



THE SPRINGFIELDER

July 1975
Volume 39, Number 3

THEOLOGICAL OBSERVER

UNFINISHED BUSINESS AT ANAHEIM

At the Fifty-first Convention of the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod, Committee 3 (Theology and Church Relations) received 262 proposals and in response to them prepared thirty-six resolutions. Of these, about a third were acted upon by the convention. Administrative and constitutional affairs took a great deal of the convention's time. Previous conventions have clearly outlined the doctrinal position of the Missouri Synod and its future direction. The Anaheim Convention saw a fleshing out of positions previously adopted by the synod. Nevertheless, there are a number of matters where further doctrinal articulation will be necessary at future conventions.

For one thing, the matter of the proposed new hymnal will loom large in the future and not just at conventions. The hymnal has been called the dogmatics of the people. It is the means by which they confess their faith and learn theology.

ORDINATION AND THE PAROCHIAL SCHOOL-TEACHER

The failure of the Anaheim Convention to act in any way upon the request to ordain parochial school-teachers should not be interpreted to mean that the issue is now dead. Proposed resolution 3-17, which did not come before the delegates for action, advised that further study be undertaken (*Today's Business*, Section A, p. 61). This particular question appears on the scene when the synod is protesting the ordination of female pastors by the American Lutheran Church and trying to resolve the problem of the ordination of graduates of Concordia Seminary in Exile. The theological ramifications of one issue are necessarily related to the other two. Only poor logic would suggest that if we ordain women as parochial school-teachers, we therefore must ordain women as pastors. Yet there is the not unwarranted fear that, if the former is allowed, some will use poor logic in working toward the other.

As I am not a parochial school-teacher, I am not fully aware of all the personal concerns in the matter. There does seem to be a general sense of frustration as parochial school-teachers attempt to clarify their position in the church. At the present they cannot be recognized as either pastors or laymen in the voting procedures of the synod. They are, however, represented on boards of control, various synodical boards, and convention floor committees. As I see it, the church is under some kind of obligation to give them full recognition as professional workers in the church, but at the same time to make it clear that their office is distinct from the pastoral office.

This latter obligation is not fulfilled by the request from the Board of Parish Education that this status be recognized and confirmed through ordination. From a purely pragmatic point of view, acceding to the request at this time might increase the confusion now existing about the pastoral office. (This is not to say that those requesting ordination for parochial school-teachers are responsible for this confusion.) More importantly, however, let us consider the theological implications of such a move.

Parochial school-teachers recognize that their office, unlike that of pastors, is not established by a specific command of Jesus or the Apostles.

The church in its freedom has established the office of the parochial school-teacher to assist the pastor in teaching children Biblical truths and in nurturing them in the true faith. The New Testament references to "teacher" or "teachers" are to pastors who have been entrusted with the preservation of the apostolic teaching and its proclamation. Already in New Testament times, ordination was practiced as that rite through which men were admitted into the pastoral office. The rite consisted of the laying-on of hands with an accompanying word of Scripture and was conducted by a group of pastors. Paul instructs Timothy to use this rite with extreme care in admitting others into the office. Thus he envisages that it should continue in the church in his absence and after his death.

The laying-on of hands is used in many ways in the Bible. Jesus heals through the laying-on of hands, seven helpers are appointed in Jerusalem in this way, and Paul and Barnabas, who are already pastors, are sent out by the church in Antioch by this procedure. Paul's references in the pastoral epistles are to one particular kind of laying-on of hands which can only be done under certain restrictions. (The church has called this particular rite "ordination," even though it could very well be called something else.) We must make this point completely clear. Peter healed the lame man by laying on the hands, and Paul inducted Timothy into the pastoral office by the laying-on of hands. But the intent of the one action was quite different than the intent of the other. The lame man did not become a pastor, and Timothy was not healed from any disease.

We raise no objection, then, to parochial school-teachers being admitted into office by the laying-on of hands as long as this rite is not confused with admittance into the pastoral office and as long as there is no suggestion in this rite that the office of the parochial school-teacher is commanded by Scripture or, conversely, that the office of the pastor is not commanded.

