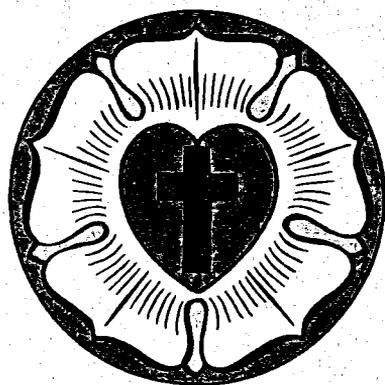


**EVANGELICAL
DIRECTIONS
FOR
THE
LUTHERAN
CHURCH**



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ERICH KIEHL
WALDO J. WERNING
Editors

Foreword

The Lutheran Congress with its emphasis on humble loyalty to the Scriptures and to the Lutheran Confessions is now history.

Through the pages of this book the reader may share in the rich experience of the listeners at the Congress during the days of August 31 to September 2, 1970. Calm and positive expression was given to eternal truths of the Scriptures, the truths which are also reflected in the Lutheran Confessions.

In one of his two essays delivered at the Congress, Dr. Francis Schaeffer recalled the tragic experience of his beloved Presbyterian Church. He reminded his Lutheran friends that many of them now stand at the same crossroads where his church once stood. Dr. Schaeffer retains all rights to his two manuscripts, and no publication is to be made without his personal permission.

We must remember that most Lutherans have never walked this way before. Most of us have never experienced a situation where God's Word is openly questioned, where eternal truths are relativized, traditional theological terms are emptied of their Biblical meanings, and the process of normal communication between brothers in faith is made difficult with endless ambiguity.

What shall we do as we face a new humanism, a new theology, and a new hermeneutic parading as permissible options for the Lutheran Church in the Twentieth Century? Speakers at the Lutheran Congress were conscious that many are deeply perplexed and pained by these challenges to the firm Biblical moorings of the historic Christian faith. The program was planned to give Scriptural and evangelical guidance and direction regarding the nature of Scriptural truth, faithful confessional life in the church, and evangelical communication of the Word.

Although all essayists sought to be faithful to the statements of purpose of the Congress, each essayist is responsible for the contents of his essay. Participants came as individual Lutherans to share their views as they understood the Scriptures and the Lutheran Confessions. The only exception was Dr. Francis A. Schaeffer, who graciously accepted an invitation to come as a Presbyterian to speak to his Lutheran friends.

By common consent the essay on "Humanization and Mission" by Rev. Gunnar Stalsett of Oslo, Norway, does not appear in this book. He will be presenting this essay at several gatherings in Europe. It will then be published within the context of the mission enterprise of the church. Stalsett's provocative essay is available on cassette or tape for \$3.95 from the Congress Registrar, Roy Bleick, 2751 South Karlov Avenue, Chicago, Illinois 60623. All essays can be attained from this source.

The editors ask the reader to join them in appreciation to the essayists who freely gave the rights of publication so that others might have the opportunity of reading their timely messages for Christians in mission for our Savior Jesus Christ.

Reformation Day
1970

Erich H. Kiehl
Waldo J. Werning
Editors

Congress Call To Order

Edwin C. Weber, D.D.

Dear Fellow-Christians,

In our world, where everyone seems to be seeking a solid foundation for life here and the one to come, many articles have been written influencing the thought of our day.

One such article appeared in the syndicated column of Sydney J. Harris in the Detroit Free Press on August 14, 1970. In casting about for an opening statement to those who attend this Lutheran Congress, I chose this article to give momentum to our discussions here.

THE WORLD YEARNS FOR FALSE MESSIAH

People keep saying "We need a leader" or "We need better leadership," but that is not what they really mean. What most of them are looking for is not a leader, but a Messiah.

They want someone who will give them the Word. And the Word would be one that is agreeable to them, that appeals to their preferences and prejudices, so that they can follow it whole-heartedly.

But this is not what a true leader does — a leader tells people hard truths, gives them a difficult path to follow, calls upon their highest qualities, not their basest instincts. A true leader does not tell us what we WANT to hear, but what we OUGHT to hear.

Indeed, this is the difference between a false Messiah and a true one. A false Messiah — such as Hitler, in our time — caters to and inflames the fears, hates, angers and resentments of his people, and drives them to destruction rather than to salvation or self-realization.

A TRUE MESSIAH — such as Jesus, even taken on the worldly plane — rebukes his people, shows them their errors, makes them want to be better, not stronger or richer, and asks them to make sacrifices for the common good and for the good of their own souls. He is never followed by very many, usually killed by the majority, and venerated only when he is safely dead and need not be taken seriously.

What we are looking for, I am afraid, is neither a true leader nor a true Messiah, but a false Messiah — a man who will give us over-simplified answers, who will justify our ways, who will castigate our enemies, who will vindicate our selfishness as a way of life, and make us comfortable within our prejudices and preconceptions.

