

**An Informal Report
of the
Chicago Sessions
of the Synodical Conference
1954**

*Prepared by
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INTRODUCTION

This report is not so exact that it may be quoted word for word. The reporter believes that it is exact only in the general picture of the meeting with which it describes.

The reporter left Mankato on a train at 5:30 p.m., Nov. 14th, and arrived in Chicago at 7 a.m. on the next day. Riding in a day coach, he slept only about four hours, and arrived fresh as a withered daisy. His train partner was Pastor Arthur Drevlow of St. James, Minn. When this man boarded the train, he set down a bag of lunch in order that he might put his suitcase on a shelf. He then took seat, forgetting about the bag. The brakeman shortly saw it, and held it up, asking whose it was. This provoked some laughter. Rev. Drevlow generously shared the contents of the bag with this reporter. Speaking of lunch, - the reporter ate some of his own in the waiting room of the Northwestern Depot in Chicago, while Rev. Drevlow and another pastor bought their breakfast in the depot café. Aside of the reporter, in the waiting room, sat Dean Norman Madson munching his breakfast. The Dean related that, as a youth, he had been ashamed to be seen eating out of bag on a train. Therefore, on a long trip, he had gone hungry all day, and had eaten in his berth at night. But now, he said, he no longer cared who saw him. He also remarked that people in Chicago and other large cities pay little or no attention to the queer actions of some people in public. Later, in his hotel room, the reporter finished his breakfast with some homemade rolls. He ate all his breakfasts, except one, and most dinners, there. Pastor C.M. Gullerud, his roommate, did the same. They ate suppers in cafes. At the hotel, the reporter eventually met the following pastors and professors of our synod: Otto, J. Preus, J. Anderson, Lillegard, Tweit, N. Madson, Theiste, Oesleby, and Newgard. He counted 25 clergymen and 4 laymen, all of our synod, who were present at the convention, at least part-time. No doubt, there were other laymen.

- D. L. Pfeiffer.

Monday Afternoon: Chicago Study Club

After dinner, on Monday, Gullerud, Madson, and this writer rode by streetcar to Pastor Luther Vangen's home. Vangen then took them by car to Oak Park, a Chicago suburb. There, in Trinity Lutheran Church (Missouri Synod), a meeting of the so-called Chicago Study Club began at 2 p.m. Forty people were present. All but six of whom belong to the Missouri Synod. Five were aged, retired pastors. Present were also some laymen, one of whom told the reporter privately, "I'm here because I can't see that what I learned from my pastor 50 years ago is now wrong."

Purpose of the meeting was to decide what, if anything, these people should do at the Synodical Conference convention, which was to start the next morning. Rev. Romoser, chairman, gave a brief report on the Detroit session of the SC (Synodical Conference) in August. His report can be summarized as follows: The Wisconsin and the Norwegian Synods said that the Common Confession settles nothing with the American Lutheran Church; the Missouri Synod said that the CC (Common Confession) is as perfect as a human document can be. Discussion followed this report, as follows:-

A Mo (Missouri Synod) pastor: Why have the Wisconsin and Norwegian men said little publicly about their meeting last summer with ALC (American Lutheran Church) men in Milwaukee?

Lillegard (who had been at the meeting): It is hard to quote from memory, because your quotation can be denied, and you then have nothing to prove it correct; but the meeting made it clear that the ALC men believed that, not their church, but Mo, has changed.

Some one (the reporter did not catch all the names): Negotiations between Mo and ALC have been suspended, but not out of obedience to Titus 3:10 ("A man that is an heretic, after the first and

second admonition, reject"). They have been suspended only because ALC is working toward a merger with ELC, UELC, and LFC (Evangelical Lutheran Church, United Evangelical Lutheran Church - Danish, and the Lutheran Free Church).

Mo pastor: our club should ask for nothing less than a rejection of the CC.

Another: The CC is hypocritical because it implies an agreement which simply does not exist.

Mo pastor (formerly missionary in South America): The CC should be rejected, not merely as a settlement of old controversies, but as a statement of doctrine, lest it be used to support error.

Another Mo pastor: Protests do not help. We protest as you Norwegians do; but our own officials pay no attention to us.

Romoser then read a proposed overture which the Club and the church councils (scheduled to meet in the evening) could make their own. The discussion then turned to the matter of an overture. The following thoughts were expressed by various speakers: the CC does not show that the controversy between the SC and the ALC has been settled.... The ALC shows where it stands by supporting the National Lutheran Council with its unionism and the modernistic World Council of Churches.... the ALC shows its colors by moving swiftly toward merger with bodies which are obviously not agreed with the SC.... The president of the ALC has said that the CC harmonizes with the United Testimony on Faith and Life (platform of the proposed merger). The Lutheran Witness has denied this.... In the Detroit sessions of the SC, it was publicly stated that the Mo and ALC committees (authors of the CC) had decided to talk only about things on which they agreed; and no one denied this in Detroit.... The ALC paper, the Lutheran Standard, has attacked scriptural doctrine in recent months.... After Prof. Baepler (chairman of Mo's union committee, also president of SC) had stated under oath in the Chesterfield-Missouri court case that ALC has changed its position, the ALC Standard said, "That will be news to our fellowship committee.".... The ALC, in its latest convention, approved, with little discussion, both Part II of the CC and the United Testimony. Such facts make it clear the ALC does not understand the CC as Mo thinks ... It was finally moved and seconded that the club ask the SC to reject the CC as a settlement, and to ask Mo to do the same.

Former missionary in SA: This is not enough, because then the CC can still be used for other evil purposes. (This reporter also stressed this point, referring to the fact that although the platform adopted by Mo and ALC in 1938 was later shelved as a basis for union, it has constantly been used in support of false teaching.)

Dierks: The club should ask only for a rejection of the CC as a settlement, and not worry now about other evil purposes for which it may be used. We can take care of that later.

Former missionary: No overture from us will be accepted. Our overture will only be our testimony that some in Mo speak against its false position. Therefore, we should say all we want to say.

Aged Mo pastor (named Prechel): We must not pussy-foot and dilly-dally. That is not the way of God's Word. Titus 1:9. Soft peddling won't convert anyone. Only God's Word can do this. Therefore, we must speak out as God's Word does.

Romoser: We can be mild for the sake of Mo lay people and even pastors who don't know what the score is.

