

THE CHURCH RELATIONS DEBATE
AT THE WISCONSIN EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN SYNOD'S 36th CONVENTION ([96])
IN MILWAUKEE JOURNAL AND MILWAUKEE SENTINEL COVERAGE

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The following consists of an evaluation of the Milwaukee Journal and Milwaukee Sentinel accounts of events as they transpired at the 36th Convention of the Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod (WELS) in August of 1961.

A proper introduction to that evaluation requires some discussion of the sources from which the material was drawn for this compendium. The newspaper accounts were transcribed from microfilms at the Milwaukee Public Library.

The larger question for the reader is not where the material was drawn from but why. Why should newspaper accounts of events in a critical point in WELS church history have been examined for insights into those events? Although a fuller development of the answer to this question is reflected in the content of Section II below, a sufficient answer to the question as the study begins is that there is a relative dearth of official information on the day by day progress at the WELS 1961 Convention. The synod secretary has no record of minutes from the 36th Convention. Neither were those minutes published in the Synod Proceedings subsequent to Convention closing. The WELS archives may be fairly said to be a shambles by one so foolish as to take an unguided tour, and from any outward indication cannot readily produce those minutes. The only official convention record readily available is the collection of news releases held by Rev. James Schaefer, WELS PR man since the 1961 Convention. These are limited in scope and coverage and

can provide only a partial picture of what occurred each day and can perhaps most usefully ^{serve} for a pattern against which the more detailed news accounts might be judged.

It is to that business itself which the thesis of this paper is directed. Although the greater value of this work is in the collection of the newspaper accounts themselves (and of certain other secondary sources), a thesis has been called for and most simply stated it is that these news accounts are accurate and therefore valuable.

With such introduction we may address the thesis in Part I, develop its ramifications in Part II, and finally discuss the use of the materials presented here, in Part III.

I. Thesis

The Milwaukee Journal and the Milwaukee Sentinel coverage of the church relations debate in the 36th Convention of the WELS allows the reader to conclude that those papers individually presented accurate accounts of the essential debate and final severance of relations between WELS and the Lutheran Church--Missouri Synod (LC-MS) and that they together present an account of those events as detailed as any extant account and an account more complete in many ways than any other available because of its day by day reporting. It is helpful to consider the coverage from three points of view: pre-convention news, the course of events in the convention itself, and analysis of final developments. The accounts in their entirety are reproduced in Appendices B and C.

Both the Milwaukee Sentinel (MS) and the Milwaukee Journal (MJ) ran articles about the coming WELS Convention in their Saturday religious news on August 5, 1961. Individually these accounts are accurate

in essential detail. The Sentinel in a shorter article outlines the major convention business,

With the accent on a proposed missionary corps, higher education, and the ever present question of relations with the LC-MS, the WELS will hold its National Convention here Tuesday to August 17. (MS 8/5)

This lead is developed by paragraphs on each of these foci. These correspond to similar development in the first convention related news release from the WELS convention press team. It reads,

Delegates will be asked to speed up work in foreign mission fields by approving the establishment of a "Christian Missioners' Corp." The Missioner'Corp, as recommended by the Board for World Missions, is a mobile group of specially trained pastors who could be shifted from one foreign field to another as the need arises. The delegates will also act on recommendations calling for a ten million dollar expansion of the educational facilities of the synod during the next ten years. A major item on the agenda will be the relationship of the Wisconsin Synod to the LC-MS. The Commission of Doctrinal Matters of the Wisconsin Synod has declared that "in our efforts to resolve our differences (with the LC-MS) with respect to the Scriptural principles of church fellowship an impasse has been reached." (Release 61-8-cl)

The Journal's report as well reflects the pre-convention news release of the WELS, stating,

The Wisconsin Synod's commission on doctrinal matters has declared an impasse in efforts to resolve differences between the church bodies on the Scriptural principles governing fellowship. (MJ 8/5)

The Journal also adds background beyond the material provided by the release,

The Wisconsin Synod which has accused the Missouri Synod of false doctrine regards virtually every church activity as an expression of faith which requires prior agreement on doctrine. The Missouri Synod takes a more liberal view. (MJ 8/5)

But more than in just background information the Journal contrasts the Sentinel pre-convention coverage, for the focus is less on the con-

vention menu as a whole (Sentinel) than it is on the single tough entree of the doctrinal dispute itself. It is the future of the Synodical Conference which is discussed. In fact, the Mt. Olive, Lamar, Col., resolution to sever relations is mentioned. (MJ 8/5)

The combination of these news items presents a more complete picture than either alone provides. One can see a number of convention issues up for consideration, the chief and overriding concern, though, to be placed on the doctrinal dispute with Missouri.

