

THE SPRINGFIELDER

Vol. XXVIII

Spring, 1964

No. 1

THE SPRINGFIELDER is published quarterly by the faculty of Concordia Theological Seminary, Springfield, Illinois, of the Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod.

EDITORIAL COMMITTEE

ERICH H. HEINTZEN, *Editor*

RICHARD P. JUNGKUNTZ, *Book Review Editor*

EUGENE F. KLUG, *Associate Editor*

MARK J. STEEGE, *Associate Editor*

PRESIDENT J. A. O. PREUS, *ex officio*

Contents

Page

EDITORIALS

Welcome to Our Finnish Brethren.....	1
The Matriculation Mania and The Church.....	1
CHURCH POLITY AND FELLOWSHIP IN AMERICAN LUTHERANISM.....	3
LOUIS J. BETO MEMORIAL LECTURE August R. Suelflow, St. Louis, Missouri	
EFFORTS AT LUTHERAN UNION IN AUSTRALIA.....	20
FRED C. RUTZ FOUNDATION LECTURE Henry Hamann, Adelaide, Australia	
A CRITICAL INVESTIGATION OF THE SO-CALLED HISTORICAL-CRITICAL METHOD IN THE INTERPRETATION OF HOLY SCRIPTURE.....	32
Manfred Roensch, Heidelberg, Germany (Translated by Martin Naumann)	
BOOK REVIEWS.....	43
BOOKS RECEIVED.....	63
SPRINGFIELDER INDEX: December 1959-Winter 1964.....	66
Arleigh Lutz	

Indexed in INDEX TO RELIGIOUS PERIODICAL LITERATURE, published by the American Theological Library Association, Speer Library, Princeton Theological Seminary, Princeton, New Jersey.

Clergy changes of address reported to Concordia Publishing House, St. Louis, Missouri, will also cover mailing change of *The Springfielder*. Other changes of address should be sent to the Business Manager of *The Springfielder*, Concordia Theological Seminary, Springfield, Illinois.

Address communications to the Editor, Erich H. Heintzen, Concordia Theological Seminary, Springfield, Illinois.

Business correspondence should be addressed to Arleigh Lutz, Concordia Theological Seminary, Springfield, Illinois.

Efforts at Lutheran Union in Australia

HENRY HAMANN

The Reverend Dr. Hamann was graduated from Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, Missouri, in 1907; he received his M.A. from Columbia University in 1914; his Th.D., from Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, in 1942. Dr. Hamann has served congregations in Canada, in the United States, and in the foreign mission field (India). In 1925 he accepted a call to Concordia College and Seminary, Adelaide, Australia, where he served as professor and president until 1962. For thirty years Dr. Hamann was editor of the AUSTRALIAN THEOLOGICAL REVIEW. He is now living in retirement in Australia.

I.

THERE IS a striking parallel between the Saxon immigration that led to the organization of the Missouri Synod and the Lutheran migration to Australia which occurred at about the same time. Both were religiously motivated. The exodus to Australia was due to the introduction of the so-called Union, which made one church of Lutherans and Reformed, in Prussia and some other German states (1817). This measure caused no general stir in an age marked by an absence of confessional earnestness; but there was strong local opposition by faithful Lutherans, which in turn led to repressive governmental action. Tension increased when a new "Agende" (book of formularies) was introduced by order in all "Evangelical" congregations of Prussia. This "Agende," repugnant to Lutheran conscience on account of its Reformed features, was forced upon congregations, while repression of objectors continued and permission to leave the state church and form an independent church was refused.

The only way to escape this situation seemed to be emigration to a country where religious liberty prevailed. Hence a group of Lutherans living about the Brandenburg-Silesian border, led by Pastor A. L. Kavel, decided to emigrate to South Australia, which had recently been constituted a British colony and was eager to attract settlers of just the sort these Old World villagers appeared to be. Late in 1838 and in the next year a number of ships conveyed several hundred Lutheran settlers to Australia, where they formed communities close to Adelaide and at a little distance. Another group, under the leadership of Pastor G. D. Fritzsche, arrived late in 1841. Permission to secede from the Prussian state church had actually been given before their departure; but they had sold their property and made all preparations for the voyage and hence resolved to carry out their plan. The last group that may be reckoned as belonging to this movement arrived in 1844.