The question then seems to be whether or not this ceremony of the laying-on of hands, if it be used to induct school teachers into their offices, should be called "ordination." If it is called "ordination," then many, if not almost all, will get the idea that the offices of pastor and parochial school-teacher are both divinely required and commanded or in some sense equal. An "ordained" parochial school-teacher who, after certification by colloquy, received a pastoral call might decline what he might consider "another ordination" on the grounds that he was already "ordained."

Traditionally, the term *ordination* in the Lutheran Church suggests a rite by which the pastoral office is committed to a man. The request of the Board of Parish Education would require a new definition for this term. It would also require that a new term be assigned to the rite which is uniquely used for pastors. The church should, however, be very hesitant to assign words new meanings. This tendency is what has made neo-orthodoxy so treacherous. The words no longer mean what they seem to say at face value. Take, for example, "Jesus rose from the dead." To us it means that His corpse was resuscitated and came back to life. To another it may mean only that Jesus is alive in the church. If "ordination" were applied to the rite inducting parochial teachers into their office, exactly what term would be used for the rite inducting pastors into their office?

Something better than a handshake should be given to parochial school-teachers as they enter their God-pleasing offices. The laying-on of

hands would be an appropriate ceremony, but calling it "ordination" would be fraught with confusion and the seedbed for all kinds of false doctrines. The word "ordination" as used of pastors is clear. Why muddy these waters?

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MISSION MESSAGES FROM ANAHEIM

If I were to offer any general impressions of the Anaheim Convention, they could all be summed up in this one sentence: Synod addressed itself to its problems and troubles in a fair and firm Christian manner, and at the same time courageously went about its task in a remarkably imaginative way considering the circumstances. However, I shall leave any further general impressions to others, and shall concentrate my remarks upon the mission messages that came from Anaheim.

One message that came through loud and clear was the desire of the brethren and sisters to expand and increase their involvement in God's mission. Synod resolved to be bolder and more creative in expanding mission fields. They directed the Board for Missions to "actively seek new areas of ministry, promote and support expansion within and through sister churches, and in coordinate planning with other Lutherans and Christians speedily respond to the Lord's command."

Synod readily implemented that desire by authorizing the Board of Directors of Synod in the period between conventions to decide whether or not the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod should begin mission work in either Mozambique or Angola or both. This is to be done on the basis of an extensive, in-depth study of mission opportunities in those two emerging nations. Although time elapsed before it was brought to the floor of the convention, a resolution to expand work in Portugal, in cooperation with the Brazil District, appeared in "Today's Business."

At home we resolved to enlarge our North American Indian ministry, to move forward in Hispanic ministry, and to "explore other models of ministry and mission outreach which would be more effective, efficient and adaptable in and to the Black community." Near-neighbor evangelism by every baptized Christian received a tremendous impetus at Anaheim. A Lutheran understanding of evangelism was affirmed. Renewal retreats for professional church workers and their spouses and for congregational leaders and their spouses to train them for better evangelism were inaugurated. District and congregational boards were given specific evangelistic objectives as guidelines by which to establish their own evangelism objectives and programs. Colleges and seminaries were urged to continue the development of the teaching of the concept and practice of evangelism where it has already commenced and to incorporate it in the curriculum where it has not. An additional man is to be called to the staff of the Board of Evangelism to meet the increased requests for evangelistic assistance from every quarter. Resolutions to strengthen Sunday Schools for nurture and evangelism, to support elementary schools, to intensify the publication of evangelism materials, and many other related resolutions are indicative of Synod's deep conviction that it is a missionary enterprise. To back up words with action some three hundred delegates made evangelism calls with surrounding congregations on Saturday afternoon, while another eight hundred attended evangelism workshops.

Another Anaheim mission message was the reaffirmation of some of the Scriptural principles that undergird our Christ-given mission. In God's mission the Gospel must be proclaimed, both so that Christians may be properly motivated to do His mission and "so that by the power of the Holy Spirit people may come to know and accept Jesus Christ as their Lord and Savior." In other words, Synod reaffirmed that there is no mission without that Message. The deeds of love are also indispensable in the mission of Christ, but they flow from the Gospel at work in the lives of Christians. This relationship was once more made clear at Anaheim. It had to be said again that the Scriptures and the Lutheran Confessions are the "determinants and guides" for our mission, under which we follow the Mission Affirmations.