The composite leaves the question why the Sentinel should have been so low-keyed in presenting what was so obviously in the minds of Wisconsin Synod leaders (judging from Journal coverage) the great issue of the day, i.e. relations with Missouri.

The answer is shaped by the personalities involved in the work of transmitting the news to print. The obvious WELS contact man for either paper was Rev. James Schaefer, who had served as field reporter for the Journal while attending the 1959 WELS convention in New Ulm and who was designated both a member of the 1961 convention's press liaison team and by that convention public relations officer for the Synod. In the days before the 1961 convention Rev. Schaefer had opportunities to speak with David Runge, religious editor of the Journal, and convey the tenor of attitudes within the Wisconsin Synod whereas such interviews were not held with James Johnson, religious editor of the Sentinel.¹

Perhaps as well James Johnson himself was reluctant to give very large play to what generally speaking on the religious scene was horrendous news, that in an era of denominational mergers a de-

nominal split was immanent and that over what seemed a minor issue. In a post-convention religious feature he displayed such a bias,

To the post-war Christian world with its surge of togetherness resulting in denominational mergers, a relatively small group of Lutherans here last week voiced a resounding dissent. The 1961 convention of the WELS may become an historical event beyond its significance to the giant LC-MS with whom it broke relations....A moot point involves the doctrine of church fellowship....(MS 8/26)

Similarly, in the Sentinel's pre-convention item, the report that "the Wisconsin--Missouri situation has stood at attruce since the May meeting of the Synodical Conference," can be considered only religious wishful thinking, notwithstanding Synodical Conference reports to the contrary.

(MJ 5/20/61)

It seems that news of an immanent split would have been distasteful to James Johnson. Rev. James Schaefer commented in a recent interview,

Jim Johnson is probably as saintly a man as you will find. To write ill about somebody would make him ill, positively ill. If you look at the great controversies that have swept through Milwaukee, I don't think Jim was very active in reporting them. There were things that were unavoidable, but basically Jim steered clear² of those controversies. He didn't like to talk about them.

In spite of any personal bias, though, it seems from the close adherence of his reporting to the WELS news release and events as they occurred that a newsman's sense called forth accurate, even if sometimes less than complete, coverage of the church relations debate at the WELS 1961 convention.

Journal and Sentinel coverage may be evaluated in terms of the course of events at the WELS 1961 convention itself. It may be demonstrated that the papers accurately reflect what the official news releases offer. It may also be seen that they offer material beyond that which the official releases provide.

Tuesday, August 8--The 36th convention of the WELS opened after a short delay allowing delegates to attend the funeral of Synod treasurer Carl Niedfeldt. (Release 61-8-c3) President Naumann's report to the convention filled most of the first afternoon's agenda. Pastor Schaefer's third convention release outlines the President's report, citing four emphases: truth, mission intensification, finances and relations with Missouri Synod. In a front page Journal by-line article, David Runge adds perspective to the enigmatic discussion of truth in the Release for the day (61-8-c3). Here too the discussion was of relations with Missouri. He said,

President Naumann said that a new statement on the Scriptures prepared by the Missouri Synod's theological faculties constituted an attack on the authority of the Scriptures. "The time has certainly arrived for our synod to speak clearly and in unmistakable terms concerning this development," he said. "When confidence has been destroyed, it can be rebuilt only by the action of those who have destroyed it." (MS 8/8)

Even the discussion of mission activity, if it did not directly reference the church relations debate, certainly still played itself out on the field of implied liberal views of Scripture on the part of Missouri. Runge continued,

The speaker said that all the church's preaching depended upon the certainty of the Bible and its unchallenged authority. "What kind of mission work could we do if we listen to man's wisdom which denies the account of creation recorded in Genesis," Pastor Naumann asked. "How could we convince the heathen that we preach truth and bring lasting peace if we were to tell them that the Genesis stories are fables?" (MJ 8/8)