A breach came as early as 1846. Whatever contributory causes may have been operative, the personal relations between Kavel and Fritzsche appear to have been both correct and cordial, there can be no doubt that the split came in consequence of doctrinal differences. No reflection is cast upon Kavel's integrity and sincerity by saying that he held strong chiliastic views. His attitude toward the Lutheran Confessions was that of a subscription "quatenus" rather than "quia." He issued a number of "Protestations," as he called them, against certain teachings of the Confessions, though he doubtless misinterpreted some of these teachings and hence modified or withdrew some of these "Protestations," though not all. Finally, he insisted that the constitution which he had given his flock was the only Scripturally sound one. These views Fritzsche felt in conscience bound to oppose. Hence the rupture—unhealed to this day.

A reunion of sorts was indeed brought about by the so-called "Confessional Union" of 1864. The two groups did not amalgamate; but, stimulated in part by the plan to launch a joint mission project among the Australian aborigines, they agreed to re-establish the disrupted church-fellowship. Kavel's "Protestations" were withdrawn; that is, they were not upheld, but retracted. The other doctrinal issues were to be discussed further, but meanwhile were to be considered not divisive of fellowship. Thus the "Confessional Union" bore within itself the germ of dissolution. But the renewed separation was mainly due to another cause. Other Lutherans, not religiously motivated, had meanwhile settled in other parts of Australia; Lutheran synods had been organized in Victoria and Queensland. One of these bodies wished to join the "Confessional Union," but with the proviso that it would continue its practice of importing pastors provided by the Basel Mission Society—not a Lutheran institution confessionally. The Kavel group consented; the Fritzsche group demurred—and the "Confessional Union" came to an end in 1874.

The Fritzsche party or group, after repeatedly changing its name to suit changing conditions, finally became the ELCA, the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Australia. Fritzsche had begun a school for the training of pastors and teachers at Lobethal; the little house, preserved since it was built in 1845, is a sort of counterpart to the historic college at Altenburg, Missouri. The school had to be closed after furnishing a few ministers; a second attempt, launched a few decades later, suffered the same fate; lack of men and means was the obstacle. For its pastors the church relied chiefly upon the Hermannsburg Mission Society; and a few missionaries sent by the Leipzig Mission for work among the aborigines helped to swell the ranks of the ministry when the native mission stations had to be abandoned for a number of reasons. Toward the end of the 19th century there began the close connection with the Missouri Synod.

Dr. C. F. W. Walther himself was interested in sending the first Missourian pastor (C. E. Dorsch) to Australia. He was fol-

lowed by a number of others, while many young men from Australia completed their studies for the ministry at Ft. Wayne, Springfield, St. Louis., until Concordia College and Seminary at Adelaide began to send out pastors and teachers regularly. It is a fact that the influences that shaped the doctrinal and theological position of the ELCA proceeded to a very large extent from the Missouri Synod.

The history of the Kavel group was more checkered; but there is no need to enter into details of the history of the Immanuel Synod, as it was first called, and of the other Lutheran Synods in Australia. These all looked for their supply of pastors to sources overseas. It is probably correct to say that the influence of Neuendettelsau became paramount. Hence, because of the connection between Neuendettelsau and the Iowa Synod, the influence of Iowa grew strong in the Immanuel Synod as the Missourian influence grew in what is now the ELCA. The consequence was that the theological battles fought in North America for some decades after 1880 reverberated also in Australia. Again, the connection with Neuendettesau-Iowa explains the interest and the participation of the Immanuel Synod in the New Guinea mission; for Neuendettelsau had been a founder of that mission when northeastern New Guinea was German colonial territory. The repatriation and internment of German missionaries in two world wars and the cession of the territory to Australian control helped to increase Australian Lutheran influence in the mission, while the American Lutheran Church, the heir of the Iowa Synod, became a powerful partner in that large mission. It remains only to state that the United Ev. Luth. Church in Australia was brought into being, not without some compromises, in 1921, when the Immanuel Synod with its affiliates combined with other Lutheran organizations. Thus, when some other small groups joined this union within the next few years, there were two Lutheran churches in Australia, if we except two congregations, in the large cities Melbourne and Sydney, which are associated with the EKID (Evangelische Kirche in Deutschland) through its *Aussenamt*.