The various mission resolutions of Anaheim spelled out a clear partner relationship with sister churches and mission fields. We resolved to respond lovingly "to the needs and wills of our sister churches and mission fields" in a "genuine partnership and mutual sharing with co-workers throughout the world to foster an aggressive, growing mission, in order that more people may learn the saving Word of Jesus Christ." Their counsel is to be actively sought and carefully weighed "in formulating and administering future policies and programs." Synodical districts are also to be consulted in the development of position statements and mission work.

"Consultative" and "coordinative," two formerly-used terms, were underlined at Anaheim with regard to planning and implementing God's mission with other Lutherans and Christians. Our Synod is not a separatistic sect, nor has it ever desired to be. But it definitely does not want to compromise God's Word and is still convinced that "the achievement of doctrinal agreement and the subsequent synodical establishment of fellowship must precede joint involvement with other Christians in matters pertaining to the ministry of the Word and Sacraments or directly affecting the doctrinal position of the Synod." This guiding principle obtains for joint ministry in North America as well as that abroad.

New terminology for old duties of the President of Synod in his relation to sister churches was used at Anaheim. The President is to be called "chief ecumenical officer of Synod." His assistant in these matters is the Commission on Theology and Church Relations.

With the exception of the above ecumenical responsibility, the mission message of Anaheim decreed unmistakably that the Board for Missions is "Synod's primary agency in mission." Duties and relationships of the synodical President and the CTCR and the Board for Missions in dealing holistically with the sister churches in a "genuine partnership" will have to be brought to a head quickly and set down in writing.

In accord with its action reaffirming the place of the Board for Missions as Synod's primary agency in mission, Synod has empowered the Board to act on the report and recommendations of the Mission Study Commission that was created by Synod's Board of Directors as a result of synodical mission tensions and problems. They are to do this after consulting with the Board of Directors once more. The Study Commission is to perform a final useful service by gathering responses to its report and recommendations until December 31, 1975, after which it is to disband.

Another needed mission message that Anaheim sounded forth was

that "walking together" in performing God's mission "commits us to honor and uphold the Constitution, Bylaws, and resolutions of Synod."

Because Christian medical work has always been a part of Christ's mission in the comprehensive sense, Synod was reluctant to pass Bylaw changes that would place administrative distance between it and Synod's primary agency for mission, the Board for Missions. Pending further study, action was deferred until the 1977 synodical convention.

Finally, a clear mission message from Anaheim was the call for "earnest prayers" and "renewed and strengthened financial support" for Synod's world mission work. Furthermore, it was resolved "that the present mission education program and promotion of the synodical program and services be intensified and expanded to inform and inspire the Synod's members for vigorous involvement in their Christ-given mission." To heal a kind of sclerosis of the giver the Department of Stewardship has been urged to conduct annual regional mission conferences and annual "skillshops" for ongoing training in the ever-changing mission scene. A significant change in the distribution of mission education materials came from the floor of the convention when Resolution 7-10 was amended to have all mission education materials sent to the congregations instead of the pastors. Could they not be sent to both?

God's people at Anaheim reaffirmed their mission as being that of Christ, standing in, with, and under the Scriptures and in the train of the Apostles. But at the same time they were willing to try new and imaginative approaches in our ever new and changing context.

Otto C. Hintze

AUTHENTIC ENDINGS: MATTHEW AND MARK

Two studies dealing with the authenticity of the last sections in the first two Gospels have by chance come across my desk at the same time. William R. Farmer of Southern Methodist University goes against the tide of common opinion in his *The Last Twelve Verses of Mark* and argues for their possible authenticity (Cambridge University Press, 1974). A former Missouri Synod clergyman and now Lutheran Seminary professor, Jack Dean Kingsbury, does the same for Matthew's Gospel with "The Composition and Christology of Matthew 28:15-20" (*Journal of Biblical Literature*, December 1974).