We are seeking for leadership that will reconcile the irreconcilable, moralize the immoral, rationalize the unreasonable, and promise us a society where we can continue to be as narrow and envious and short-sighted as we would like to be without suffering the consequences. In short, we are invoking magic, we are praying for the coming of the Wizard.

But there is no Wizard. There are only false prophets — and they come equally from left, right, center, and below. Wherever they come from, no matter how they differ, they can all be distinguished by the same sign: those we like make us feel better, instead of making us feel worse. We want to follow them because they "understand" us.

But all the true prophets, from the Old Testament through Jesus, made us feel worse. They knew, and said, that the trouble wasn't with our enemies, but with ourselves. They demanded that we shed our old skin and become New Men. And this is the last thing we want to do. What we are looking for is a leader who will show us how to be the same old men, only more successfully — and his ancient name is Satan.

Our Lord Jesus gave His people direction in His day when He said to those Jews which believed on Him, "If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed; and ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free" (John 8:31-32). Note that He spoke to believers. We who are assembled to bear witness to our faith will identify with these Christians of old. We believe in Jesus and would certainly seek knowledge and understanding from Him Whom we claim as our Savior.

What was His directive to those who believed on Him? "Continue in My Word" are the words which the Son of God urges upon His followers. We know Him as the one Who reveals to us the Father and sends the Holy Spirit to work and maintain faith in the hearts of men. His word, spoken by inspiration of the Holy Ghost, is the one guideline that never fails.

He makes a promise in connection with this statement when He says, "Then are ye my disciples indeed." Here speaks the Son of God, the omniscient God, the wise leader, the spokesman for the Holy Trinity. This is how we become disciples. The one who bears and heeds will be a disciple. Our God has spoken to us from the beginning in His word and deed and we have studied this word to become wise unto salvation.

A confessing Christian must know the truth. Jesus said, "I am the truth." Many uses have been made of the Word of God. Many have studied it so that they might attack it. Some have used it to demonstrate a preconceived idea. Some have employed it to exhibit great scholarship. Jesus holds out the brightest prospect and the real use to which it must be put. Seekers can find the truth there. The truth becomes evident to all who approach the Word of God humbly and find in it the truth, which is the foundation of their faith.

This truth will make men free. This truth shows a sinner the way to become free indeed. Under the forgiveness of sins, a believer will be free to pursue a free life of joy in Christ, a testimony to all who are still struggling to find life, a way of life which will lead to a true confession of Christ, the Lord, a freedom to serve this God with heart and soul and mind.

As we begin to speak to one another during these next three days, may God grant grace that we might continue in His Word.

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15. God's Harmony and Man's Discordant Notes and Missions

Psalm 67 tells us:

Elmer Reimnitz, M.S.T.

“God be merciful unto us, and bless us; and cause His face to shine upon us. Selah.

That thy way may be known upon the earth, thy saving health among all nations.

Let the people praise Thee, O God; let all the people praise Thee.

O let the nations be glad and sing for joy; for Thou shalt judge the people righteously, and govern the nations upon the earth. Selah.

Let the people praise Thee, O God; let all the people praise Thee.

Then shall the earth yield her increase; and God, even our own God, shall bless us.

God shall bless us; and all the ends of the earth shall fear him.”

MISSIONS — GOD'S IMPERATIVE

God, in His mercy, planned for the salvation of sinful mankind. His plan, the master plan is a plan that shows its harmony throughout the Bible. There is no discordant note in God's plan for the salvation of mankind. God sent His Son, Christ Jesus, into the world to save mankind. Christ suffered and died for us on the cross, and He rose again to gain the victory for us over sin, death and the devil. God offers this complete salvation to man, but, in foolish pride too many men resist the Spirit of God. Man brings his discordant notes into the mission work that God wants man to do.

God has given man his marching orders: “Go ye, therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.” The only reason the church exists is because Christ wants His children, His disciples, to bring souls to Him, teaching them the way of eternal life. But the world is still the same sinful world and has not changed for the better in spite of all the great discoveries of modern man. When we read books such as “The Stranger” by Albert Camus, we see and feel the struggle going on in the hearts and minds of those who want to be above religion. They don't want to worry about life and death. After all, God is dead, and what is there left for us in this world? From the viewpoint of sinful mankind, we see them wondering where to look for hope and for help. Where do they find peace, security, and hope? Terrorism, kidnappings, and murder of ambassadors take place in a number of countries. Where is the hope for peace and security? Even in America you find the resistance against authority. Man is rushing down the road to anarchy.

Perhaps the churches, with their emphasis on man's intelligence, man's social progress without spiritual growth are partly to blame for much of what is happening throughout the world. Too many have forgotten the true mission of the church. They have brought discordant notes into the harmony God planned for mission work.

God's plan is for us to go and preach the saving Gospel of Jesus Christ. This is the mission work, the harmony of God's plan. Tell the story of Jesus.