II.

The general course of the doctrinal discussions may be traced in a summary fashion. A beginning had been made in the 1920's, but only a few men were directly concerned; and I, a newcomer to Australia (in 1926), heard little more than the echo of the proceedings, which ended without achieving any results except an accentuation of antagonistic emotions. It was a flash in the pan. Thereafter the ELCA at every one of its triennial conventions passed a formal resolution calling upon the UELCA for the resumption of thorough doctrinal discussions. But these resolutions were either ignored or brought the answering resolution that certain grievances would first have to be removed. Hence, when the discussions at last got under way in 1942 (or was it 1941?), the matter of these

grievances came up first. It was a wise move not to pursue this question, which would have led to interminable talk and debate.

Thereafter rather large committees from both sides, in which laymen were always represented, met regularly and at rather frequent intervals (normally every six weeks). The declared aim was of course the establishment or re-establishment of church-fellowship, but by way of complete amalgamation rather than by way of affiliation or federation. The method followed may be said to have been that which was adopted by the Formula of Concord. Since no one knew precisely what was actually the *publica doctrina* of the other side, each presented the other with a list of doctrines in which it was supposed to have gone astray. Thus a number of subjects could be ruled out very quickly as irrelevant, there being no dispute about them; and this helped greatly to fix the actual *status controversiae*. The tone at the meetings of the Inter-synodical Committees was almost invariably good. While both parties contended for what they believed to be right according to the divine Word, and while now and then an orator may have spoken with unnecessary heat, the spirit that prevailed, after contact had once been established, was one of mutual considerateness—one could say, without real exaggeration, of cordiality. Since about 1949 the committees benefited from the presence and the collaboration of that great Lutheran scholar, Dr. Hermann Sasse.

In retrospect, one almost marvels at the amount of patient labor, extending over many years, which was performed by the committees. Numerous doctrinal and exegetical essays were presented and discussed. On the basis of these discussions, theses were set up and adopted after thorough examination. Favorable results were officially published from time to time to keep the churches informed. Besides, mixed pastoral conferences as well as circuit meetings of laymen busied themselves with these theses; and, at least in the ELCA, all pastors were urged to place the adopted theses before their congregations for approval. The time came when doctrinal agreement seemed to be complete. When the ELCA met early in 1953 for its regular convention, provision was made for a special convention to take appropriate action should complete unity be attained. Actually the "Theses of Agreement" were adopted by both churches.

Has doctrinal agreement and unity been established by the "Theses of Agreement"? Yes and no. The rock on which the movement foundered is the ecumenical issue. The UELCA belongs to the Lutheran World Federation, from which the ELCA feels in conscience bound to remain aloof. The UELCA is working in closest union and partnership, in a New Guinea mission field, with the Neuendettelsau Mission (Bavarian Landeskirche), with some Leipzig Mission men, and with The American Lutheran Church, all of which are affiliated with the World Council of Churches, while the German churches represented are also in the EKID. For a number of years, therefore, the discussions centered about these

two matters. At one stage the men of the ELCA consented, though without much hope, to join the UELCA in an effort to re-write in part the constitution of the LWF; viz., with respect to the admission of churches that are not really Lutheran, with respect to functions that pertain to a church and not to a "free association" of churches, and with respect to the declared purpose of fostering the ecumenical movement. These proposals were placed before the Minneapolis Assembly of the LWF. They have not been heard of since. As regards the co-operative mission in New Guinea, the Intersynodical Committees unitedly went on record that continued and unquestioning co-operation in church work is indeed an act of church-fellowship. But this resolution was disallowed, in the case of the UELCA, "von oben herab."

