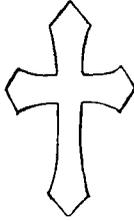


What Separates the CLC from Wisconsin?

President Albrecht clarifies
the present situation with a
factual report . . .
speaking the truth in love.



UNRESOLVED ISSUES

On August 17, 1961, the Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod solemnly resolved,

"That we now suspend fellowship with the Lutheran Church - Missouri Synod on the basis of Romans 16: 17-18."

We consider this resolution a sincere and heroic effort on the part of Wisconsin to extricate herself from the web of unionism into which her relations with erroristic Missouri had degenerated. We rejoice and thank God.

This action of Wisconsin at once gave rise to the question: Does Wisconsin's resolution suspending fellowship with Missouri pave the way for our return to the fellowship which most of us had enjoyed for so many years?

The answer to this question was

given at Spokane when we said,

" — the recent convention of the Wisconsin Synod passed a resolution of suspension which gives rise to the hope that the membership of that synod may be seeking to rectify a situation that has caused so much grief and concern. Over this possibility we sincerely rejoice. — We do feel constrained to point out, however, that this suspension of fellowship does not in itself remove the real issues that are involved in our relations with the Wisconsin Synod."

We named the issues:

"deviations (on the part of Wisconsin) from the scriptural doctrine of Church Fellowship, and the doctrine of the Clarity and Authority of the Scriptures, as well as instances of violation of the sanctity of the CALL."

DEVIATIONS FROM THE SCRIPTURAL DOCTRINE OF CHURCH FELLOWSHIP

For quite some time, Wisconsin has proclaimed and defended the position that "Termination of church fellowship is called for *when you have reached the conviction* (emphasis ours) that admonition is of no further avail" (Report to the Protest Committee).

Wisconsin's practice has been in conformity with this unscriptural principle. Wisconsin continued to practice church fellowship with Missouri long after she had recognized Missouri as a causer of divisions and offenses contrary to the doctrine, under the plea that she had not yet reached the conviction that further admonition would be fruitless. This aberration led Wisconsin so far astray that those who had been charged with the duty of dealing with the sister synod fellowshiped with that synod even after they had publicly declared that an impasse had been reached.

The Lord says, Romans 16: 17: Now I beseech you, brethren, mark them, that is, take careful note of them, which cause divisions and offenses contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned, and avoid them, have no fellowship with them, not tomorrow or next year or when you reach the conviction that admonition is of no further avail, or when a majority of convention delegates reaches this conviction, but

when you see what they are doing.

When we seek to understand what the Lord would have us do when confronted with a situation in which divisions and offenses contrary to the doctrine are being caused, we dare never ask: How will the errorist react to brotherly admonition? or, Is there still a faint ray of hope that he will recognize his error and return to "the old paths"? We cannot look into any man's heart nor discern his future reactions. The only proper question is: What do we see after we have taken a very careful look? If we see causers of divisions and offenses contrary to the doctrine which we have learned, that is, if we see people ^{who} by the unscriptural position which they actually hold and proclaim, cause divisions and offenses contrary to the doctrine, then the Lord's injunction is, "Avoid them!" not tomorrow or next year, but *at once*. When God has spoken, then delay is disobedience.*

There is nothing in Wisconsin's recent suspension resolution that would show that Wisconsin has receded from the unscriptural position to which she has clung and which she has stoutly defended. The supporting "whereas's" (1, 2, 4, 5, and 11) indicate that Wisconsin still holds and defends the above error.

(continued on page 10)

*For the place of brotherly admonition in the mutual relations of Christian brethren, the reader is referred to paragraphs 63, 65, and 72, CONCERNING CHURCH FELLOWSHIP (available from CLC Book House, Box 145, New Ulm, Minnesota).

DEVIATIONS FROM THE DOCTRINE OF THE CLARITY AND AUTHORITY OF THE SCRIPTURES

The orthodox Lutheran Church has always believed and taught that the Scriptures are *clear*, that their meaning is not obscure but easily intelligible to a devout child of God. That is why the psalmist was able to say: Thy Word is a *lamp* unto my feet, and a *light* unto my path. Psalm 119: 115. And St. Peter says:

"We have a more sure Word of prophecy; whereunto ye do well that ye take heed as unto a light that shineth in a dark place" (2 Peter 1: 19).

The orthodox Lutheran Church has always accepted the divine *authority* of the Scriptures and taught that since they are God's Word we owe them unconditional obedience.

"Thy teachers shall not be removed into a corner any more, but thine eyes shall see thy teachers; and thine ears shall hear a word behind thee, saying, This is the way, walk in it" (Isaiah 30: 20-21).

Whosoever transgresseth and abideth not in the doctrine of Christ, hath not God" (2 John 9).

The manner in which Wisconsin has these past years dealt with Romans 16:17-18 is a clear deviation

from the above teaching of Scripture.

The 1955 convention of the Wisconsin Synod heard her president say in his presidential report:

"The charges which we brought (against Missouri) in an effort to do our brotherly duty before God have been definitely denied . . . divisions and offenses have been caused contrary to the doctrine which we have learned. And when that is the case [emphasis ours] the Lord has a definite command for us: 'Avoid them'".

This was clear and unequivocal language.