Belief in missions and belief in Christ stand and fall together. "The concern for world evangelization is not something to be tacked on to a man's personal Christianity, which he may take or leave as he chooses . . . It can never be the province of a few enthusiasts, a sideline or specialty of those who happen to have a bent that way. It is the distinctive mark of being a Christian. To accept Christ is to enlist under a missionary banner . . . In fact, here is the surest test whether we have truly grasped what Christ was doing by His life and death and resurrection or whether we have failed even to begin to understand the Gospel that He brought. James Denny once heard a distinguished missionary say, 'Some people do not believe in missions. They do not have a right to believe in missions: they do not believe in Christ.' My friends, if we have really encountered the Lord in the innermost part of our souls, if we are truly sons and daughters of our heavenly Father, we will never rest until the new life we have found in Christ is the conscious possession of all sinful mankind. It must be with us as it was with Paul at Damascus, 'Necessity is laid upon me to publish this to the ends of the earth.' It is said that when the Rabbi Duncan was dying, someone told him that there was a man in the infirmary, a foreign seaman, whose language no one could speak. 'I will learn it,' cried the scholar saint, 'I will learn it that I may tell him of his Saviour.' When the everlasting mercy of Christ broke like a sudden dawn upon Saul Kane in Masefield's poem, it gave him his task in life:

I knew that Christ had given me birth
to Brother all the souls on earth."¹

PHILOSOPHIES OF MISSIONS

Finding the lost and bringing them back to the Father's house is the chief and irreplaceable purpose of missions throughout the world. However, man has succeeded in changing the philosophy of missions. Other items are given equal weight and even priority over this irreplaceable purpose of God's. In his book, "How Churches Grow," Dr. Donald McGavran points out that today there exists three categories of philosophies about missions:

- "1. The Pauline Philosophy. This holds that the central continuing purpose of the world mission is winning men and women, tribes and nations, to Jesus Christ and multiplying churches. There are no other chief ends of mission, though man may be healed and kind deeds done as in the case of the cripple of Lystra. These, however, never form the purpose of mission . . . It is not the business of the church in Antioch to do charity in Antioch, but rather to establish churches there which will overflow with Christian neighborliness and abound in all the loving service and good works mentioned by Christ in His account of the last judgment.
- "2. The Parallel Philosophy. This says that the world mission consists in great parallel thrusts — of service in the name of Christ, witness to Christ, prosecution of great causes, enlightenment of other religions and cultures, contributions of life and money, and evangelization; that the world mission is as broad as the physical, mental, social and spiritual needs of man and includes his economic, industrial and political life . . . a mission to teach men how to double their rice crop has equal weightage — with a second, to teach them to read and a third — to lead them to Christ. . .
- "3. The Temporal-Eternal Philosophy. This holds that while the acceptance of the Evangel by the whole world is, indeed, the long range chief goal, in the shifting scene which faces us, other ends must sometimes share the stage as equals with church multiplication . . . Christians, says this philosophy, are simultaneously working toward the evangelization of the world and living a Christian life in a needy world. . . . With the tremendous resources of the Church today, it should be possible to do both all the disciplining that can be done and all the good deeds the world needs. However, when resources prove insufficient and the choice has to be made, the eternal has a clear priority with us as it had with our Lord."¹

The second and third philosophies are taking over most of the mission fields today. Both appeal to the love for our neighbor and have great emo-

tional appeal. We should prove that we love our neighbor, we are living in the richest land in the world and out of gratitude to God should show our love and our interest in those poor people who are hungry, illiterate, sick, etc. Would to God that the members of the church would be able to solve all of the problems of misery in this world. However, we know that this will never happen. We know that what actually happens in the mission field is "Practically both conservatives and liberals faced with many human needs, often defeated by resistant populations, always bound by previous patterns of action, cumbered by institutionalism in advance of the church, burdened with cultural overhang, which leads them to proclaim Christ in Western Ways, committed to a non-Biblical individualism, not understanding multi-individual accession as a normal way men come to Christ, and deceived by their own promotional efforts (whatever our missions do is so wonderful), constantly overemphasize and betray these truths."²

"Both liberals and conservatives too frequently are content to carry on 'splendid mission work.' Bitter experience teaches them to entertain small expectations of church growth, and they spend most of their budget, time and missionaries for other things."² We can't accept the entire indictment made by Dr. McGavran, but much is true in his statement.

The Frankfurt Declaration tells us: "Today, however, organized Christian world missions is shaken by a fundamental crisis. Outer opposition and the weakening spiritual power of our churches and our missionary societies are not solely to blame. More dangerous is the displacement of their primary tasks by means of an insidious falsification of their motives and goals." There are many discordant notes brought into mission work by man.

UNIVERSALISM — SYNCRETISM — Religion in General.