Madson: Ask Mo that since the CC contains false doctrinal statements, Mo should no longer consider it a settlement. (Note to Madson from Pfeiffer: your proposal does not prohibit use of the CC for other evil purposes. Madson later denied this.)

The club finally decided to let a committee draw up an overture which could be considered that evening.

Monday Evening: Church Councils

At 8 o'clock, in the same church, a meeting of the church councils of the Chicago area took place. (These are the officers of the congregations whose pastors form the Chicago Study Club.)

This meeting, as had been true of the afternoon meeting, was opened with a hymn, scripture reading, and prayer. The prayers at both meetings had been written by C.F.W. Walther, first president of Mo. What struck this reporter was that these prayers gave thanks to God for the truth which has prevailed among us in the past, and did not pass judgment on whether we still have it in the present.

The Rev. A.T. Kretzmann reported that the pamphlet published by the Group, "100 Questions and Answers for Synodical Conference Lutherans," had sold in 25,000 copies. The treasurer, a layman, reported a balance of \$200 in the treasury - to everyone's surprise.

The Rev. Kuster: Then reported on the Synodical Conference sessions in Detroit as follows:-

Dr. Baepler, president of the SC, had recognized the disunity in the SC, reviewed SC history, and pleaded for patience and more meetings to talk things over, in his message. Greetings from a Lutheran Synod in Australia had begged that we patch things up. It had been ruled that Wisconsin Synod objections be taken up, but that non-delegates (visitors from SC synods) could talk on a subject only after no more delegates wanted the floor on the subject. The first essay, by a Wis. man, had brought out that the CC has created "a basically untruthful situation," because it implies that ALC has changed, when it has not. Madson of the Nor had agreed with this. The next essayist, speaking for Mo, had defended the CC all along the line, the fashion of "A Fraternal Word" (pamphlet mailed by Mo officials to all SC pastors last summer). The Mo essayist had maintained that by accepting the CC, ALC had rejected all its false doctrine. The Slovak Synod, he said, has accepted the CC. After the essays on the CC had been discussed, the convention committee had suggested that the CC be "deactivated" as a settlement. This suggestion had then been discussed. During the discussion, Dr. Behnken, Mo president, had said that he did not know the details about the Milwaukee meeting between ALC men and Wis and Norw men, but that if what he had heard was true, ALC has been speaking out of both sides of its mouth. The Mo essayist had then read another page which he had overlooked before. He had defended what the united testimony says about justification, and had claimed that the Brief Statement (Missouri's 1932 confession to other Lutherans) agree on justification. Then the convention committee had come with a new suggestion, and had withdrawn its previous suggestion. The new suggestion had then been discussed most of the remaining time at Detroit. Otto, J. Anderson, and others had asked that Titus 3:10 be applied by Mo against ALC, Mo men denied that the passage can be applied to ALC. Behnken had now expressed the wish that we forget about past dealings with ALC because it intends to merge with ELC, etc. A Mo pastor had stated that he had begun to study the CC this year, and had found it a sacred document. Lillegard had asked that if the ALC really agrees with us, why hasn't it applied for membership in the SC,

Those who had defended the chaplaincy in Detroit had defended it mostly on sentimental grounds, stressing the good results which it has had, they had not discussed the thing itself. The other side had said that we should not follow sentiment, but the Bible.

Most speakers, even some from Mo, had said that the chaplaincy is inclined to unionism. A Wis man

man said that we should support our chaplains ourselves, so that we, not the government, can make the rules for them.

At this point, the convention committee had come with a revision of its new suggestion. The revision included a general confession of sin. This had been criticized as too general because sins were not named, the revision had also included a statement to the effect that Mo is orthodox. Mo men had taken this to mean that all that Mo has said is right. Behnken had stressed this, and had expressed joy. Wis and Norw men on the committee had said that the statement referred only to what the Mo essayist had read at the convention about justification.

Next, an essay by a Mo man, on scouting had been read . But an essay on the same subject, by a Wis man, had not been read at Detroit for lack of time. The subject had therefore been little discussed. Prof. Reim, Wis, had then withdrawn his earlier support of the revised committee report because of the interpretation which Mo men had put on the statement about Mo's orthodoxy. Behnken then had made an impassioned speech, expressing great dismay at this turn of events. He had expressed great disappointment at Reim's withdrawal of support. Behnken had also insisted that Part II of the CC clears up Part I (Part I is what was first called the CC). Naumann, president of Wis, had suggested that SC recess until later in the year.

Behnken: What will our breaking off with ALC mean, if we break off as you wish? What will we tell them? We can't use the CC any longer?

Naumann: Dr. Behnken's words cut! He should ask, What are we going to tell each other?

It was then resolved to recess the meeting until fall.

After Kuster had finished this report on the Detroit sessions of the SC, he added that the pamphlet, "100 Questions and Answers for Synodical Conference Lutherans" and the erring ACDP report of Mo's presidium had not been mentioned at all in Detroit. He felt that the meeting had not gotten down to the root of our troubles.

Members of the group to which Kuster reported complained that visitors to the Detroit convention had not been permitted to speak. Some said that Behnken, not Reim, had stopped any progress in Detroit, namely, by insisting that the convention committee statement regarding Mo's orthodoxy covered everything, that his insistence had made Reim withdraw his support of the committee report, that Behnken's broad interpretation was nonsense because it contradicts everything that Wis and Norw Synods have been saying for years. But Wis and Norw men, especially Reim, are blamed for the Detroit failure. It was also reported that Reim had twice talked with Behnken privately, and had pointed out that Behnken was misrepresenting the other side with his broad interpretation. Madson and Otto now told the group that they had left the meeting with ALC representatives in Milwaukee convinced that we have not been misunderstanding and misrepresenting the ALC position all these years in our dealings with Mo, that ALC has not changed.

Dierks now presented a proposed overture to the SC. Individuals were asked to sign it. Before the meeting adjourned, Mo's new magazine "Advance" was criticized by a layman for its unionistic spirit. He mentioned its praise of a "community church" established by a Mo missionary. Meeting adjourned, and fifty Mo people signed the proposed overture, which reads as follows:

TO THE BRETHERN OF THE SYNODICAL CONFERENCE -

We wish to lay before the Synodical Conference the following facts pertinent to the Common Confession and the doctrinal discussions between the Missouri Synod and the American Lutheran Church.