The situation, then, is this: In spite of the "Theses of Agreement," there is no full doctrinal agreement in the matter of church-fellowship and unionism. These matters were supposed to have been settled in and by the "Theses of Agreement;" but there is a divergence of opinion as to the interpretation or applicability of the theses. An impasse has indeed been reached; and that is the reason why of late doctrinal meetings have been few and far between. Besides, the UELCA has since formally declared itself in fellowship with the ALC.

III.

As for the Theses themselves, it has already been pointed out that they were published from time to time as agreement was reached. They were later revised for better wording and printed in a pamphlet; they have also been translated into German; and they seem to have attracted some attention here in America. Can we evaluate the Theses theologically or dogmatically? The aim of doctrinal discussion and controversy is not to achieve personal or partisan triumph, but to let the divine Word decide the questions at issue. This aim has been achieved: such is the conviction of Christians in the ELCA and also of many in the UELCA, perhaps with the exceptions noted above. There were a few in the ELCA who thought that something had been yielded that should not have been yielded; while certain expressions were questioned. But no protest was raised, so that the conviction that the Theses truly represent the teaching of Holy Writ and of the Lutheran Confessions remains unshaken. However, let us look at the Theses themselves.

a) Open-Questions

Although there is no special section under this heading, the theory or principle of "Open Questions" is absolutely ruled out by various other sections of the Theses, e.g. by the following statements under "Principles Governing Fellowship:"

Where a difference in teaching or practice is a departure from the doctrine of the Bible, such difference cannot be tolerated, but must be pointed out as an error on the basis of

clear passages of Holy Writ; and if the error is persisted in . . . it must at least lead to a separation.

All doctrines of Holy Writ are equally binding, though not all are equally fundamental.

Divergent views arising from different interpretation of difficult Scripture passages are not necessarily divisive of church-fellowship, provided that such divergent views do not deny, contradict, or ignore a clear word of Scripture; provided that thereby nothing is taught contrary to the *publica doctrina* of the Lutheran Church as laid down in its Confessions; and provided that such views are not propagated as the public doctrine of the church, and in no wise impair the doctrine of Holy Writ.

b) Conversion

Agreement regarding this doctrine was reached by the simple method of reading Art. II of the Formula of Concord (*Solida Declaratio*) and recording absence of dissent and complete consensus.

Specifically, the Theses mention the acceptance by all of the teaching of divine monergism so powerfully witnessed by the F. of C.; the disavowal of all synergism or co-operation of the unconverted sinner in bringing about his conversion; and the repudiation of a *status medius* between conversion and the sinner's unconverted state.

c) Predestination

This doctrine was treated precisely like the doctrine of Conversion, and with the same happy result.

Specifically, the Theses define Predestination as an election of persons and not as the ordaining of the means of grace or the *ordo salutis*; distinguish God's foreknowledge from election; assert both the *gratia universalis* and particular election; declare that the terms *intuitu fidei* and *ex praevisa fide*, while not necessarily synergistic, have often been used synergistically and should be avoided, all the more since they are not found in the Scriptures nor in the Confessions; assert the correctness of the expression "election to faith;" exclude an absolute Calvinistic view of election by means of grace; acknowledge the mystery of the *discretio personarum* (*cur alii prae aliis; cur alii, alii non*) and refuse to carry the matter beyond the statement: the sinner is saved only by the grace of God, he is lost through his own fault. There is also a note on the proper teaching and use of this doctrine.

d) Eschatology

There is a general statement on the importance of eschatological matters to the Christian's faith and hope, and on the need of careful exegesis of the prophecies in both the Old and the New Testament in view of their frequently figurative language.

Details. After repeating the familiar *positiva*, the Theses "reject every kind of millennialism or chiliasm, that is, the false teaching that Christ will return visibly to this earth a thousand years before the end of the world and establish a dominion of the church over the world."

Caution is urged with respect to Rev. 20. The Theses do not lay down an exegesis of the 1000 years, but insist that no interpretation dare be given which is contrary to the analogy of faith. One general resurrection of the dead is taught. Explanations of Rev. 20:4-6 (the resurrection of martyrs) "must be in keeping with relevant clear passages of Scripture."

While denouncing Antisemitism, urging the duty of preaching the Gospel to the Jews, and leaving open the possibility that toward the end Jews may be converted in large numbers, the Theses hold that the teaching of a general or universal conversion of the Jews to Christianity "has no foundation in Scripture."

