-men, had again written to the leaders and delegates at the Convention this year, pleading that the Synod return to the principles of Scripture and sever fellowship relations with the Synod that is causing divisions and offenses. But these urgings were not heeded by the majority.

8.

QUESTION: How was the Convention able to resist such requests?

ANSWER:

The official representatives of Synod had voiced a different rule in regard to fellowship relations with other church bodies. Their position can be summed up in their own words:

"Termination of church fellowship is called for when you have reached the conviction that admonition is of no further avail and that the erring brother or church body demands recognition for their error."

This principle the Convention adopted. It is false and unscriptural.

9.

QUESTION: Why is it false and unscriptural?

ANSWER:

Because in teaching us when to avoid erring church bodies, Scripture says nothing about "reaching the conviction that admonition is of no further avail." Therefore also the Standing Committee in 1955, as above shown, did not mention that, but declared that when divisions and offenses continue after the erring has been admonished, it is time to avoid. It is not our business to reach a conviction about whether more admonition would be profitable or might accomplish the purpose. Nor is it our business to stop admonishing after we have terminated fellowship relations. But it is our duty to terminate fellowship when the erring has been corrected and does not stop giving offense with his error.

10.

QUESTION: Was all this brought to the attention of the Convention?

ANSWER:

It was, in writing and by word of mouth. It has been repeatedly explained through the years since 1955. But the Synod, under its present leadership, did not heed it. Indeed, there is evidence that many were impatient and resentful of scriptural correction and made no effort to give it a full hearing.

11.

QUESTION: What is the result?

ANSWER:

The result is that the Synod, by continuing in fellowship with a persistently erring church body, in spite of admonition, has itself become guilty of persisting in causing divisions and offenses contrary to the Truth.