Farmer's job is much more difficult and, in spite of the massive array of evidence, his conclusions much less convincing than Kingsbury's. Every first-year seminary student learns that it is probably the best to assume that Mark's Gospel ends with verse 8, "for they were afraid" (RSV). After a thorough review of the disputed manuscript evidence, Farmer gives a careful form critical study of each word in 16:9-20 to show whether the style is Marcan. The presentation is less than convincing. There are just too many words and phrases that appear no place else in either Mark or the remainder of the New Testament. This is not to deny that Farmer has not isolated certain Marcan words in the disputed ending, but even he asserts nothing more definite than that the question is 'still open.' Of the five proposed solutions for the problem, Farmer himself rejects the view that Mark was the original author of verses 9-20; Farmer settles for Mark's use of previous material. If Mark is the earliest Gospel, an opinion which is commonly held by modern critics, then this option is fraught with

difficulties. A later relative dating of the Gospel permits a borrowing from the other Gospels. This course of action raises even more questions concerning Mark 16:9-20.

Kingsbury's task is easier and his conclusions are much more convincing. There are no manuscript discrepancies here of the sort through which Farmer had to plough in Mark. The Trinitarian ending has suggested to many that the ending of Matthew's Gospel had its origin in Hellenistic Christianity (e.g., Hahn) or perhaps the liturgy (e.g., G. Strecker). After surveying these and other options, Kingsbury does a word analysis of the controverted section. There are no literary forms which are not found in the rest of the Gospel. Kingsbury then concludes with a study of the Christology in the section and sees a theological unity here with the rest of the Gospel.

For the pastor who wants to be a student of the New Testament, both of these studies will be a pleasure. The disputed Marcan ending contains the references to exorcism, speaking in new tongues, picking up snakes, and drinking poison; it has been used by groups who see such signs as necessary or beneficial to the Christian life. Matthew's ending contains the commission to the nations and the most explicit Trinitarian section in the New Testament.

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WOMEN PASTORS IN THE MISSOURI SYNOD

The *Reporter* in its first issue reported that a Texas congregation has taken on the services of a woman vicar and that the district president, Dr. Carl Heckmann, is asking the congregation to reconsider this action. Even before The Lutheran Church in America and The American Lutheran Church officially approved women pastors, *The Springfielder* published a special issue on the problem (March 1970) and since then additional articles have been printed. One did not need to be a prophet to know that sooner or later the Missouri Synod would be confronted with the problem. To a certain extent, the Missouri Synod's problem with women pastors is overshadowed by a similar controversy in the Protestant Episcopal Church. Some are predicting that, regardless of the final decision, there could very well be a rift in the Anglican Communion. A movement working for ordaining women priests in the Roman Catholic Church is growing, even though Pope Paul VI is outspokenly opposed to it. Raymond E. Brown, one of the leading theologians in that church, sees the possibility as a real one that the Holy Spirit will lead the church to the acceptance of women priests. (Cf. his *Biblical Reflections on Crises Facing the Church*, New York: Paulist Press, 1975.) Because of the general movement towards ordaining women in all sorts of Christian groups—"evangelicalism," Anglicanism, large liberal denominations, and even Rome—it would be impossible for The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod to escape ever facing this problem right in its own midst.

The question of a woman vicar in a Missouri Synod congregation must be kept separate from the fact that she is receiving her theological education at Seminex. That is an entirely different issue. The problem of women vicars in the Missouri Synod really took shape when women were admitted to the regular ministerial program of Concordia Seminary,

St. Louis, presumably in 1973. The problem of women vicars forces us to focus our attention on the role not only of a vicar but also of a seminary and seminary education.

Though auxilliary programs can be established in conjunction with a seminary, the seminary's primary educational program is explicitly designed for the preparation of Lutheran ministers. This does not mean that simply enrolling in a seminary class involves any commitment to the ministry, but it does mean that enrollment in the regular program of the seminary involves this commitment. This a two-sided commitment. The seminary, upon the recommendation of the home pastor and after due deliberation, makes a temporary commitment to the enrolling student to receive him as a possible candidate for the ministry. It is a commitment that is periodically reviewed by the seminary, but a commitment it is. When a woman was enrolled in the regular program of the seminary, the Synod was, in effect, making this kind of commitment to her.