Universalism is one of the loudest discordant notes in mission work, for if the beliefs of universalism is true, we no longer need to do mission work. We could even forget about churches and Christ. The Wheaton Declaration explains universalism in a few words: "The teaching of universalism, which we reject, states that, because Christ died for all, He will sovereignly and out of love bring all men to salvation. It proclaims the essential and final unity of the human race, which will never be broken . . . those who have met Christ have an advantage above those who have not, but it is a difference in degree, not in principle. If men do not believe the Gospel in this life — even if they reject it — their guilt and punishment will ultimately be removed. They are simply not conscious of the riches they possess."³

The Frankfurt Declaration of 1970 states: "We therefore oppose the universalistic idea that in the crucifixion and resurrection of Jesus Christ all men of all times are already born again and already have peace with him, irrespective of their knowledge of the historical saving activity of God or belief in it. Through such a misconception the evangelizing commission loses both its full authoritative power and its urgency. Unconverted men are thereby lulled into a fateful sense of security about their eternal destiny."

These words are underscored by statements in Dr. Martin Marty's book, "Youth Considers 'Do It Yourself' Religion," in which there are five statements made by those who profess a religion-in-general that shows universalism:

1. Well, after all, in matters of religion the people of different faiths are just in different boats heading for the same shore.
2. It does not make any difference what anybody believes, so long as he believes.
3. I may not agree with his religion, but he's so sincere. That's all that matters.
4. I don't really belong to the church, but I am very religious.
5. I don't have a clear idea of Christian beliefs, but I am a Christian and I'm sure I believe in its main principles, such as the Sermon on the Mount and the Golden Rule and the Ten Commandments."⁴

How often have we heard statements such as this, not only in the United States, but also throughout the world. If these statements were the truth, we would have no reason to be doing mission work. We could close down our mission fields, shut our churches here at home, and think only of doing good.

“As a further step of development in the concept of ‘Church mission’ it can then be held that the reconciling acts of God may be found in all religions. Dr. Niles asserts, ‘But what of those who already have faith to whom this declaration is made? Are there not those who have not consciously accepted God in Christ, but who nevertheless in some measure respond truly to God’s action on them? Are there not those who, being outside the Christian faith, still do the truth? (John 3:21). The answer is yes.’ From this position it is then but a short step to a new universalism of all religions and faiths — a veritable syncretism of universalistic Christianity, and of other ethnic faiths and animistic religious beliefs.

“It is here then that this particular meaning of the mission of the church comes to full universalistic syncretistic flower. There is no necessity to challenge men to flee to the Lord Jesus Christ from the city of destruction. There is no ‘Woe is me if I preach not the Gospel.’ There is no wishing one’s self accursed for his kinsmen’s sake because they are lost! Instead we find a concept of love and service which depends on dialogue with the various faiths and practices of the world to introduce them to what they already are by the grace of God and that they will be whether they accept it in this life or not! Thus the call to harvest fields is muffled, volunteers dwindle away, and the spirit of evangelism in the Great Commission is no longer one of urgency.”⁵

The Frankfurt Declaration gives us a very clear statement on syncretism: “We recognize and declare: The offer of salvation in Christ is directed without exception to all men who are not yet bound to him in conscious faith. The adherents to the nonchristian religions and world views can receive this salvation only through participation in faith. They must be freed from their former ties and false hopes in order to be admitted by belief into the body of Christ, . . . We, therefore, reject the false teaching that the non-christian religions and world views are also ways of salvation similar to belief in Christ. We refute the idea that Christian presence among the adherents to the world religions and a give-and-take dialogue with them are substitutes for a proclamation of the Gospel which aims at conversion. Such dialogues simply establish good points of contact for missionary communication.”

Universalism and syncretism are some of the loudest discordant notes in mission work throughout the world. Too many have entered their ranks as they substitute for the true Law and Gospel a vague talk of the love of God. We must remind them that Christ taught eternal punishment as well as eternal life. There is a heaven, and there is also a hell. There are the saved, and there are also the lost. Scriptures give us no alternative; we must take seriously all it says of the wrath and judgments of our God. “Then shall he say also unto them on the left hand, Depart from ye, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels, . . . And these shall go away into everlasting punishment: but the righteous into life eternal” (Mt. 25:41, 46). “And if thine eye offend thee, pluck it out: it is better for thee to enter into the kingdom of God with one eye, than having two eyes to be cast into hell fire: where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched” (Mark 9:47 ff.). “And in hell he lift up his eyes, being in torments and seeth Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his bosom . . . And beside all this, between us and you there is a great gulf fixed: so that they which would pass from hence to you cannot; neither can they pass to us, that would come from hence” (Luke 16:23, 26). “And to you who are troubled rest with us, when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with His mighty angels, In flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ: Who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of His power” (II Thess. 1:7-9). In true loyalty to the Holy Scriptures we will continue to

reject the devilish teaching of universalism, for we know and believe and teach what the Scriptures teach. Salvation is through faith in Christ alone.