Quoting the Lutheran Confessions, the Theses declare: "We, too, recognize that the Roman Papacy bears the distinguishing features of the Antichrist in greater number, more distinctly, and with greater soul-destroying force than any other known historical person and phenomenon."—Quoting Scripture, the Theses point out that other persons and phenomena also bear essential marks of Antichrist. "The church cannot definitely state how and in what form the prophecy on the Antichrist may still be fulfilled in the future in the Papacy and elsewhere." The final sentence, which some have objected to as weakening the confession, is found in the same or in a similar form also in one or both of the following: the *Eini-gungssaetze* of the Lutheran Free Churches in Germany; the "Common Confession" (Mo. Synod and ALC).

e) *The Word of God*

There is in the Theses of Agreement no trace of that recent invention which would make of the Word of God a mystic and mysterious something that is identical with God's will and purpose and action with respect to the world. There is, in fact, no section headed "The Word of God."

What is stated on this subject is contained in the section "Theses on Scripture and Inspiration;" and it is noteworthy that, when reference is made to these matters in other parts, the terms "Scripture" and "Word of God" are used in the same sense. Hence the section begins by "solemnly reaffirming the Scriptural principle of Luther and the Lutheran Church" that

The Word of God shall establish articles of faith and no one else, not even an angel (Smalcald Articles); and: We believe, teach, and confess that the only rule and standard according to which all dogmas together with all teachers should

be estimated and judged are the prophetic and apostolic Scriptures of the Old and the New Testament alone (F. of C.).

Pointing out that this same norm and standard applies also in the doctrine of the Scriptures and Inspiration, the Theses continue:

We reject all attempts . . . to introduce into the church under whatever name other sources of doctrine besides Holy Scripture.

Again:

The Holy Scripture is the Word of God in writing. As the written Word of God, the Bible is inseparably bound up with the Word Incarnate and the oral Word.

Of course! For Christ, the incarnate Logos—the Son is the center and the proper content of the Scriptures, which are His Word. As for the oral Word, the prophets and the apostles spoke the Word before they wrote it; and when the Christian message is spoken (proclaimed, preached), it is still the Word of God. However:

Although . . . the Word of God in its totality is wider than Scripture. Holy Scripture is, without limitation, God's Word. Everything which Scripture says is God's Word. On the other hand nothing can be proclaimed as Word of God which is not taught in Scripture.

And again:

We believe and confess that Holy Scripture does not only contain the Word of God, but that it is God's Word as a whole and in all its parts.

As for Inspiration, the Theses teach with the Nicene Creed and with the whole true Christian Church that Holy Scripture is given by inspiration of God the Holy Ghost (theopneustos). The definition of the term runs thus:

Inspiration in this sense was that unique action by which God the Holy Ghost gave His Word of revelation to men whom He chose . . . , so that of this their spoken or written word it must be said without limitation that it is God's own Word.

After adducing the self-witness of Scripture about its several parts, the Theses declare: "We teach the verbal and plenary inspiration of Scripture." But, while confessing the fact of inspiration, the Theses decline to give an explanation of the "how," since "the mode or manner has not been revealed and remains an inaccessible divine mystery." Explanations that tend to weaken or limit plenary and verbal inspiration or that reduce it to a mechanical process are alike rejected. If the Theses speak of a "human side" of Scripture, this is fully warranted in view of the definition:

God is the prime and absolute source and origin of all revealed truth. But it pleased Him to give His Word through

holy men who spoke and wrote as they were moved by the Holy Ghost.

There has been some unnecessary raising of eyebrows at the sentences:

We cannot know how God the Holy Ghost worked the miracle that human words became His word. . . . It pleased God to give us His Word under, or in the garb of, the human word of the Biblical writers.

We need but picture to ourselves David crying to God when distressed by his enemies, lifting up his rapt soul to God in adoration, and sighing out his confession and plea for pardon "out of the depth;" or Luke diligently searching out details about the life of Christ; or St. Paul, almost at his wit's end, expostulating with the Galatians. Did not these men feel the emotions and think the thoughts which they expressed? God used such situations and human reaction to them to give to men of all ages His Word of Truth. We cannot get closer to this "inaccessible mystery," that what we have here in human language is the Word inspired by God.