Fact 1. Two synods of the Synodical Conference, as well as a number of congregations, pastoral conferences, and individual members of the Missouri Synod hold that the Common Confession does not show that the doctrinal differences between the American Lutheran Church and the Synodical Conference have been composed according to the scriptures and the Lutheran Confessions (Cf. Mo. Syn. Proceedings, 1950, pp.575-585 and 918; 1953, pp.530-532, 535-538, 542-544; and A Declaration of 89 members of the Missouri Synod to the 1952 Synodical Conference convention, dated June 10, 1952).

Fact 2. The American Lutheran Church continues to lend its approval, support, and membership to the National Lutheran Council, Lutheran World Federation, and World Council of Churches (cf., e.g. Luth. Standard, July 1952, p.8), organizations which the Synodical Conference has found to be unionistic (cf., e.g., Mo. Synod Proceedings, 1950, p.692).

Fact 3. The American Lutheran Church, by unanimous convention action, continues to move toward an early merger with church bodies which are not in agreement in doctrine and practice with the Synodical Conference (cf. Luth. Standard, Oct.23,1954, p.3).

Fact 4. The president of the American Lutheran Church has declared that "differences remaining to be ironed out" for the final merger "have nothing to do with doctrine and practice" (St. Paul, Minn., Pioneer Press, Jan.14, 1954).

Fact 5. The president of the American Lutheran Church declared to the 1954 convention of the American Lutheran Church that there is "complete agreement" between the Common Confession and the United Testimony on Faith and Life, the uniting confessional basis of the merger within the American Lutheran Conference, while, on the other hand, officers of the Mo. Synod have publicly expressed grave concern regarding the adequacy of the United Testimony, and have raised questions concerning the consistency between the United Testimony and the Common Confession (Luth. Witness, July 6, 1954, p.6; Vice President Grumm at the special Wisconsin Synod Convention, Milwaukee, Oct.8-9, 1953).

Fact 6. In Aug. 1950, Dr. Fendt of the American Lutheran Church, a member of the joint subcommittee which drafted the Common Confession, declared that the Common Confession sets forth "the doctrine taught by both Synods" and that "the underlying motivation (in drafting the Common Confession) was to give expression to existing doctrinal unity rather than to rehearse past doctrinal disagreements or to seek compromises or conversions among the negotiators" (C.T.M. 1950, p.773).

Fact 7. Scripture doctrines held by the Synodical Conference have, subsequent to the adoption of the Common Confession, been denied and attacked in publications of the American Lutheran Church (cf. Luth. Standard, Oct,25,1952, p.4, on Creation; Febr.21, 1953, p.15, on Inspiration), without public rebuke or correction.

Fact 8. The statement of the chairman of Mo. Synod's Committee on Doctrinal Unity that the American Lutheran Church receded from its former position has been challenged in a publication sponsored by the American Lutheran Church with the response, "that will be news to the members of the ALC committee" (Lutheran Outlook, Aug.1953, p.230: Dr. Dell).

Fact 9. In spite of the situation outlined above, the 1954 convention of the American Lutheran Church has, on the one hand unanimously adopted resolutions providing for the final steps toward merger with other bodies of the American Lutheran Conference, and, on the other hand, has unanimously approved part it [II?] of the Common Confession (Lutheran standard, oct.23,1954),

Fact 10. These facts make it evident that the American Lutheran Church has not interpreted the Common Confession in the sense in which the Mo. Synod committee intended it to be understood, thereby demonstrating that the Common Confession is defective for the purpose for which it was

framed.

Fact 11. The Lutheran Confessions have laid down the scriptural requirements for settling doctrinal differences: "For the preservation of pure doctrine and for thorough, permanent, godly unity in the church it is necessary, not only that the pure, wholesome doctrine be rightly presented, but also that the opponents who teach otherwise be reprov'd, I Tim.3 (2 Tim.3,16); Titus 1,9." (Cf. Trig. pp.855-859).

In view of these facts we petition the Synodical Conference:

- 1) to recognize that we reject the Common Confession because it does not define and safeguard scripture doctrines clearly taught in the Brief Statement, and does not forbid the teaching of doctrines specifically rejected by the Brief Statement;
- 2) to request the Missouri Synod to rescind its 1950 resolutions regarding the Common Confession;
- 3) to make this memorial a part of the record and of the printed proceedings of this convention of the Synodical Conference.

Tuesday to Friday: Synodical Conference

The Synodical Conference sessions opened on Tuesday, Nov.16th and closed on the following Friday. Your pastor, as well as many others, did not take part in the devotional services, because, to him such services imply a unity which no longer exists. Indeed, our synod, last June, officially recognized the fact, and should have separated from the Missouri Synod on account of it. God's word (for example, Rom.16:17) commands us to mark and to avoid those who cause divisions and offenses contrary to scripture doctrine. Our synod has done the marking, but not the avoiding. The fact that many did not join in the devotions was obvious to the convention, and was even mentioned on the floor. Nevertheless, a motion carried that the convention occasionally interrupt its sessions with joint prayer. To this, some voted no, but these votes were ignored, this is a bad sign because no one votes against prayer, or refuses to join in it, unless he is a rank unbeliever who thinks prayer is foolish, or unless he is a true believer with conscience scruples against the contents, nature, or circumstances of the prayer.

Since we have just quoted the overture of the Chicago group on the foregoing pages, we shall first tell what happened to it and to its makers during the convention. The overture was mentioned by the chairman on the first day of the convention. It was at once resolved that the convention committee decide what should be done with the overture, - without its first being read to the convention, this is unheard of, that what has been addressed to a convention is not even read to it before referral to a committee. No more was heard of the overture until the last day of the convention, when some one asked that it be read. After a great deal of debate, a motion at last carried to have it read, and then referred for consideration to a standing committee which, by then, had been created.