The Lutheran Confessions clearly show us the Christological burden in the Gospel content. Perhaps the best definition of the Gospel Content is found in FC, SD V, 21:

“The content of the Gospel is this, that the Son of God, Christ our Lord, Himself assumed and bore the curse of the Law and expiated and paid for all our sins, and that through Him alone we re-enter the good graces of God, obtain forgiveness of sins through faith, are freed from death and all the punishments of sin, and are saved eternally.” (Cf. FC, Epit. V, 5).

As Melancthon says, the Gospel compels us to make use of Christ. It teaches that through Him we have access to God, reconciliation with God and victory over sin and death (Ap. IV, 291). The Formula tells us that the Gospel ‘directs’ sinners solely to the merit of Christ, and raises them up again by the delightful proclamation of God’s grace and favor acquired through the merits of Christ” (FC Epit. V, 7). The Confessions see and recognize this doctrine and article as one that must be held fast at all costs: “Nothing in this article can be given up or compromised, even if heaven and earth and things temporal should be destroyed. For as St. Peter says, ‘There is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved’ (Acts 4:12). ‘And with his stripes we are healed’ (Is. 53:5). On this article rests all that we teach and practice against the pope, the devil, and the world. Therefore we must be quite certain and have no doubts about it. Otherwise all is lost, and the pope, the devil, and all our adversaries will gain the victory” (SA II, I, 5).

FALSE ECUMENISM

We are living in the so-called modern age. We have come to the point where many feel the pressure of society and the need to conform. It is an age in which propaganda over the radio, television stations, and newspapers have come to exercise such a profound influence on the lives and thoughts of men, that it is much easier to conform and to flow with the stream than to hold fast to so-called outmoded convictions. Especially since John XXIII shook the Christian world with the convocation of the II Vatican Council, giving it a strong ecumenical character, the hosts of those who are fighting for the ecumenical *movement* have grown considerably. In a short time the climate of relationships between the Protestants and the Roman Catholic church has changed much and has become a climate of dialogue between separated brethren. Many are ready to return to the ‘Holy Father’ and forget that the Roman Catholic Church has not changed a single one of its fundamental doctrines. Ecumenism has become, as we call it in Brazil, the “coqueluche do dia,” (the church fad of the day). The Wheaton Declaration diagnoses the problem as it states: “Contemporary Protestant movements that boldly contend for the non-existence of the Gospel revealed by God, that propagate a neo-universalism denying eternal condemnation, that substitute inter-church reconciling service for aggressive evangelism, that blur the biblical distinction between ‘church’ and ‘mission’ between Romanism and Protestantism, and that create ecclesiastical organizations moving in the direction of a worldwide religious monopoly, likewise demand a careful assessment and response.”⁶ Dr. Robert Preus, analyzing the implications and studying the ecumenical movement, writes: “We can at least help to determine our stance toward this movement today by examining briefly the modern ecumenical attitude toward the mission of the church, specifically as seen in the Report “Renewal in Mission,” adopted by the WCC assembly in Uppsala in 1968. An analysis of this report which is the result of years of study and preparation (since the WCC assembly in New Delhi) by theologians and member churches of the WCC reveals that the WCC in its official statement has virtually missed and passed over the great evangelical themes and concerns which dominated the Reformation and our historic Lutheran Confessions. The Report has little in common with either the New Testament teaching on the church’s mission or that of our

Confessions. . . . The Report scarcely touches the great soteriological and eschatological themes so fundamental to historic Christianity and to our Lutheran Confessions as they lay a background for the ministry of the Church. . . . can the very content of the Gospel, the great themes of salvation, reconciliation, justification, the work of Christ, to say nothing of the eschatological themes of Christ's return, judgment, resurrection and eternal life — can the content of the Gospel be ignored when Christians band together to speak of the mission of the church? The urgency for proclaiming the Gospel is not apparent in the Uppsala report. And this is inexcusable. . . . What then, can be our relation today as Lutherans who have a Lutheran and Biblical doctrine of the church's ministry to the ecumenical movement? To identify with a great movement which so tragically buries the Gospel and misses the crucial mission of the church would constitute a compromise and denial of our understanding of the Gospel and the work of Christ's church.”⁷

Heaven and earth would rejoice if the goal of unity among the churches could be achieved here on earth. However, this goal dare not be achieved at the expense of doctrinal confession. We enter into dialogue with other churches, we will bear witness to Scriptural truths, but we will not compromise the Scriptures and the Lutheran Confessions. Professor Osvaldo Schueler clearly diagnosed the entire ecumenical movement when he wrote for the *Mensageiro Luterano*: “The churches which unite only for outward motives and forget about doctrine will finally be united and not know what they are united about.”⁸