The *inerrancy* of the Holy Scriptures is very strongly emphasized:

We confess the Bible to be the inerrant Word of God . . .

The Scriptures are the Word of God and therefore inerrant.

The terms "inerrant" and "inerrancy," which occur six times in the paragraph, are not defined and hence denote what they ordinarily mean; viz., the absence of errors as to truth and fact and also of contradiction; for we have a real contradiction, as defined by the famous formulation of Aristotle, when of two propositions, if the one be true, the other must be false, and vice versa. What is not meant by inerrancy is stated thus:

The term "inerrancy" has no reference to the variant readings found in the extant textual sources because of copyists' errors or deliberate alterations; neither does it imply an absolute verbal accuracy in quotations and in parallel accounts, such absolute uniformity evidently not having been part of God's design.

These are truisms. If we in normal life sometimes quote verbatim, at times only *ad sensum*, and sometimes are content with a passing allusion or reference, why should not the Holy Spirit have that right? Or again, we all know that, if six persons give an account of an occurrence seen by them, we shall probably hear six somewhat different stories, without the least implication of error or contradiction. Each reports what he saw or what particularly impressed him; the accounts are supplementary.

The Theses well observe:

This inerrancy of the Holy Scriptures cannot be seen with human eyes, nor can it be proved by human reason; it is an article of faith.

How in such cases it is possible that differing accounts of the same event or the same saying are the true and inerrant report of one and the same fact cannot and need not always be shown by rational harmonization.

Of course, attempts at harmonization are quite in order; and many scholars have demonstrated how most "errors and contradictions" fade upon close investigation. The meaning is that the faith of Christians ultimately or rather a priori rests upon something higher than such harmonizations; for

Holy Scripture is the book of divine truth which transcends everything called truth by the wise men of this world.

f) *The Lutheran Confessions*

The lengthy statement on the Lutheran Confessions may be summarized as a full and unqualified acceptance of, and subscription to, these Confessions as binding and authoritative (as *norma normata*) because they are a pure and correct exposition of the Holy Scriptures, the Word of God (as *norma normans*). The confessional obligation is held to extend to the entire doctrinal content of the Confessions, stated thetically and antithetically; not merely to those doctrines that are formally introduced by the words: We believe, teach, and confess (or similar expressions). Not included in the confessional obligation are matters pertaining to human knowledge and philosophy, as also to purely exegetical procedure (i.e., whether in every instance a Scripture text has been correctly interpreted and applied).—The following paragraph is of some interest in view of a certain resolution adopted at Cleveland [by the Missouri Synod in its 1962 convention]:

The Young Churches on the mission field may find it necessary to make a new formulation of the Lutheran doctrine. . . . The Lutheran Church in future may be obliged to formulate new confessional statements on subjects or about questions which may arise in the course of history. Such new confessions will be Lutheran only if they reaffirm and presuppose the doctrine contained in the Book of Concord, just as the Augsburg Confession confirmed the Ecumenical Creeds and the Formula of Concord reaffirmed the older Lutheran Confessions.

One who denies this fails to grasp the duty of the Church of Christ to be a confessing church always, also in the face of new errors and heresies.

g) *Church-Fellowship*

The position of the ELCA appears not only in the sections headed "Principles Governing Church Fellowship" and "Joint Prayer and Worship," but also in the sections "The Church" and "The Lutheran Confessions." It is, in brief, the position of the Lutheran Church as enunciated from the Augsburg Confession to the Formula of Concord—and incidentally also the position of the ancient church: *nulla communicatio vel communicatio cum haereticis* (no fel-

lowship with heretics and errorists). To quote again from the first-mentioned section:

Where a difference in teaching and practice is a departure from the doctrine of the Bible, such difference cannot be tolerated, but must be pointed out as an error, on the basis of clear passages of Holy Writ; and if the error is persisted in, in spite of instruction, warning, and earnest witness, it must at last lead to a separation.