No signer of the overture was ever given the floor knowingly by the chairman. Two started to talk, but their words were drowned out by the chairman. He could easily do this by means of the loud speaker system which was used. Two signers stood for some time with upraised hands, but were not recognized by the chairman. He thus acted according to a rule which permitted only delegates to speak, - rule which had not been followed in Synodical Conference conventions until 1952. He contended that if he let visitors speak, they would take up too much time. This, however, is no real defense of the ruling simply because the convention could easily have limited the total time for non-delegates to speak. Your reporter, as a visitor, did not speak, nor did he see any use in trying

to get the floor. Nevertheless, some justice prevailed at one point through the ignorance of the chairman and most of the delegates. The Rev. Tobias Peterson, a Mo pastor, but not a delegate, was allowed to speak. He protested that the Rev. Oswald Hoffmann, head of Mo's publicity bureau, who had spoken twice, had no right to speak. Peterson: Does that man have a right to speak? Chairman: He has a right. Peterson: Is he a delegate or an officer of the Synodical Conference? No answer was given, but, to our knowledge, Hoffmann did not speak more.

We believe that it will be confusing to report the discussions in chronological order. For the discussion of a given subject was often interrupted by the discussion of a report or partial report of the convention committee. We shall therefore quote first the committee resolutions which were finally adopted by the convention and the discussion of them. These resolutions read as follows:

PREAMBLE: we humbly bow before our God and Lord Jesus Christ and sincerely confess our past sins in our intersynodical life and seek his forgiveness. We gratefully acknowledge that in spite of our weaknesses and sins our Lord has bountifully blessed us with the unity we have enjoyed these past eighty-two years.

WHEREAS, further fellowship negotiations between the American Lutheran Church and the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod have been suspended because of the merger actions of the American Lutheran Church; and

WHEREAS, Article 5 of the constitution of the Synodical Conference states: "Without the consent of all the Synods of the Synodical Conference of North America none of its constituent Synods shall be permitted to enter into actual church fellowship with any other church body"; and

WHEREAS, not all the Synods of the Synodical Conference had a part in the negotiations between the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod and the American Lutheran Church, which resulted in the drafting of the Common Confession; and

WHEREAS, the Wisconsin and Norwegian Synods and individual members within the Synodical conference believe that the Common Confession is unacceptable as a settlement of past differences with the American Lutheran Church;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that we request the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod not to use the Common Confession as a functioning union document without, however, passing judgment on pro or con on the doctrinal content of the Common Confession by this convention; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that we respectfully petition the four constituent Synods to agree to act in unison in any possible future discussions with other church bodies, and that we to this end petition each individual body of the Synodical Conference to appoint or elect a standing unity or doctrinal committee and to instruct these committees to participate in such discussions as a Synodical Conference unit, in order that each committee can report back to its Church body on the development or progress, if any, of such discussions, (Syn. Conf. Const. Article 4. "Purpose: The purpose of the Synodical Conference of North America shall be: to give outward expression to the unity of spirit existing among the constituent Synods; to encourage one another in faith and confession; to further unity in doctrine and practice and to remove whatever might threaten to disturb this unity; to cooperate in matters of mutual interest; to strive for true unity in doctrine and practice among Lutheran church bodies,") and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Synodical Conference request the presidents of the constituent Synods to appoint, as soon as feasible after this convention, committees

on doctrine and/or practice with equal representation from each constituent synods. To these committees they shall assign for study such areas of doctrine and/or practice as need clarification and settlement among us. These areas are to be determined by the presidents of the constituent Synods and the president, secretary, and three vice presidents of the Synodical Conference who shall make their reports available to the constituent Synods; and be it further resolved, that in the meantime the issues which disturb the unity of the Synodical Conference be thoroughly discussed and considered on the basis of God's word and that we to this end suggest that these matters be studied by the constituent synods and in 1) joint meetings of the theological faculties, 2) mixed pastoral conferences, 3) other smaller groups, and 4) the sessions of the Synodical Conference,

There was much discussion of the preamble, which it would be well for you to read again at this point. It is reported that the same preamble had been suggested already in Detroit, and had there provoked much discussion. Those who opposed it did so on the ground that sins were not specified, and it could therefore mean almost anything. Those who supported it contended that no one claimed to be perfect, and that therefore everyone should be willing to confess that he had sinned. The following notes give an example of the discussion.

A committeeman: The committee did not propose to solve our controversy, but only to keep the SC in operation.

Various speakers: The unity of the SC is gone, and we should face this fact honestly in our resolutions, and not imply, as in the preamble, that unity still exists.

Stahlke (Mo): We have perfect unity, but are not using it properly.... Controversy arises from the hatred of the teachers. Personal animosities cause our trouble, and existed before the controversy.

Sitz (Wis): No one wants to see the SC break up; but the preamble is not a sign of repentance. It is a face-saving device. We should specify the sins we mean. A hundred miles from here is pastor who denies objective justification. Is such a sin not to be confessed? (This is a Mo pastor, with whom this reporter had much correspondence about ten years ago concerning the doctrine about the Antichrist, the Mo pastor at that time denying that the pope is th Antichrist. More recently, in writing and in a Minneapolis conference, this same pastor has denied objective justification and the complete inspiration of scripture.)

Gericke (Wis?): I think the preamble is OK. We have unity.

Reim (Wis leader): Why has the minority report not been read? (This question drew the discussion away from the preamble for some time, and was proper, because the preamble was the start of the majority report.)

Schumann (Wis member of convention committee): I have a minority report.

Another speaker: Why has your minority report not been given?

There was now some argument, sparked chiefly by the committee chairman (Mo) as to whether the minority reports (there was one also from the Norw member of the committee) could actually be called minority reports. The committee chairman insisted that they were not minority reports, but "dissents" from the majority report. This reporter later learned that the chairman did not want to call them minority reports because then, according to parliamentary law, they must be considered before the majority report.

Schumann: I dissented from the majority report because it does not get down to the issues. My statement is a minority report. (He then read his statement. Visitors did not get a copy. But, as this reporter understood it, it suggested that the SC should hand over all essays and documents

of the convention to its synods for study and for final action in 1955.) After this interruption, the discussion of the preamble to the majority report continued.

Reim (in answer to Stahlke): The preamble is the same as it was in Detroit.... I have sinned emotionally and in judgment some times. But I cannot agree that a whole generation has been raised which hates. I have not acted out of hatred or bitterness. We should not judge hearts, but only things we can judge.

Franzmann (Mo): If we don't take the preamble seriously, it is useless to continue.

Julian Anderson (Norw) now suggested some changes in the preamble, which would have made it more definite, but which this reporter could not record.