Prof. Arnaldo Schueler in his essay “Let Unity be Unity,” points out one of the major arguments for ecumenism and the fallacy of the argument: “There are three things which must not be confounded: 1) What is strictly necessary for faith to be created in the heart; 2) What does it mean to preach the Gospel correctly; 3) What are the conditions necessary for two church bodies to declare external fellowship.”⁹ Many of us will remember how a young man stood up at our convention in Denver and claimed: Christ decided the issue of ecumenism over 1900 years ago. WE are brothers — a fundamental error in distinguishing between the visible and invisible church. Thank God that there are many true children of God in other church bodies in spite of doctrinal errors, but for true unity we must have the right basis. The basis for uniting the Lutherans is clearly expressed in the Formula of Concord: “Thus the churches will not condemn one another because of dissimilarity of ceremonies, when, in Christian liberty, one has less or more of them, provided they are otherwise agreed with one another in the doctrine and all its articles, also in the right use of the Holy Sacraments” (FC, SD, 31). Formula Concordia, Solida Declaratio, Rule and Norm, 1: “The primary requirement for the basic and permanent concord within the church is a summary formula and pattern, unanimously approved, in which the summarized doctrine commonly confessed by the churches of the pure Christian religion is drawn from out of the Word of God.”¹⁰

To this last statement Dr. R. Preus comments in a recent article: “What a remarkable statement! Here is not the cynical despairing of the possibility of doctrinal unity, so common to our relativistic age! Not the sneering rejection of doctrinal unanimity as something inimical to man's freedom and autonomy. Now here is a statement of confidence in the unifying power of the Word and the Spirit of God. These old Lutherans were convinced that doctrinal controversies were an offense and doctrinal aborrations pernicious to believers and unbelievers alike.”¹¹

SOCIAL GOSPEL

Hand in hand with universalism and the ecumenical movement we find an over-emphasis on social work. We are told that we must dedicate our efforts to help the “whole man.” True, we must help the poor, the hungry, the sick, but above all we must help these come to the knowledge of the Saviour. Too often evangelical social action is just social action while the witness to Christ is missing. It becomes a type of self-redemption of man. Dr.

Schoehne writes: "This kind of self-redemption is offered today by those theologians, whose theology has shrunk to social ethics and who transform the need for salvation into a need for society's improvement. In this conception human activity replaces the grace of God. For example, let me quote from the Credo of Dorothee Soelle: 'I believe in God, who . . . wants the alteration of all conditions by our work, by our politics . . . I believe in Jesus Christ, who arises into our life that we may become free from prejudice and arrogance, from fear and hatred, and promote his revolution toward his kingdom: I believe . . . in our responsibility for what will become of this earth: a vale of tears, hunger, and violence, or the city of God.' No wonder, that a prayer composed under Mrs. Soelle's authority, ends with these words: 'Come, Lord Jesus, and let us bring up your future.'"¹²

It is a sorry thing that many ecumenical conferences, including Lutheran conferences, do not give a clear confessional witness to Christ and His infallible Word. Too often Lutheran gatherings and councils have not heard such valid and honest criticism which was voiced properly recently at the end of an Inter-Lutheran gathering of campus pastors: "We sat here for four days and we have scarcely heard the name of Jesus and the Gospel. What are we doing here?" We can ill afford a continuation of sharing our weaknesses and reaching the least common denominator, when the Saviour requests us to edify and strengthen one another through His precious Word.

Fortunately there are young churches today that still hold fast to confessional loyalty rather than false ecumenical breadth. It is commendable that Dr. A. A. Carino, the president of the Evangelical Lutheran church of the Philippines recently told Lutherans from all over the world in a meeting in St. Louis: "The LCP President as guardian of doctrine and Scriptural practice suspended the resolution (he was referring to a resolution of a district of his church) and its implementation by citing the Confessions on the matter. . . . it is not those who subscribe to the Confessions and are loyal to them who divide the Church. It is those who disregard the fellowship and go their own way."¹³

Such statements are especially heartening in this day when the Lutheran World Federations in its assembly in July of this year went on record to change the name of its Commission on World Mission to the Commission on Church Cooperation. Missions in the Gospel sense among the ecumenical forces is receiving less and less attention. True ecumenism is God pleasing, the right ecumenism fights for the unity of the church on the basis of the Scriptures and the Confessions. Unfortunately, the ecumenical movement has hurt aggressive evangelism and mission outreach rather than helped it. Too much time and effort, and too many funds are funneled to this movement while the mission work of the church, the real work of Christ, is sidetracked.