As regards the Theses on the Church, it is enough to say that the church in the strict sense is defined and described as to its essence, membership, and true marks entirely in agreement with Augustana VII-VIII. The following paragraphs are relevant regarding church-fellowship:

The term "church" is by common usage applied also to visible ecclesiastical organizations, church-bodies. . . . All such church-bodies are only *ecclesia late dicta* and *ecclesia mixtae*. They are "true churches" only in the sense and to the extent that the Word of God is taught by them in its truth and purity and the Sacraments are administered according to Christ's institution. According to the revealed will and command of God, all believers are directed to that visible church which teaches the Word of God in its truth and purity and administers the Sacraments according to the institution of their Founder. Conversely, they are directed to avoid all erring and heterodox churches.

From the Theses on the Lutheran Confessions:

They (i.e., the "condemnations" in the Confessions) mean that false doctrine is rejected and that no church-fellowship can exist with those who consistently and persistently hold such doctrines.

Sin and error will continue, and with them will continue the obligation of the church to confess in living faith Christ and all His Word in the face of opposing error, until He Himself will confess before His Father in heaven those who have confessed Him on earth.

The Theses on Joint Prayer and Worship, which grew out of an actual situation, were certainly not designed to render the Theses on Church Fellowship ineffective by allowing a spate of exceptions. They have been faulted for entering upon the field of casuistics; but recent happenings in the Synodical Conference have clearly shown their pertinence and importance. They declare that "joint prayer cannot under all circumstances be identified with unionistic prayer or church-fellowship," and that prayer showing the marks or characteristics of unionism must be condemned and avoided. The marks of unionism are stated thus:

Failure to confess the whole truth of the Divine Word (*in statu confessionis*); failure to reject and denounce every

opposing error; assigning to error equal right with truth; creating the impression of unity in faith or of church-fellowship where it does not exist.

As examples of non-unionistic prayers are mentioned those that may occur within the family circle, or in the host-guest relation; and also "when members of different churches meet to bring about unity on the basis of God's Word and jointly ask for God's blessing." On that understanding the Australian doctrinal discussions were opened with a prayer; and I do not recall a single instance in some 18 years where the letter or spirit of this understanding was violated. If some Lutherans think this inadmissible, might they not at least declare such carefully and conscientiously considered practice non-divisive of church-fellowship?

Avoidance of "services conducted by churches not in the fellowship of faith" is of course the rule, being "required by loyalty to Christ and obedience to His Word." There are legitimate exceptions (such as church weddings and funeral services), just as there are demonstrations and special gatherings where the imputation of unionism cannot or need not arise.¹

Participation in "union" services, or services and gatherings plainly unionistic, is ruled out.

Co-operation with other churches *in externis* is held to be permissible by the Theses (e.g., charity, relief work, united defense against laws harmful to the church). Co-operation *in sacris* is ruled out by silence; it was fully discussed later. Yet even under co-operation in externals there is the caution:

We dare not shut our eyes to the fact that many inter-church and ecumenical meetings, bodies or organizations proceed from unionistic thinking and rest on a unionistic basis. Lutherans, while ready to co-operate in such externals, cannot condone such unionism nor cease their witness against it.

It is finally pointed out that much of this matter lies in the sphere of casuistics, and that something will have to be left to individual conscience, though there must be no weakening of witness against unionism and care must be taken not to create offense. [Section h) Ethics and Practice was not treated for lack of time].

Whatever the final outcome — and it seems that union in Australia will now have to wait upon a rapprochement between Missouri and the ALC—a positive effect of the discussions is this, that there is now a clearer grasp of doctrinal issues and probably greater unanimity of teaching in Australian Lutheranism than before. Nevertheless, the deadlock after high expectations has naturally resulted in deep and widespread disappointment.

¹ We send "observers" to ecumenical gatherings. If Lutheran laymen and pastors took part in the Civil Rights march to Washington, they did not do so as an act of church-fellowship even though their motives may have been in part religious. If Lutheran pastors and laymen attended one of Billy Graham's meetings in order to see and hear at first hand what is going on and is being preached, they have a perfect right to do so.