The picture which the Journal paints is of a synod president whose speech in all likelihood reflected frustration and fear in the Wisconsin Synod leadership regarding developments on more than one front in the Missouri Synod and even a fear of what the ramifications of

those developments might be for the Wisconsin Synod should it remain locked in a death grip, as it were, with that body. Yet there was to be no headlong rush to sever relations either, for President Naumann in his opening remarks chose to interpret Mt. Olive's (Lamar, Col.) resignation from Synod as a withdrawal of its severance memorial. (MJ 8/8) Rather the portrait of these days was one which lacked the finer lines of definition regarding the reason for the considered break as Rev. Schaefer also relates in retrospect,

I am not sure whether we broke on fellowship....If you read President Naumann's presidential address from 1961, he spoke of the terrible problem of Scharleman and the Holy Scriptures. I think people who could not get warm on the fellowship idea could get pretty warm on Scripture. "Now they are denying Scripture. What next?" I say we broke on Scharlemann.

Wednesday, August 9 was a business day at the convention. It saw President Naumann's and Vice-president Habeck's reelections and Rev. E. Hoenecke's report on foreign missions. Professor Blume of Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary read an essay delineating the ills and dangers of liberal Neo-Orthodox approaches to Scripture. (Release 61-8-c4, c5)

However, a report of discussions held Wednesday evening by the Floor Committee on Church Union Matters was not carried in official releases. The Sentinel briefly reported on the intersynodical impasse announced in discussions over joint prayer and church fellowship and relayed Rev. Wendland and Prof. G. Franzmann's request for clarifications of the WELS thesis. (MS 8/10) It might be noted that this August 10 article was the Sentinel's first detailed reporting on the church relations debate. It was followed by another Journal by-line that night in which Runge traced the same developments, quoting arguments on both sides. (MJ 8/10)

Thursday, August 10--The high point in a day of routine convention business was the greeting and address from Dr. Behnken, President of the LC-MS, with its urgent appeal for unity and denial of any doctrinal rift between Wisconsin and Missouri Synods. (Release 61-8-c6)

Dr. Behnken's address drew the personal attention of James Johnson, for his by-line article the next day repeated the story of Dr. Behnken's appeal to prevent a severance of relations. Johnson's article also underscored the contention of Dr. Behnken that the issues, "have arisen out of practice, not of doctrine." (MS 8/11) Johnson's own participation in the coverage at this point is perhaps indicative of his personal approach to religious news. Rev. Schaefer comments, "Jim saw the news more from the point of view of the men involved. It was the people he was interested in."⁴

It is interesting to note the added feature of Dr. Behnken's speech which was picked up by Sentinel and Journal alike. Both papers report Dr. Behnken's answer to the "doctrine of Scripture" gauntlet thrown down by Rev. Naumann in his opening address. Runge wrote,

8 He (Behnken) answered a statement by the Rev. Oscar J. Naumann president of the Wisconsin Synod, who complained in his opening report to the convention Tuesday that a new statement on Scriptures had been prepared by the Missouri Synod's theological faculties.

President Naumann's report said the statement constituted an attack on the authority of the Scriptures. In his reply, Dr. Behnken said this was a study document and still subject to correction. (MJ 8/11)

It seems the argument removed the discussion of the doctrine of Scripture from the essential debate on relations with Missouri, for it does not appear publicly in any newspaper coverage or convention release for the duration of the convention.

Other business conducted on Thursday included greetings and an address from Rev. Julian Anderson, vice-president of the Evangelical Lutheran Synod, Rev. Oscar Siegler's election as second vice-president of WELS, and Rev. Norman Berg's election as secretary of Synod.

Friday, August 11--Conventions business included a vote to establish a public relations committee, adoption of a new constitution for the Synod's nine districts, a report on Bethesda Lutheran Home and reception of new Synod members. (Release 61-8-c8) Delegates also heard an essay by Prof. E. Kowalke praising the classics as instructional prerequisites for ministerial students. (MS 8/12; MJ 8/12)

Saturday, August 12--The WELS official release for this day indicates two matters were the concern and from every indication, routine business of the convention session, i.e. adoption of a pension plan and moves to bolster Synod's scholarship program.