The convention said:

"A church body which creates divisions and offenses by its official resolutions, policies, and practices not in accord with Scripture — becomes subject to the indictment of Romans 16: 17-18. The Lutheran Church - Missouri Synod has by its official resolutions, policies, and practices created divisions and offenses both in her own body and in the entire Synodical Conference. Such division and offenses are of long standing" (1955 Proceedings, p. 85).

The convention received the following resolution:

“Resolved, that whereas the Lutheran Church - Missouri Synod has created divisions and offenses by its official resolutions, policies, and practices not in accord with Scripture, we, in obedience to the commands of our Lord in Romans 16: 17-18, terminate our fellowship with the Lutheran Church - Missouri Synod.”

But the convention did not follow this Scriptural directive in simple obedience to God's Word. It merely received it

“for final action in a recessed convention in 1956” (1955 Proceedings, p. 86).

In a Post-convention *News Letter* the Board for Information and Stewardship, Wisconsin Synod, offered a statement with intermittent quotes attributed to President Oscar Naumann:

“‘The most difficult question confronting our Synod at this convention’ concerns our relations with the Lutheran Church - Missouri Synod. Though ‘deeply grieved at the sight of a crumbling fellowship’ the decision must be made whether the Lord would not

have us apply His difficult command, ‘Avoid them,’ or [emphasis, Ed.] whether we still have a continuing debt of love to those whose fellowship we cherished so many years.’”

In reporting the outcome of convention action, the same *News Letter* said:

“Agreement on the fact that Romans 16: 17-18 applied to the situation in the Missouri Synod was almost unanimous. The divisions and offenses are clear. There was an honest difference of opinion whether it was necessary to break relations completely with the Missouri Synod now or: whether we, in the words of our President, ‘still have an unpaid debt of love to those whose fellowship we have cherished so many years.’” [Emphasis in the original].

This approach to the issue made Scripture equivocal. It says, in effect, that Scripture placed the Synod in a dilemma. Toward its solution, one set of Scripture passages is pitted against another. The clarity and authority of Scripture is thus undetermined.

INSTANCES OF VIOLATION OF THE SANCTITY OF THE CALL

We have always believed and taught that a valid and legitimate *CALL* is something sacred and divine, and may not be tampered with

by any man. The relation of a Christian pastor to his congregation, and the relation of a Christian congregation to its pastor is a creation of

the Holy Spirit. It is God who gives a Christian congregation its pastor. Ephesians 4: 11. A Christian pastor is not a servant of men but a servant of Christ. I Corinthians 4:1. For that reason, no congregation can, without grievously sinning against God, reject its God-given shepherd unless he has made himself unfit for the high office by persistent adherence to false doctrine, a scandalous life, or wilful neglect of duty.

In the very recent past, however, Wisconsin has, through its elected officials and appointed representatives, taken the position that a congregation has the right to reject its pastor whenever he ceases to be a member of the Wisconsin Synod.

Congregations have been advised and urged to take this sinful step. When they acted on this ill advice they were commended for their faithfulness and synodical loyalty. In no case that has come to our attention has a congregation contemplating this step been admonished not to tamper with the divine *CALL* of their pastor unless there is clear evidence of persistent adherence to false doctrine, a scandalous life, or wilful neglect of duty. In one instance, a visiting elder tried to make this Scriptural point and was promptly and rudely overruled by the district president. The monotonous reply to the question,

"For what reason do you want to

reject your God-given Pastor?" has been,

"He does not belong to the Wisconsin Synod."

Is a Christian pastor pledged to membership in a synod or to faithfulness to Christ and His Word?

Again and again, Wisconsin has given its official sanction to the actions of congregations which rejected their pastors for no Scripture-approved reason, and has helped fill the pulpits thus sinfully vacated. *

The manner in which Wisconsin Synod officials have dealt with congregations and their pastors whose only "sin" was that they disagreed with, and objected to, Wisconsin's unscriptural fellowship doctrine and practice can not honestly be described as anything other than violations of the sanctity of the *CALL*.

The above cited *deviations* from Scripture doctrine are the *UNRESOLVED ISSUES* that still lie between *The Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod* and *The Church of the Lutheran Confession*.

It is our fervent prayer that God may mercifully grant Wisconsin grace to recognize and remove these *UNRESOLVED ISSUES* in accordance with His will.

PAUL ALBRECHT
BOWDLE, SOUTH DAKOTA
PRESIDENT OF THE
CHURCH OF THE
LUTHERAN CONFESSION

Footnote to Page 12

* God does not want men to replace the pastor whom He has given with another whom He has not sent.

PASTORAL THEOLOGY, by J. C. Fritz, textbook used at Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary, page 62:

"A pastor should not accept a call to a congregation which has without good reason (false doctrine, offense, willful neglect of official duties) and therefore unjustly deposed its pastor from office or compelled him to resign or to look about for another call. Before God such a pastor is still the pastor of that congregation, and therefore no other pastor has the right to take his place. Before such a congregation may again be supplied, a reconciliation must be effected: it must either recall its pastor or otherwise give satisfactory evidence of its repentance."

PUBLISHER'S NOTE

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Additional copies may be had by sending one dollar per dozen to the CLC Book House, Box 145, New Ulm, Minnesota.

