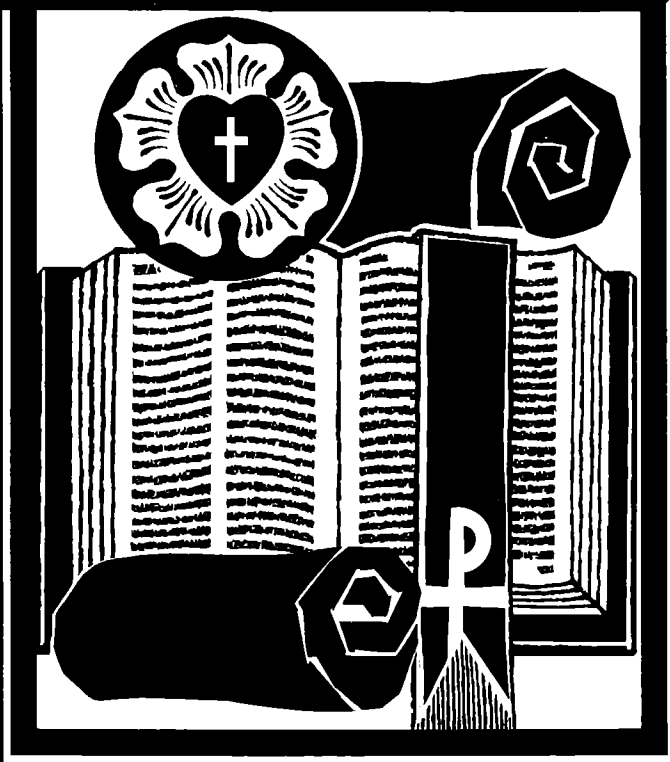


THEOLOGIAN'S CONVOCATION



ESSAYS

PREFACE

The 1975 convention of The Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod, recognizing that "there is a hunger and longing for peace and unity" among all members of the Synod, requested the Commission on Theology and Church Relations to continue to carry out its responsibilities of "fostering and providing for ongoing theological education through institutes, seminars, and other means" and to "coordinate the preparation of a series of Bible Class Studies" in order to further "true and lasting peace and concord" in the Synod. (1975 Resolution 3-01 "To Seek Unity")

In response the CTCR, convinced that this assignment demanded a comprehensive and long range program, formulated initial plans which were shared with representatives from the synodical boards, commissions, and auxiliaries. As a result of these discussions, the "That We May Grow" program emerged and five major objectives were formulated. "That We May Grow" was adopted as the theme for the Planned Parish Program for 1977-78 and 1978-79, as well as for the 1977 Synodical Convention, and "That We May Grow" calendars and Parish Planning Kits which outlined the major facets of the program and provided suggestions for congregational planning were sent to all congregations in the Synod.

At the heart of the "That We May Grow" program is a comprehensive study of the Scriptures and the Lutheran Confessions. Under the direction of the Board for Parish Education a series of eight studies on the Scriptures and four on the Lutheran Confessions has been developed for lay study classes. The second phase of the "That We May Grow" study program was the Theologians' Convocation held on the campus of Concordia Seminary in St. Louis November 7-9. This three day convocation brought together approximately 175 Missouri Synod theologians to hear and discuss a series of papers and responses on the theme "Formula for Concord." District/Regional pastors and principals conferences to be held in 1978 comprise the third stage of the "That We May Grow" study program.

It is in preparation for these "Formula for Concord" conferences that the CTCR is herewith sharing the three major essays presented at the Theologians' Convocation with all pastors and teachers of The

Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod. Included in this resource booklet is also Dr. Karl Barth's keynote address, which relates the purpose of the convocation (and thus also of the upcoming conferences) to the five basic objectives of the "That We May Grow" program. Some study questions have been appended to the essays to assist in focusing on the basic issues.

It is the prayer of the members of the CTCR that these essays will prove helpful as you prepare for the regional conferences, the final phase of the "That We May Grow" study program. May God bless our study of His Word and of the Lutheran Confessions so that "speaking the truth in love, we (may) in all things grow up into Him who is the Head, that is, Christ. From Him the whole body, joined and held together by every supporting ligament, grows and builds itself up in love, as each part does its work." (Ephesians 4:15-16)

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Commission on Theology and
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November 1977

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DISCUSSION STARTERS

I. THE BASIS FOR CONCORD

1. Do you agree that the distinction which the confessional writings make between *proprie dicta* and *late dicta* can be appropriately termed “invisible” and “visible”?
2. Why is it important to distinguish the marks of the church from the church itself?
3. Do you agree with the statement that “the unity of the church is expressed simply by agreement (*consentire*) in this doctrine of the Gospel and in the Administration of the Sacraments (Aug. VII, 2)”?
4. Is the lack of concord in the Lutheran Church today due to a lack of consensus in “doctrine and all its articles”? (FC, EP.X.7)
5. What does the distinction between *Einigkeit der Kirche* and *Einigkeit in der Kirche* contribute to the whole discussion of unity and concord?
6. Do you agree fundamentally with Dr. Preus’ discussion on the nature of the church?
7. What questions pertaining to the Basis of Concord does this paper leave unanswered?
8. What insights does “The Basis of Concord” give us for resolving the doctrinal differences in our church today?

II. THE WAY TO CONCORD

1. The essay states that Luther chose two ways to concord:
 - 1) The appeal to already existing formulas of concord, and
 - 2) The affirmation of new formulas of the same concord.Do you agree? Do you see any tension between the two?
2. In what sense can it be said that “Confession is . . . a direct consequence of the unity of the Church”?
3. How is the principle of *analogia fidei* related to the unity of and concord in the church?

4. Do you agree that political pressure can be a tool in God's hands "to lead the church again to the concord in confession" (p. 18)?
5. Do you agree that political pressure in Luther's day determined only some of the procedures of the way to concord, but not the content of the way to concord? (p. 18)
6. How can concord be achieved in the church when individuals disagree on the nature and authority of the "invariable factor"?
7. What should be our Synod's prayer as it seeks for greater concord?

III. THE CELEBRATION OF CONCORD

1. Do you agree that "Where the church is, there is unity"?
2. What do we mean by the term "fellowship"?
3. What is the basis of fellowship between church bodies?
4. Is it true that the Missouri Synod now requires a more comprehensive agreement in doctrine than was understood when fellowship was established between the LCMS and the ALC in 1969?
5. How does the authority of Scripture pertain to the basis of fellowship?
6. Is our church today agreed on the nature and meaning of confessional subscription?
7. Is the practice of selective fellowship a help or a hindrance to the establishment of church fellowship?
8. Is there a legitimate distinction between the practice of fellowship and cooperation in external matters?
9. "How are we to resolve the tension between a confessionally narrow conscience and an ecumenically broad heart"?
10. Are the requirements for membership and unity in the *una sancta* a sufficient requirement for external unity in the church in the broad sense?

OTHER SAMPLE QUESTIONS FOR GROUP DISCUSSION:

1. What specific insights does the essay(s) give us for achieving concord in our Synod?
2. What questions pertaining to concord in the church does the essay(s) leave unanswered?
3. What “terms” need further “definition”?
4. What aspect of the doctrine of fellowship needs further study?
5. What concrete steps ought to be taken to achieve greater concord in our Synod?