Boumann (Mo): We should be willing to confess our sins.

Madson (Norw): Our unity has been broken, but the preamble implies that it has not.

Another speaker: The preamble should name sins of lovelessness and the disappearance of fraternization among us.

Still another speaker: The preamble does not refer only to personal sins, but to Synodical sins, and is all right.

Fisher (Wis): The preamble can refer only to Synodical sins, which, however, are not specified.

Behnken: I'm glad Mo men have spoken for the preamble. I have sinned not only personally, but officially, as pastor, and now as president. But in spite of our sins, God has preserved unity among us.

Schumann (not Schumann of Wis): I subscribe to the preamble. I think our people at home, whom we represent, want us to confess our sins.

Layman: We should quit discussing the preamble.

After some more talk, the preamble was adopted by a majority vote. This reporter considers the preamble what one speaker called it, a face-saving device. If individuals have sinned, it is for them to confess this, each for himself. For no one can confess another's sins before God. If the preamble refers to sins of whole Synods, the sins should be named, otherwise, what would the delegates who voted for the preamble have in mind? Were they uncertain as to their stand or as to the way in which they were upholding it? In the discussions, neither side showed any doubt at all as to the righteousness of its position. Those who accuse Mo upheld their accusations with all firmness. Mo defended itself with equal firmness, and certainly Mo could not confess sin for its accusers, nor they for it. The preamble, under the circumstances, is only window-dressing. As some one put it, who approved of the preamble, "If we vote the preamble down, what will our people at home think? They will think we have no humility, and do not want to confess that we are sinners."

A motion was now made to discuss all the WHEREASES or reasons for the resolutions at once. You should now read them again. On the first three there was little discussion because no one denies that they state facts. But there was some discussion of the last WHEREAS as follows:-

One speaker: Adoption of the CC by Mo is not the heart of our troubles. The first resolution means nothing. The whereases already show that the CC is non-functioning. Why, then should we still ask Mo not to use it as a functioning union document?

J. Anderson: The CC is inadequate not only as a settlement, but also for other purposes for which it could be used. I move that we ask Mo to reject it.

Anderson's motion was not seconded; but chairman wondered whether it, since it was a substitute for the first resolution of the majority report, could even be considered before the convention had decided to consider it. Behnken stated that a meeting may decide whether it will even consider a substitute motion.

Gullerud: At the St. Paul convention in 1952, the consideration of the convention committee's resolution was discontinued without such preliminary action when a substitute motion had been moved and seconded from the floor.

Chairman: It wasn't the same, brother! (But he did not point out any parliamentary difference between the two cases. The only difference, in this reporter's opinion, was that the St. Paul substitute motion was what the chairman wanted, while Anderson's motion was not. That is, the chairman's actions in St. Paul and Chicago were prejudiced at this point. Could this reporter have gotten the floor, he would have said so. As a matter of fact, the floor committee's recommendation at St. Paul, which had been discarded in favor of a substitute, had been much the same in content as Anderson's substitute in Chicago, namely, to the effect that the CC should be rejected. Our Lutheran Sentinel called the substitution of the floor motion for the committee's recommendation in St. Paul "an adamant closing of all doors." It also hoped that such action would not be repeated. It was repeated in Chicago. Such things could happen because 80% of the delegates are from Mo.) So a motion to consider Anderson's substitute was entertained by the chairman, but was voted down. This means that the SC as a body refused even to consider asking Mo to reject the CC.

Otto: Now that Anderson's motion has been ruled out of order, what will you do when you come to our Synod's memorial which means the same thing? The CC can no longer be considered an adequate settlement.

Oswald Hoffmann (Mo's publicity director): If it be insisted that we take a stand on the doctrinal content of the CC at this convention, this is too much.

Piehler (committee chairman): The committee recommends further study of the CC. This is the way we propose to take care of the Norw memorial.

Some one now moved to strike out the fourth whereas and the first resolution from the majority report. The motion was seconded, and began to be discussed, when some one objected: We are not dealing with this new motion as we did with Anderson's, but are considering it without further ado. But others said that the new motion was not the same as Anderson's because the new one proposed striking out all reference to the CC.

Madson: Wis has said that the CC "creates a basically untruthful situation." (He then cited an example from the CC to illustrate what Wis means.) This means that the CC says things that ought not to be said. We want it rejected lest it be used in support of false doctrine.

Lillegard: We should pass judgment on doctrinal documents such as the CC. The SC has done this in the past.

Franzmann: The motion before us (to strike out all reference to the CC) is not realistic.

Peters (Mo?): We thank God for your testimony about the CC, and recognize that we are not united. The majority report is confusing.

Some one now asked whether the committee had not considered the memorial of Wis.

Piehler: I have received no memorial from Wis.

Another: The memorial was given to the SC president.

Piehler: I have read it.

J. Anderson: Committee resolutions have been getting weaker since Detroit,

Otto: We should take definite action on the CC at this convention.

The motion to strike out all reference to the CC from the majority report was now lost.

A motion to consider the Norw memorial was then passed by a narrow vote. At this point, the minority report of the Wis committeeman was again mentioned, and this report, on motion, was only entered into the record. It was not considered.

Speaker (Wis): Because of many recorded protests against the CC, I move we declare the CC no settlement of the differences with the ALC. (Motion not seconded,)

Meyer (Mo union committeeman): I am loyal, first to Mo, then to the SC!! (Said with some emotion.) I think Mo is the best Synod in the world. (He expressed what this reporter believes is a great evil in the church; loyalty to external church organizations.)

Wis man: I am committed to my Synod's stand, not because it is my Synod's, but because it is according to God's Word. It has not been proved wrong.

Naumann (Wis pres.): I object to Meyer's statement that Mo is best.... We have studied God's Word. Why do you ask for more study of the issues which divide us? Why are Mo people who reject the CC not allowed to speak, even if they are only visitors? Why has their overture not been recorded? We don't have a single copy of Mo's essays delivered at this convention, even from Detroit, although copies of our essays have been given to Mo.

Behnken now read a letter from a German Free Church, which said that if the SC is wrecked, the Free Church will be wrecked.