However discussion surrounding the pension proposal was anything but routine. From Journal coverage it is possible to see how much the church relations question was in the air, for even in the discussion of this pension proposal minds were directed to the shock waves that might be felt in this area from an intersynodical split. Runge quotes Dr. Henry Koch, Greenleaf, Wisconsin,

"What if a break in the synod should come about? Are we not binding consciences of individual pastors or teachers who might fear a loss of their pension rights?" (MJ 8/13)

The implication of such statements at the convention was not only that a split was very much a possibility and on the minds of delegates as "the overriding issue of the convention" but also that there were members of the Wisconsin Synod who might sever their own ties with their

church should it break with Missouri. The Journal adds,

The inference was that some would be dissatisfied and might feel conscience bound to withdraw from the Synod. (MJ 8/13)

Monday, August 14--The three releases the WELS issued Monday show a large amount of business was transacted that day. Rev. Wilmer Vallesky of Detroit reported on evangelism workshops conducted throughout Michigan and the convention delegates called for stepped up production of evangelism materials. An obligatory vicar year for Seminary students was also announced. (Release 61-8-c11).

Delegate action included a vote to suspend building plans at Synod schools pending a report under production by the University of Minnesota, and the decision to grant congregations in California "mission district" status. (Release 61-8-c12) Also approved was the Christian Missioners' Corps, requested earlier in the convention by Rev. E. Hoenecke. (Release 61-8-c13)

Of the official business conducted on Monday little was reported in either Milwaukee paper. (The Journal mentions the evangelism program outlined on Monday (MJ 8/14) and the Sentinel the pay raises for Synod staff members (MS 8/15)).

Tuesday, August 15--Significant news in the field of education was reported from Tuesday's convention activities. The convention resolved to upgrade teacher training at DMLC by eliminating its two-year, two-summer, certificate course. For ministerial training, delegates approved a practical seminary, relaxing classical language requirements. Steps were also taken to allow for a land purchase for Milwaukee Lutheran Teachers' College. (Release 61-8-c14)

Events of the day also brought the convention into its critical

phase, when the Floor Committee on Doctrinal Unity gave its report recommending,

"that we now suspend fellowship with the LC-MS on the basis of Romans 16:17,18, with the hope and prayer to God that the LC-MS will hear in this resolution an evangelical summons to 'come to herself' (Luke 15:17) and to return to the side of the sister synod of Wisconsin, from whom she has estranged herself."(Release 61-8-c15)

The official WELS release describes the issue at stake in the area of fellowship, detailing the WELS position and the charges advanced against the Missouri Synod. It reads,

The chief issue between the Wisconsin Synod and the Missouri Synod is the doctrine of fellowship. The issue came to a head in the principles embodied in a recent document on fellowship prepared by the Missouri Synod's two theological faculties. The doctrine of fellowship involves the question of religious fellowship--pulpit, altar, and prayer fellowship--and joint church work with other Lutherans who are not in agreement with the Synodical Conference. The Wisconsin Synod maintains that there can be no religious fellowship or joint church work with other church bodies unless full doctrinal agreement has been reached. It further maintains that the fellowship principles set forth in the document by the Missouri Synod theological faculties constitutes a radical departure from the Scriptural principles on fellowship held and defended jointly for many decades by the Synodical Conference. Specifically, the Wisconsin Synod charges that leaders and official boards of the Missouri Synod have for a number of years engaged in joint devotions, prayer, and church work with leaders and boards of Lutheran bodies not in full doctrinal agreement. Because the Missouri Synod's Doctrinal Unity Committee subscribes to and defends these principles and practices, the Wisconsin Synod's Commission on Doctrinal Matters has declared that the discussions have reached an "impasse." Release 61-8-c15)

It should be noted that Journal and Sentinel alike reproduce these explanations verbatim from the release (cf MJ 8/15--Final edition and MS 8/16)

The Release continues with a synopsis of the Floor Committee's report which stressed the Wisconsin Synod's willingness to open negotiations

again if sufficient reason were to exist, the disclaimer that the personal faith of no individual was being judged by the Committee recommendation, and assurances that support for joint Synodical Conference projects would be continued through a transitional period.

The Journal was able to include in its Final Edition Tuesday front page coverage of the Committee's report. Besides its verbatim transmission of the WELS's official explanation for the recommendation, it reproduces the Committee's analysis of its own work, adding,

In its resolution the committee addressed a "stern admonition" to the Missouri Synod although it said, "it was not passing judgment on the personal faith of Missouri Synod members."

The Sentinel's front page, Johnson by-line the next morning focuses attention on the promise of continued support in joint projects, listing the institutions involved and citing the resolution's assurance that the Wisconsin Synod is,

"ready to continue our support of joint projects carried on by the Synodical Conference and by groups within the Synodical Conference until we can adjust to the new conditions brought about by the suspension." (MS 8/16)

The remainder of the article transmits exactly the official release.