To review recent history for a moment, this is the way in which women entered the ministry in the Lutheran Church in America and The American Lutheran Church. After the women had enrolled and graduated from the seminaries, the question of what to do with them came up. The answer given was to ordain them as pastors.

In the case of the female vicar in the Texas District of the Missouri Synod, Dr. Heckmann has called the action of a Texas congregation in appointing a woman vicar "violating resolutions of the Synod because Joan Lundgren, a 24-year-old Seminex student, 'is a woman who is performing functions reserved for the pastoral ministry'" (*Reporter*, 1, 1, p. 7). The congregation's pastor claims that his vicar is not performing pastoral duties because she is not pronouncing absolutions or consecrating the elements, but is only preaching. The pastor claims that preaching can be done by any layman chosen by the congregation under proper pastoral supervision.

The Texas District president has seen the issue properly. A vicarage is part of the preparation of a pastor and not of a layman. A person is a layman by virtue of faith and baptism and not by participation in a vicarage program. All Christians speak of their faith in Christ, but only those trained for the pastoral office are ordinarily to preach publicly to and before the congregation. It is for the express purpose of making this public proclamation that men are specially trained and then ordained. When a vicar preaches, he does so not because he is a layman, but rather because part of the pastoral office is delegated temporarily to him. His performance in carrying out his temporary duties in the pulpit is taken into account in determining whether the entire pastoral office should be conferred upon him at the completion of his seminary studies.

The question of women pastors in the Missouri Synod should have been faced squarely when women were admitted into the regular ministerial program of the Missouri Synod. In retrospect, it can be seen that the seminary did not have the right to act independently in admitting women, and the proper synodical officials should have intervened. That failure to act in refusing admittance several years ago means today that the president of one of the synod's districts has to intervene now. In doing so, he is on solid theological ground.

A SPRINGFIELDER Bibliography on Women in the Ministry

For nearly six years *The Springfielder* has been carrying articles dealing with the problem of the ordination of women pastors. For the convenience of our readers who would like to restudy these essays again, this brief bibliography is presented.

Vol. XXXIII (4), March 1970

"Natural Orders" by Martin J. Naumann.

"Twenty-Three Theses on the Holy Scriptures, The Woman, and The Office of the Ministry" by Bo Giertz.

"Regin Prenter on the Ordination of Women" by Peter Brunner.

"The Place of Woman in the Old Testament" by Raymond Surburg.

"Some Thoughts on the Role of Women in the Church" by Walter A. Maier.

"The Status of Women in the Missouri Synod in the Twentieth Century" by James Weis.

Vol. XXXIV (4), March 1971

"Falling from Faith in Christ, of the Church, and of the Lutheran Reformation: An Article on the Ordination of Women" by Wolfgang Buscher.

Vol. XXXVI (2), September 1972

"May Women Be Ordained as Pastors?" by David P. Scaer.

Vol. XXXVIII (2), September 1974

"The Office of the Pastor and the Problems of Ordination of Women Pastors" by David P. Scaer.

SOLI DEO GLORIA

In the Gospel for Christmas Eve we read that on the night of Christ's birth a skyful of angels appeared to certain shepherds near Bethlehem praising God and saying, "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will to men." After seeing Christ in the manger, the same shepherds went away, says Luke, "glorifying and praising God for all they had heard and seen" (2:20). On the basis of this text we pastors are accustomed to exhort ourselves and the people to respond to the Christmas Gospel in the same manner as the shepherds, to give glory to God. And we usually point out that the Christian glorifies God not only in the liturgy, but in his life as a whole. For Paul urges us: "So, whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God" (I Cor. 10:31).