Man has his duty to be a good Samaritan, and our churches should do all they can to help the needy. However, we dare not place the emphasis of the church's work in the wrong place. "Finding the lost and bringing them back to the Father's house is a chief and irreplaceable purpose of American missions to Africa, Latin America, and Asia where tremendous numbers are living and dying without Christ. Men have multitudinous needs of body and mind to meet which is thoroughly Christian. The Church is properly engaged in relief of suffering, pushing back the barrier of ignorance, and increasing productivity. But such activities must be carried out *in proportion*. They must never be substituted for finding the lost. Christians must never be guilty of turning from the Spirit to the flesh or of mocking men with false securities."¹⁴

It is not the duty of the church, but of the State, to create a social and political order . . . The Church, based on revelation, has no revealed political or social programme, nor, as a Church, has it the means to put such a programme into effect, even if it had one . . . The Church's only instruments are Christian witness and brotherly love, and these overcome all selfishness, self-importance and legalism."¹⁵ "The church's business is creating new lives,

not new lobbies. If the church becomes merely one more reform bloc it will inevitably be classed only as a social movement representing a phase of opinion rather than as the people of God empowered by a spiritual dynamic. Christians should affect the social structure in which they live, but nowhere in the Bible are missions equated with social reform apart from the regeneration of the individual . . . the church must always remember that 'the things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal' (II Cor. 4: 18)."¹⁶

In his message to the LWF assembly Dr. Visvaldis V. Klive writes: "There is a contemporary tendency among many Christians to de-emphasize theological problems. This is unfortunate as the history of the Church suggests that theological clarity and comprehensiveness can be decisive. A number of failures on the part of the Church can be attributed precisely to the absence of sufficiently well-founded and definite theological perspective. This means the avoidance of the identification of the church with any secular movement, regardless how good and noble are its intentions and origins. Every time that the Church has identified its interests with those of some social, political, cultural, or economic structure, the christian community has turned out to be the loser."¹⁷ The church dare not let the social gospel take the place of the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

It is the activity of the church to be a serving church. But what is the meaning of the idea of serving in our confessions?

Our Confessions clearly show us that the service of works, that acts of love, is the fruit of faith through the Gospel and is the true service of Christians. Melancton tells us, "After we have been justified and regenerated by faith, therefore, we begin to fear and love God, to pray and expect help from him, to thank and praise him, and to submit to him in our affliction. Then also we begin to love our neighbor because our hearts have spiritual and holy impulses" (Ap. IV, 111. Cf. 129, 270). The child of God, living a life of faith will produce love and good works, not only because works are commanded as a testimony of our faith (Ap. IV, 184, 189), not only because our works glorify Christ (Ap. IV, 269, 189), but because the Spirit has transformed us by bringing us to faith, and "faith is a living, busy, active, mighty thing, so that it is impossible for it not to be constantly doing what is good" (FC, SD IV, 10). So Gospel faith is joined inseparably to the service of good works in Lutheran theology. Listen to Melancton: "We are justified for this very purpose, that, being righteous, we might begin to do good works and obey God's law. For this purpose we are reborn and receive the Holy Spirit, that this new life might have new works, new impulses, the fear and love of God, hatred of lust, etc." (Ap. IV, 348-9).¹⁸

The true Christian church will continue to bring the Gospel message to the whole man and urge its faithful to express their social concern. The children of God must be concerned for the needs of the whole man, they will continue to help in obedience to Christ's command to help those who are hungry, sick, alone, etc., but above all the church will remember that the salvation of the whole man has priority and will bring the man the sweetest story ever told, the message of salvation through faith in Christ Jesus.

DEAD ORTHODOXY-INDIFFERENCE

Another bad discordant note that man brings to God's harmony in mission work is dead orthodoxy, indifference. Are some of the attacks leveled at the Lutheran Church justified, even though their suggested solution is just as unjustified? The Hungarians sent a message to the LWF assembly and among other things we read: "The Christian does not view the events of the world with an impassionate self-righteousness as the Lutheran pietists and the orthodox did and still do, but he is out to look for the footprint of God, entering into the events and accepting solidarity with them. Just as God loved and still loves the world (John 3:16), the church, too, must love the world and, with this love, must accept her solidarity with all the problems of the world . . . From God whom we know in Christ we learn that Christian

love knows no limitations or barriers. It is not obstructed by the existence of the various religions and ideologies, and bypasses the pious forms of traditional religiosity. Measured by the love of Jesus, there is but one impiety and that is inhumanity. Jesus loved people and did not push abstract truth (Luke 9.56). He sat at one table with the publicans and sinners. He prayed for his enemies and broke the Sabbath law to heal the sick. The pious of his age also preached love among themselves, but they hated their enemies. Christians of our time are also exposed to the temptation to love themselves and turn a cold shoulder on the outsiders.”¹⁹

When I think of the actual evangelism work of the members of our churches, when I consider the offerings for missions of our churches, I wonder if the Hungarians haven't hit a weak spot in our lives. I would like to ask you whether you have dedicated some time every week to lead a soul to Jesus. Have you prayed for someone who does not believe? Have you been an instrument of the Lord in bringing someone to Christ during this year? You know that the Holy Spirit works through you and through me to bring souls to Christ. Have you been satisfied with the fact that you and your family have the pure Gospel? That you and your children know the way to heaven? What have you done to bring others to Christ? What have you done to wake up all the members of your congregation to the most important task in this world, bringing souls to Jesus?