The fact that the WELS issued only one more release for the convention demonstrates how necessary the newspaper accounts are for providing details from the debate over the recommendation of the Floor Committee on Doctrinal Unity, debate which lasted through Wednesday, and Thursday until a delayed convention closing. The final release itself merely records the vote of the convention 124 to 49 to suspend fellowship with the LC-MS, repeating the explanation given in previous releases.

(Release 61-8-c17)

Journal and Sentinel coverage of the church relations debate may be assessed in terms of the final developments as the convention drew to a close. Journal and Sentinel accounts suggest the existence of a more newsworthy fare than the terse official release statements ("debate continues") would of themselves indicate.

The Journal Picture Page account from Wednesday sets the tone for discussions over the severance recommendation forecasting "marathon debate" over the issue. It adds,

After more than two hours the discussion was still in a preliminary stage and convention officials set aside four free periods in their agenda for the debate Wednesday. There are indications that the issue might not be decided until the closing hours of the Synod's 36th convention Thursday. (MJ 8/16)

The debate on Wednesday seems to have focused on the theses of fellowship developed by the Wisconsin and Missouri Synods. The Sentinel's Second Front Page article briefly outlines charges against the WELS theses, that they were "unclear, unscriptural and even 'intimidating.'" (MS 8/17)

The Journal in greater detail presents the rather heated exchange between Rev. John Daniel, president of the Synodical Conference, and President Naumann. Rev. Daniel had charged that the WELS theses were intimidating in discussions held on fellowship. The report continues,

His face white the Rev. Oscar Naumann, president of the Wisconsin Synod, interrupted to say, "Those statements I will not allow. I stand before God that our men worked in an evangelical manner. I resent the word, 'intimidation.'" (MJ 8/17)

After a recess which ended the exchange, debate was resumed and the issue remained the clarity of the WELS position. Dr. Henry Koch referred to the contention of overseas theologians that the WELS theses

were unscriptural. Rev. Ernest Wendland took the floor to label the WELS position unclear. Rev. Norman Berg charged confusion over the theses indicated their inadequacy. (MJ 8/17)

An atmosphere of confusion seems to have continued in the discussions on Thursday as well, as might have been expected in a partisan debate where feelings ran high. Loyalties had to be reexamined. Doctrinal theses had to be evaluated. Missouri practice in recent years was under scrutiny. And in the milieu were heard voices telling sad stories as the Sentinel's Front Page article read on Friday,

The Rev. Erhard Pankow, pastor of Garden Homes Lutheran Church, remarked that he might have to tell his parishoners in a certain institution that worship is forbidden and they can't take communion if served by a Missouri Synod pastor. (MS 8/18)

On the Journal's Front Page that same day the story was of an angry voice,

A lay delegate, Victor Hartung, Deerfield, Wisconsin, accused the Wisconsin Synod of hypocrisy for insisting on purity of doctrine while "we are letting lost souls slip by, lost forever." He asked, "Which is the worse sin, to convey an impression of religious snobbery or to join in communal prayer with others who are more likely better Christians than we are." (MJ 8/18)

Delegates heard Rev. Schaefer declare that there was nothing in the developments of the controversy to date, "that indicated to me that today, 4:30 p.m. August 17, 1961, and no other day, we must break with the Missouri Synod." (MJ 8/18) And when the vote was finally recorded, it was no knock-out blow which was struck for a religious principle understood and accepted by all, but rather a split decision, 124 to 49. Even after the resolution passed there was some confusion regarding its real meaning as the Journal records,

After the vote was taken it was apparent that there was some confusion among the delegates over the definition of suspension. Pastor Franzmann said it was used in the sense of termination but with the hope that it would not have the same final quality. (MJ 8/18)

That whatever confusion or indcision surrounding the vote for suspension would require time and effort for clarification was also obvious from President Naumann's comments after tabling Rev. Schaefer's motion for referendum on the resolution. The Sentinel states,

After the convention let it die, President Naumann said it would be hard for individual congregations to decide the issues without the reports and data that the floor committee possessed. (MS 8/18)

A consideration of the Milwaukee Journal and the Milwaukee Sentinel coverage of the church relations debate at the 36th convention of the WELS from three points of view allows for the conclusion that these papers in their coverage of the essential debate were accurate in their reporting. The pre-convention reports show coincidence with official news releases and particularly in the case of the Journal sufficient additional background to provide good perspective for the developments to follow.