There was far more discussion of the majority report than we have recorded here, but they followed the same lines as we have already indicated, all resolutions were finally adopted. (It should, however, be added that the fourth Whereas, after some discussion, was changed, originally, it read: "A number of members within the Synodical Conference believe," etc. Especially on the insistence of Wis men, these words were changed to read: "The Wisconsin and Norwegian Synods and other individual members within the Synodical Conference believe," etc. At that, the "other individual members" were not further identified. They are Mo people as the overture from the Chicago group shows. Fact 9. It should also be mentioned that there were many no votes on the first resolution, and that most, if not all, of them were recorded on the request of the no-voters. All the delegates of our Synod were among these. Also when the majority report as a whole was adopted, there were some no votes, and our Synod's delegates as well as others recorded their nays.

This reporter is convinced that because the controverted issues have now been studied for the last fifteen years in committees and out of committees by all sorts of groups, and there are no signs of progress at any point, but only increasing proof of disunity, the following statements, adopted by our Synod in 1936 in response to ALC and ULC invitations, apply to the present situation in our Synodical Conference:-

"Thesis IV. We hold that intersynodical committees are useful in promoting Christian fellowship only: A) when the various groups or Synods have, through their public ministry of the word, given each other evidence of an existing unity in spirit, and it remains merely to establish the fact of such unity and to arrange for some public recognition and confession of that fact B) or where it is clear that those in error sincerely desire to be taught 'the way of God more perfectly' (Acts 18:26).

"Thesis V. Where such evidence of unity is lacking or where it is clear that those in error

do not sincerely desire to be 'taught the way of God more perfectly,' but such committees are nevertheless elected to confer with them with the view to church fellowship, there is grave danger that the work of these committees will result in indifferentism and in compromise of scriptural doctrine and practice. (For examples of this, consider the mergers and unions of recent years among Lutherans.) The duty of testifying to the truth of God's word and thus promoting unity rests at all times upon all Christians. Cf. I Peter 3:15.

"Thesis VI. Scripture warns us clearly and emphatically against entanglements with errorists (Romans 16:17; Titus 3:10; I Timothy 6:3-5). Any reluctance to heed these warnings and commands of scripture is unionism already conceived in the heart, which, if allowed to develop, will result in full-fledged unionism, as history attests."

Part I of the Norwegian memorial, reaffirming what the SC had adopted on justification in 1872, was unanimously adopted by the SC. The SC had said in 1872: "This doctrine (of universal justification) is expressly stated in Rom.5:18, and it is, therefore, not only a biblical doctrine, but also a biblical expression, that 'justification of life has come upon all men' (Luther's translation). Only a Calvinistic interpretation could explain this passage so as to make out that only the elect have been justified. Those who say that God has made the whole world righteous, but deny that he has declared the whole world righteous, deny thereby in reality the whole of justification; for this that the Father has declared the world righteous must not be separated from this that the Son made the world righteous, when the Father raised Christ from the dead." (Syn. Conf. Proceedings 1872, p.43, translated from the German.)

Part II of the Norw memorial was next. It was a definition of unionism taken from the 1927 edition of the Concordia Cyclopedia, a book written by Mo professors and published by Mo. The definition reads; "Religious unionism consists in joint worship and work of those not united in doctrine. Its essence is an agreement to disagree.... All joint ecclesiastical efforts for religious work (missionary, educational, etc,) and particularly joint worship and mixed (promiscuous) prayer among those who confess the truth and those who deny any part of it, is sinful unionism." This definition provoked much discussion.

J. Preus (who had submitted the Norw Memorial as his minority report): We have agreed on what unionism is since 1872. Why should we spend much time discussing a definition which was written by Mo men? The SC was founded in protest against the unionism of all Lutheran bodies in 1872. I ask the SC to accept the old definition which describes the stand that the SC took for so many years.

Piehler: Preus is a fine man on the committee, good to work with. We would like to have recommended the 1927 definition; but other things are involved. The Concordia Cyclopedia has never been approved by Mo, and therefore is not official. We don't believe that the definition condemns joint prayer with the ALC. We know that even the definition of unionism in the Brief Statement is not acceptable to some. How much more is this true of the unofficial definition in the Concordia Cyclopedia! (This reporter wants to say that Piehler was wrong about the Cyclopedia not being approved by Mo. The book was published by Concordia Publishing House, and the Mo Synod had made the faculty of Concordia Seminary its official censor of all publications printed by that publishing house.)

Julian Anderson now made an appeal for the adoption of the definition on unionism.

Piehler: Committee has had little time to consider the Norw memorial.

Albrecht (Wis): We have charged Mo with false doctrine. (He mentioned what CC says about God's eternal election. His statement was occasioned by an earlier remark of Behnken to the effect that

he was glad that no one had charged Mo with false doctrine.)

Behnken: I remember that Albrecht said this when I was about to leave the Milwaukee meeting of presidents. But no one else said anything, and silence does not always mean approval. Only one man (Albrecht) accused us of unionism. If there is false doctrine in the CC, please point it out.

Julian Anderson: We certainly expected you to adopt the old definition of unionism. If the SC can't do this, it has lost one of its original marks.

Grumm (Mo VP): I don't like Part II of the Norw Memorial because it puts the cart before the horse. We want to study the matter of unionism first. But if we vote no to the definition, we will be accused of unionism. (Remark from Paul Koch: Amen. This Mo pastor, who was denied the floor twice, has been protesting against Mo's course.)

Naumann: The Norw asks us whether we still stand where our fathers did. It has gone through the mill before. If you refuse to adopt Part II of their memorial, you refuse to stand where your fathers stood. I, too, have letters from Germany. If we don't stand where the fathers stood on unionism, let's say so. We boast of unity in the preamble of our resolutions, but here hesitate to reaffirm old principles.

Preus: I respect other committee members, too. But if we can't accept the definition on unionism, we are not agreed principle at this point.

Fuerbringer(St. Louis Concordia): Definitions have a way of getting out of date

Otto: Definition in Concordia Cyclopedia has been acceptable from the beginning of the SC. If we can't accept it today, we are spiritually bankrupt. We would like to stay with you; but if you don't want to accept this definition, I am confused. I learned my theology in Mo.

Piehler: If the Norw. Synod will not apply the definition to joint prayer with ALC, we will accept the definition.

Madson: This may be the last time I speak. We have been accused of lacking faith in the power of the truth, but let's not call that truth which is not truth! (He spoke with much feeling.)