But especially we pastors must remember that we must seek to glorify God not only in life, but also in doctrine. The glorification of God in life is called piety; the glorification of God in doctrine is called orthodoxy. For to be orthodox is not merely *orthos dokein*, to think aright, but much more *orthos doxazein*, to glorify aright—that is, to give all the glory to the rightful recipient, God. Heterodoxy says that a man can decide to trust in Christ or not to trust. Orthodoxy responds that God alone creates trust in Christ, totally excluding any cooperation by man in coming to faith. Orthodoxy gives all the glory to God. Heterodoxy feels that it would be unjust of God to condemn to hell those who never heard His Gospel, those who "never had a chance." Orthodoxy protests that God alone shall decide what is just and what is unjust and has exercised His prerogative

without needing any advice from His creatures. Orthodoxy gives all the glory to God. Heterodoxy thinks that one can admit the occurrence of minor mistakes here and there in Scripture without denying its important role as the Word of God. Orthodoxy retorts that God alone shall decide what is true and what is false, denying to any mere mortal the right to sit in judgment on the Word of God. Orthodoxy gives all the glory to God. Heterodoxy permits all those who confess Christ as Lord and Savior to worship together, even if there are a few differences amongst them concerning the teachings of Scripture. Orthodoxy answers that God alone, not His creatures, shall decide how He is to be worshipped, sweeping aside man's impudent decision to treat as unimportant things which God clearly teaches in His Word. Orthodoxy gives all the glory to God.

Yet we rarely consider orthodox doctrine a way of praising God. Indeed, sometimes we think of it as a burden; we resent its hard demands, its strict limits. "The heterodox have all the fun," we think. But when we feel this way, we are really resenting the God who has laid down these hard demands and set these strict limits. Our duty as Christians and as pastors, however, is to glorify God, not to glorify ourselves by catering to the meek and mild heterodoxy of the Old Adam in us. And we *can* glorify God by the power of Christ's Gospel. The child who lay in the manger on Christmas Eve lay dead in a tomb some thirty-three years later. But just as no swaddling clothes could hold Him, so no grave-clothes could hold Him, the God-man who became by renouncing the full display of His glory the Savior of all mankind. Risen and ascended to His Father's right hand, He has now assumed the full use of all the divine glory which always was rightfully His. This is the Gospel which we preach. It is a glorious message, one which enables us to give all the glory to God in both life and doctrine. *Soli Deo gloria.*

Judicius

"WITH COMMON CONSENT"

In the recent controversies in The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod there has been some question of how large a majority is necessary for a church convention, council, or other kind of convocation to decide a doctrinal issue. What size should the majority be? Is one vote, two-thirds, three quarters, or ninety-nine per cent of those present sufficient to establish a doctrine? Or, as some have suggested, must there be total agreement, one hundred per cent, among all the participants?

Before we go into the specific question of what kind of majority is needed, several points must first be made. There is no guarantee from our Lord that His church will be free from false doctrine. Quite to the contrary, he predicts that false doctrine will be taught in His church and that His faithful followers should be alert to it, avoid it, and remove it. The lives of His apostles were living evidences that His prediction had already come true then. Their epistles, now part of our New Testament, are warnings concerning false doctrine and the correct solutions to the problems. Controversy is not the invention of the church today. Jesus Himself was the center of controversy, especially concerning His person. The majority of those who heard Him did not accept that He was God and those who accepted Him as Messiah, the Christ of God, almost always

had a false concept of what this meant. Just as the majority was not right then, there is no assurance that the majority must in every instance be right today, even at church conventions. Similarly there is no indication that the minority has a firmer grip on the truth in any controversy than the majority. Majority and minority in themselves are not guarantees of the possession of the truth.

Christian churches since the time of the apostles have convened church councils in order to resolve difficulties confronting them. Most of these difficulties were internal problems which pitted one member or group within the church against another. Matters were frequently complicated by the existence of more than two sides or positions. At the time of the Protestant Reformation in the sixteenth century there were at least four recognizable sides—the Roman Catholics, the Lutherans, the Reformed, and the Anabaptists. If one looked harder, he could find even more. During this time the Lutherans, at one time or another, had contact with Catholics, Reformed, Anabaptists, Anglicans, and even the Greek Orthodox, whose churches were nowhere near the places where the Lutherans were working. Dr. Martin Luther, in the *Smalcald Articles*, one of our official Lutheran Confessions, said that he looked forward to a truly free conference to iron out difficulties with Rome. He freely admitted, however, that he had little hope for its success. This did not prevent him from offering his confession. In 1536 an agreement was signed which temporarily ironed out some of the difficulties between Lutherans and some Protestants who wanted to be Lutheran but were leaning heavily in the direction of the Reformed position. This agreement was short-lived.