“A noted, gifted infidel had this to say of soul-winning: ‘Were I a religionist, did I truly, firmly, consciously believe, as millions SAY they do, that the knowledge and practice of religion in this life influences destiny in another, religion should be everything to me. I would esteem one soul for heaven worth a life of suffering. There should be neither worldly prudence nor calculating circumspection in my engrossing zeal. Earthly consequences should never stay my hand nor seal my lips. I would strive to look but on Eternity and on the immortal souls around me, soon to be everlastingly miserable or everlastingly happy.’”²⁰

Thousands and millions who call themselves Christians go on their way day after day, giving our all for this life here on earth. It couldn't mean less to them that every minute of the day, souls are dying and going to eternal hell-fire. Some are interested only in giving all of their attention to having the pure doctrine in the church. We must do this, without the loyalty to Scriptures and the Confessions, we soon won't have a message to bring to sinful mankind. But we can't only fight for the pure doctrine. We must combine the pure doctrine with our zeal to do mission work. Dead orthodoxy will spell the death of the church. A church that does not place emphasis on mission work will die.

My friends, if we believe there is an eternal hell, could our eyes be dry and our hearts undisturbed when we see so many sinners blindly drifting to an eternal doom?

Why, oh why, are we doing so little for the salvation of blood-bought souls? God be praised that we do have fellow Lutherans who are afire with zeal for missions, but when we consider the average life of our average Lutheran, we must admit that we are too indifferent toward our fellow-men: too many are too satisfied with the church as it is. May our heavenly Father haunt us with the spectre of millions of our fellowmen who do not know the Saviour.

My fellow Lutherans, as I stand before you during this Congress for loyalty to the Scriptures and the Lutheran Confessions, I would like to remind you of the words of the angel to the church in Philadelphia: “I know thy works: behold I have set before thee an open door, and no man can shut it: for thou hast a little strength, and has kept my word, and hast not denied my name” (Rev. 3:8). God has put an open door before the Lutherans throughout the world. This open door has been kept open in spite of our failure to enter. God knows that we are weak, that we have little strength, but no man can shut the door, God will keep it open and will strengthen us.

Disturbing secular forces are at work in the hearts of Christians and many turn deaf ears to appeals for costly advance. We need honest self-criticism, and we must examine the motives of our hearts in the light of Holy Scripture. The needs of our day demand deep renewal of our commitment to Christ and His mission throughout the world.

“Protestantism is afflicted with doctrinal uncertainty, theological novel-
ties, and outright apostasy. Satan is active, sowing tares among the wheat,
energizing false witnesses to propagate doubt and destroying true faith.
Christians need the will and ability to ‘discern the spirits whether they be of
God.’ The Church needs the courage to implement the New Testament disci-
plinary process to guard its purity, its peace and its unity. God’s people
need the prophetic voice, calling for a separation from sin and error.”²¹

We realize the shortcomings of our service to our God. We must pledge
loyalty to God’s Holy Word and to the Confessions of our church. Under
the guidance of God’s Holy Spirit we must confess our failures and we must
affirm our confidence in His mission. God is sovereign in all times. We be-
lieve in Him, and in His triumph in history. In spite of man’s discordant
notes in missions, God will work His harmony and will bring the elect to His
eternal home.

May God grant us wisdom, courage, and missionary zeal so that we will
pray and give for His work. I am not pleading for the missions in my country,
Brazil, but I am pleading for those who need your help throughout the world,
and in a special way my fellow-Lutherans, that we all will grow in love and
Christian service and will avoid the discordant notes in missions. I wish all
of you could have the opportunity to meet some of the many in mission fields
who have come to the Saviour through your help, but I know that this is im-
possible here on earth. However, one day you will meet these people with
our Savior in heaven, where together we and they will sing songs of praise to
Him who saved us all by His grace.

FOOTNOTES

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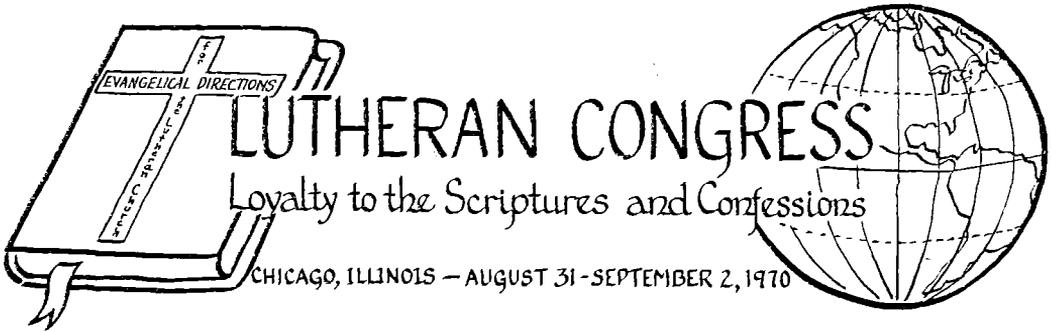
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