Gullerud: Visitors should be allowed to speak. We are becoming like the World Council of Churches, which can't decide the most fundamental things, but has to turn them over to committee to study.

Lillegard: We did not come here, to debate on the definition. Mo acted according to it for years. Everyone should know where he stands and vote yes or no on this definition.

Fuerbringer: I believe that if the Mo men who wrote the definition were alive today, they would change it. I does not cover the "Martin Luther" film, for example.

Schumann (Mo): I don't like the "etc" in the definition. It can cover anything.

Hoffmann: If we refuse to accept the definition, this does not mean that we reject the principle in it. (It was at this point that Tobias Peterson objected to Hoffmann's speaking.)

Some one: We have the Brief Statement's definition of unionism; why do we need another?

Kowalke (Wis): The Brief Statement does not really define unionism, but rather Church Fellowship.

Meyer (Mo union committeeman): My no-vote should not be interpreted as an approval of unionism. The definition is totally inadequate.

Many other speakers made it evident that if they acceded the 1927 definition, they would not take it as condemning joint prayer with ALC.

The definition was adopted by a majority vote. There was such a strong no vote that the chairman had to call the motion twice in order to be sure that it had been adopted.

Although the following discussion took place at another time during the convention, we are inserting it here in order to show how the convention felt about unionism.

On Wednesday, essays were read on the subject of unionism, because Wis has accused Mo of this sin. Prof. Kowalke spoke for Wis, VP Grumm for Mo. Grumm defended joint prayer with false teachers, so long as it was prayer for guidance into the truth, and did not imply a denial of the truth or a toleration of error. Because the accusation against Mo was raised by Wis on account of joint prayer in negotiations with ALC, Grumm made quite a point of it that ALC men do not want to deny God's Word or teach false doctrine. He denied every criticism brought by Wis regarding other unionistic activities of Mo. Kowalke's essay had, however, been mild in its criticism of Mo, sometimes too mild for this reporter. In reply to Grumm, some one should have said that no false teacher who operates in Christ's name, though he have been admonished ever so much, will ever deny that he submits to God's Word, but will rather assert his willingness to bow to the Word, often more than those who do bow to it.

Acker (Lutheran Hour speaker): It is wrong to say (as Wis does) that Mo negotiates with lodges. Mo testifies against the evil in them. It is hard to do this by mail. We therefore meet and talk with lodge leaders about those evils. We aim at last to tackle the Masonic Lodge which considers us its big foe.

Meyer: We have never said that we agree with ALC in everything, or are willing to unite with it!! I believe and teach what was taught 50 years ago, so does the Common Confession.

J. Anderson: We seem to disagree as to who persists in error. History proves that the ALC persists in error. But there seems to be a new thinking in the SC on unionism. It is now said that local conditions decide whether something is wrong, or not. But we must judge an organization or synod as such, not by what it happens to be in a certain locality.

Grumm: We do not decide things on the basis of local conditions.

Behnken: We will acknowledge our mistakes when they are pointed out. We did not say in 1938 that we would unite with the ALC, but that certain conditions had to be fulfilled first. ALC has not earnestly tried to get its sister bodies to agree with us. I have never sought fellowship with ALC, except on the basis of perfect agreement. The communion agreement with the National Lutheran Council does not permit open communion. If some practice this, they abuse the agreement. We wanted the various Synods in the NLC to respect our principle; "You serve your people; we serve ours." (However, according to the agreement, Mo serves NLC people where there is no NLC, and vice versa.)

William Arndt (Wis layman): I have been criticized for bitterness in the American Lutheran (Mo magazine). (This man had said in the Detroit sessions that the Mo Synod is like a man who puts one arm around you while he picks your pocket, and the American Lutheran used this in an editorial which accused Wis and Norw of bitterness.) I was not bitter, and didn't mean to be. But I belonged to Mo for years. Then I moved to Jamestown, N.D. There is no Mo church there, but a young Wis church. I joined it, and helped build it up, and it became a fine congregation. Then some Mo people moved into town, who wanted their boys in the scouts. We did not think this was right. So Mo started another church in Jamestown. This is what I meant. (Not a peep was heard for a few seconds after this speech, one of the last ones on Wednesday. This reporter spoke to Mr. Arndt after adjournment and found him to be a quiet little man who is not at all bitter, but rather sad.)

Parts III, IV, and V of the Norw memorial were referred to committees which are to meet between conventions, these parts cover some of the issues which have been in controversy.

At the end of the convention, a lay visitor asked for five minutes time to read a statement. The convention voted not to hear him. The reporter later learned that the layman was known to most of the convention as one who takes a stand against Mo.

On the last day, Schaller of Wis asked Behnken whether the officers of Mo were willing to call a special convention of their Synod next year just in order to discuss the controversy by themselves. Schaller pointed out that Wis had done this last year.

Behnken replied by reading Mo's constitution which states that a "special meeting of the Synod can be called by the president only with the consent of two-thirds of the district presidents, or by three-fourths of them. However, he gave the convention no assurance that he would consult with them.

SCOUTING

Some of the subjects in controversy, such as the Common Confession and the Chaplaincy had been discussed already in Detroit. Also Wis' essay on Scouting had been read there. This reporter cannot therefore report on those things. The Mo essay on Scouting and Chaplaincy was read in Chicago by Prof. Martin Scharlemann. He stated that Mo had defined its position on Scouting in 1944, when it left all decision in the matter to the local congregation. But the Synod did not approve of Scouting in general. Mo, he said, has not changed at this point, but only recognizes that membership in the Scouting organization depends on local conditions. He stated the Scout organization has changed its rules as a result of Mo dealing with Scout leaders, so that religious features are removed. The congregation chooses its own Scoutmaster, and takes care of all religious training of its Scouts. Attendance at unionistic services by Scouts is no longer required. The Scout oath is no longer considered an oath, and the good-turn philosophy can be eliminated in church troops. Scouting, he said, only offers a program which may be used in local churches. This program, he said, may be misused, but this does not make it wrong. He used a new system of awards for Lutheran scouts as a defense of Lutheran Scouting. Lutheran churches (of every stripe) cooperate in bestowing what is called the Pro Deo et Patria (for-God-and-country) Award. This award is given to Lutheran Scouts who come up to a certain standard of religious faithfulness. After applying for the award some time in advance, the candidate must keep a careful record of how much he has read the Bible, how often he has prayed privately, how often he has attended church, how many Bible passages he has memorized, etc., etc. (The list was quite long.) Boys are awarded in front of the altar.