With these facts of ecclesiastical history in mind, we must face the question of how large a majority is needed for a group of congregations or larger churches to state their doctrinal position in a controverted issue. Our *Augsburg Confession*, the first officially recognized confession of our church, says in the first sentence of the first article, "Our Churches, with common consent, do teach . . ." This phraseology occurs throughout the rest of the confession. Luther says in his *Smalcald Articles* that they were "unanimously confessed." Some have used these and similar phrases to suggest that, unless there is a unanimous decision by those participating in a church council, convention, or other form of convocation, there can be no confession, creed, or other kind of doctrinal statement.

First of all, we should be hard pressed to find a church convocation in which differing opinions were represented that ever came to a unanimous decision. The Council of Nicea, where the widely recognized Nicene Creed was chiefly formulated, did not come to unanimous agreement. Certainly Arius and his followers, who denied the eternal deity of the Son, could not consent to the decision. The Augsburg Confession was accepted only by the Lutheran participants at the Diet of Augsburg and certainly not by the Roman Catholics. Even Luther's *Smalcald Articles* were not accepted at Smalcald. What we learn from these and other cases is that, where Christians in a majority or minority felt that their position was in accord with the Holy Scripture, they confessed this position as a creed. The question of who was in the majority and who was in the minority did not prevent them from stating their faith in a confession. If we believe that what we hold is true, then we must confess it without looking around

us to see how many others agree with us. Remember that at His trial Jesus stood alone in His confession that He was the Christ, the Son of the living God. If Jesus had consulted with Peter and the other disciples, He would have made no confession at all. Luther followed this example. He did not consult with the pope, the curia, or his bishop before he told the meeting at Worms that he would not and could not recant.

Is not the church, then, in danger of having the will of the majority forced upon the will of the minority? Strictly speaking, the will cannot be moved by coercion of any type. People's outward actions can be controlled through reward and threat of punishment, but not their hearts and wills. Beginning with the time of the Roman Emperor Constantine, the Christian confession was physically forced upon many of the pagan peoples of Europe. Such a practice was used in more subtle ways as late as the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Even as late as the eighteenth century, exile was not unknown. Because of the separation of the church and state in our country, there is no real danger of coercion in that sense. This is a real blessing for which we should continually thank God.

How then should a majority and a minority regard each other when there is a church controversy? Generally it takes a little time for sides to become clearly formulated. From Luther's "Ninety-Five Theses" in 1517 to Augsburg in 1530 there were less than 13 years. The history of the church shows that where there are two irreconcilable positions, two or more churches come into existence. This happened after the Council of Jerusalem (recorded in Acts 15 and Galatians), after the Council of Nicea, and after the Diet of Augsburg. Thus we see that the phrases "with common consent" or "unanimously teach" do not mean that all the churches engaged in the controversy came to common agreement. Most frequently they did not. Also such phraseology does not mean that the opponents in any controversy let the matters hang in limbo until agreement could be reached. Such phrases refer only to those churches or persons who have subscribed to the positions outlined in the confessional documents. Those who cannot go along with the stated positions should indicate clearly where there are such errors in those documents as prevent their subscription. Where they were not successful in showing such errors, many felt a moral and confessional obligation to establish a new church organization, as the Lutherans did. This is not a suggestion that a new church should be established in the current controversy, though in the opinion of those on both sides of the controverted issues, a new church has been established. Some have said that Evangelical Lutherans in Mission (ELIM) is, in fact, a new church, while others have said that The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod is a different, and hence new, church than the one they knew ten or twenty years ago.

The point being here made is that a majority or a minority in a church has a right, a God-given and God-required right, to make a confession as to what they consider the truth of the Gospel. The issue of how large is the majority or small is the minority does not really enter into consideration.

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