Coverage of the course of the events in the convention itself displays the value of the newspaper accounts. Not only are they accurate when compared to the official releases but they are also necessary supplements of those news releases prepared by the convention press committee. (It should be kept in mind that the secretary's minutes from the 36th convention of the WELS are not extant.)

Finally, coverage of the final developments at the convention show the value of the newspaper accounts as the official releases reveal virtually nothing of the course of events in those final hours.

II. Development

To this point there may seem to be something of a strawman lurking about these lines. The question the reader might ask is why we should be so urgent about demonstrating the accuracy of the Journal and Sentinel accounts of these events. Do we not normally stipulate the accuracy of news accounts when given no cause to question that accuracy? The question presents itself in its final form--what does this accuracy mean as its implications are developed? The answer can be traced in three areas--why the news accounts are accurate, what that accuracy means in a limited historical setting, and what kind of accuracy is involved in these accounts.

It should not normally surprise us that news accounts would be, generally speaking, reliable and accurate. However, in the present study there are two streams which run counter to that designation of "normal" expectation; they are the fact that a religious sphere is the realm of that expectation and secondly that it is the Wisconsin Synod religious sphere under consideration..

Can news reporting in religious events be expected to be accurate? (Having completed sufficient pages of factual analysis, more speculative material is perhaps allowable.) Is it not possible that a bias often or at least easily develops, expecting that this seldom is the case? Christians are forewarned of persecution and perhaps occasionally face animosity or scorn when forced beyond their own protective walls. A careless misquote or a misrepresentation caused by truth poorly translated from ingroup terminology can or will be seen as Satan's attacks

at the hands of his newsprint henchmen. Whoever is not for, whatever the sphere, is against.

The present strawman of newspaper inaccuracy in religious detail would still exist if it were not for historical similarities of WELS relations with newsmen, and the caricature above. For many years this church chose to regard its affairs strictly as private matters. It wasn't uncommon for past President Brenner to refuse information outright to reporters as comments Rev. Schaefer,

John Brenner took the position that the church's business was private affairs. And while the church operated in the public it had no contact there. For example, Bechtold (David Runge's predecessor) would call up in the 50's. We were having trouble with the Boy Scouts question at the time. Bechtold would call Brenner and say, "What exactly is your position on the Boy Scouts?" John Brenner would say, "This is a private affair." and bang, hang up the phone... This was kind of a current for us and Naumann caught it. We were very much afraid of the press, that we would be misquoted or that the press might not understand what was going on.

Against the backdrop of that tradition, WELS relations with newsmen were at a watershed in the early 60's. It was being discovered that newsmen could be accurate in religious matters. They could be friendly, they could be cooperative.⁶ However it wasn't a change to be made overnight. Even now Prof. I. Habeck recalls from the same era an indication of the dangerous press,

Runge!... We had some run ins with him. Once we turned him out of a cloakroom. He was trying to listen in on an executive session meeting.

Perhaps we are not there yet.

The last word in such a discussion, then, is why. Why are the news accounts generally speaking accurate. The reason perhaps is that the newsman's style particularly in pre-advocacy days was one less

given to inaccuracies than the churchmen's. Granting the highly speculative nature of such a statement, the thought still bears consideration. For the newsman's responsibility was to present the facts, to record the events, the churchmen's to present ideas and be alert for ideological innuendo. It was the newsman's business and success to present the facts and events correctly. It is true that there can be no absolute division between the disciplines of events and ideas, of deeds and analysis, yet there no doubt was an emphasis, a technique and style, a limitation of scope, which for the newsman tended toward accuracy. (These articles also demonstrate how newsmen are often happy to present the ideas of churchmen verbatim from official releases if of sufficient quality.)

What can such accuracy mean in a limited historical setting? The real question is what can such accuracy mean for me in my generation. I had the privilege in 1961 of living in six year old contented ignorance of world events transpiring in that year. Accountability was no doubt fast in coming and soon I was at the age when I could say "Wisconsin Synod" with the proper thoughtful furrow to my brow. Yet years would pass before I would learn what it meant. "What is the difference?" was a question always poorly answered. Were those who live through the days when our church was marked out once more as a distinctive body in Lutherandom too tired to tell? Were they ignorant of their story? Why was the story always too complicated to be addressed?