The reading of the essay was followed by a long discussion. Synodical presidents were given priority to the floor.

Pres. Naumann (Wis) reading Matt.6:1-18 against the idea of training boys by the award system to publish their good works before men.

Scharlemann and other: Naumann was misusing Matt.6; Scripture tells us to let our light shine before men.

A layman: We should not lust for human fame; any organization which talks about God, but leaves out the Savior, is wrong. It is bad for a shepherd of souls to encourage such things.

Grumm: We should not argue about the rightness or wrongness of the award, because it is an indifferent thing which may be used aright or misused. Big issues, he added, are unionism and the oath. "On my honor" in the scout oath is not an oath. Since the natural man, too, has honor

(that is, honesty and truthfulness), he may promise something on his honor.

Madson: Naumann applied Matt.6 rightly. While we should not shun public prayer, the Scout award makes a boy reveal his private praying in public in order to receive human award.

A layman: The essayist did not use a single Bible passage in his paper. The Wis essay (read in Detroit) used scripture. The church should not dabble around with Scouting, 4-hing, etc. Christians should not do good works for reward.

Scharlemann: The natural man has a duty to God. Church troops interpret this in the Christian sense. Mo scouts do not deny the Savior.

Voss (Wis): The scout organization has not changed essentially since the time when Mo still disapproved of it.

Scharlemann: It has changed.

Fisher: Point out the changes in the Scout Constitution. (Scharlemann did not have the constitution. Fisher now gave him a copy. Scharlemann read part of it, but, so far as this reporter could determine, did not point out any real changes.)

Habeck (Wis): We have a right to judge Scouting by all the literature from its headquarters. This literature reveals a religion without Christ. When a Synod embraces an unclean thing (2 Cor. 6:14ff), the Synod is not doing right. Wis has borne a cross for its opposition to Scouting.

Lawrenz (Wis): We don't deny that Scouting promotes civic righteousness (good citizenship). God even uses it for this purpose; but it is another thing for the church to support it; natural man indeed knows something about God, but as soon as he does anything about it, he goes astray (Rom.1:18ff). If I join him in giving expression to his duty to God, I nullify my Christianity. Besides, does the world realize that Mo is trying to reform Scouting?

Sitz (Wis): In religious matters, Scouting is like masonry. Mo claims that it "sanctifies" the Scout program. Why don't we start our own boys' organization?

Mo man: Service men's oath is like Scout oath. Christian Scouts take oath in the light of God's Word. Not the Scout organization, but church decides the meaning of the oath in church troops, Matt.6 does not apply to Scout awards. If someone does something in secret, and reports it publicly, he still has done it secretly.

Grumm: There is no spiritual fellowship between Scouts, as in the lodge. The two should not be compared.

Behnken: Mo has not endorsed Scouting in general, but only Scouting under congregational supervision. Mo has approved only of church troops. Matt. 6 does not forbid doing good works publicly, however, the matter of awards does not please me. Let's not drag them before the altar, this is repulsive to me. (Behnken gave a very moving address. He is an orator. Such men can mislead many if they are in error.)

Reim (Wis): The Scout who applies for award is required to keep track of his good works in order to win public recognition, and this is contrary to Matt.6.

Wis man: I approved of Mo's 1944 resolution on Scouting. Then I was appointed to study Scouting. It has changed only by no longer requiring unionistic services. Its Pharisaic spirit has not disappeared. How can you support the national organization? (This man made a moving appeal to Mo.)

Fisher: The spirit of Scouting is one of the things which, in many other ways also, is undermining church life. How can you support that spirit?

Eggers (Wis): In Romans 1 and 2 (which Grumm and others had used to defend church troops), Paul denies that natural man does his duty to God. Scouting also demands respect for false religious convictions. We are not concerned chiefly about keeping the SC together, but about being faithful to God,

Another speaker: I took the Scoutmaster's course, and found I could have a church troop without violating my principles. I see nothing wrong in the Scout handbook. We would have to take our children out of public school because morality is taught there, if your position on Scouting were right.

Still another speaker: There was absolutely no religion in my local community troop. How could I forbid my boys to belong to it? We expect our public school teachers to teach morality. In New York State, my wife, while teaching in public school, opened school with Scripture reading and prayer. Public school Christmas programs are religious.

Gurgel: When the government asks for an oath, we comply, although it does not define the God in the oath.

Another speaker: Why don't we establish our own boys' and girls' clubs? Many of our pastors disagree whether Scouting has changed. Many defend it because they need outside help with their boys and girls.

At this point it was moved and seconded that the SC establish its own boys' and girls' organizations; but the motion was immediately tabled. A layman now moved (and he was seconded) that the SC disapprove of Scouting, and ask Mo to withdraw from the Scout program. This motion, too, was tabled.

Some speaker: Even Mo people admit that there are dangers, even unionism, in Scouting. Why don't they stay away from it?

Last speaker on the subject praised the unity which he said he observed in the SC.

This reporter believes that he has given a fair sampling, of arguments on both sides of the issue. It should be clear to the reader from this that most Missourians do not approve of Scouting as such, but only of Scouting under church supervision. How then can they support Scouting as such, as they do by affiliating with and paying dues to the national organization?

The subject of government-chaplaincies had been debated in the Detroit sessions, and cannot therefore be included here.

The Missouri Synod has changed since this reporter became a minister in 1932. The spirit which Mo spokesmen showed in Chicago is not the spirit which the reporter observed during his seminary days or the early days of his ministry. If that spirit existed in Mo at that time, as seems likely, it must have existed in isolated areas or only in the minds of men, and he was not aware of it. He first began to notice it about 1940, and has seen it grow stronger since then. Its growth has not been hindered by the opposition to it both from within and outside Mo. It seems rather to have thrived on opposition.

How can one explain this? A like explanation lies in the great respect for leaders, which has existed in Mo for many, many years. This respect naturally arose out of the fact that Mo has had great leaders in the past, men whose sound theology was recognized throughout the Lutheran world. When they died, respect for leaders did not die with them, but was transferred to lax leaders.