Perhaps it was that the story was too thematic. Churchmentell their stories with ideas. Doctrines marked us out as a body in 1961. But did not events, as well? And is not the story of the events a simpler one to tell? Does it not eventually too in due time give a structure for the ideas?

An accurate account of the events provided by newsmen of the church relations debate as our synod severed relations with Missouri is a structure which my generation needs. We can't remember the headlines from 1961. But we can read them today.

Finally, what kind of accuracy do the news accounts present? If they are fact- or event-oriented in distinction from concept-oriented accounts, they will have a certain degree of detachment. They are a viewpoint apart from that of my own traditions. The news accounts also provide the basis for speculative insight into the WELS public image at certain points in its history. In fact to the WELS member living in Milwaukee the accounts from the Journal and Sentinel would have been the first word he received about his church's history being made a few short blocks or miles away. Did the front page exposure of this phase of WELS history shape the public's view of this body? The newspaper accuracy was the kind which places these events into a historical setting. These were two weeks which saw the first Russian orbit the earth, the construction of the Berlin Wall, and another momentous State Fair take headlines. The newspaper accounts offer once again that kind of step-by-step presentation of events otherwise lost in the ideas and concepts and issues. If accurate they can be a proper basis for kindling respect for or criticism of the WELS handling of a critical situation. This is the kind of accuracy which frees the student of history from the fear of having a one-sided approach and the suspicion of subjectivity by any historical criterion.

III. Use

A concluding word is in order to explain the material in the appendices of this paper. The appendices have been added because I believe they are the more valuable part of the work represented by this paper. Largely the articles in Appendices B and C were transcribed from microfilms of the Journal and Sentinel at the Milwaukee Public Library.

I have avoided lengthy or frequent quotation from any of the articles in the body of the paper for four reasons: First, my thesis was simply a demonstration of the essential accuracy of the news accounts as they compare with the official releases (Appendix D). (Incidentally I had hoped with the comparison to present as full an account as possible of material which could have been supplied by the minutes of the convention.) Second, I expect to find the material gathered here much more useful for future reference if left in more easily identifiable form as appendices. Third, the value of available extant news accounts far exceeds a particular evaluation regarding their accuracy which any student of history would wish to make for himself anyway. Fourth, presentation as distinct appendices allows the reader more readily to evaluate the style and technique of the respective religious departments and their editors.

Appendix A is a collection of articles from 1950-1960 from the Sentinel and Journal with references to the Wisconsin-Missouri church relations problems. This collection is not comprehensive. It does represent the complete collection of clippings from the Milwaukee Public

Library Humanities Desk clip files of Sentinel and Journal material pertinent to this limited area.

Appendix B is Sentinel coverage of the 1961 WELS convention.

Appendix C is Journal coverage of the 1961 WELS convention.

Appendix D. is a collection of the WELS news releases from its 1961 convention.

Appendix E. is the WELS Committee on Doctrinal Unity report to the 1961 convention.

Appendix F is the Missouri Synod convention report of events which took place at Wisconsin's 1961 convention.

ENDNOTES

1. Interview with Rev. James Schaefer.
2. Ibid.
3. Ibid.
4. Ibid.
5. Ibid.
6. Ibid.
7. Interview with Professor Irwin Habeck.

APPENDIX A

Milwaukee Sentinel and Milwaukee Journal Articles Regarding Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod and Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod Relations from 1950 - 1960 (selected articles)

Submit Agreement to American Group

The ~~Lutheran~~ ^{Missouri} synod approved a "common confession" of faith, a doctrinal agreement to be submitted to the American Lutheran church, at the closing session of its convention Friday afternoon at Concordia college. The resolution was passed by an overwhelming majority.

A member of the synod's committee on doctrinal unity described the step as "the first rung in the ladder bridging the gap" between the two church bodies. Other delegates said it was "historic." The groups split in 1881 in a controversy over predestination.

The synod has a membership of 1,756,000 and the American Lutheran church lists 689,227 on its rolls. If the two groups unite, they will have a total membership of more than 2,400,000 members, the largest single Lutheran church body in the United States. The United Lutheran church, with 1,919,822 members, at present is the largest.

Uniformity to Be Sought

Another resolution at the convention instructed Dr. John W. Behnken, Oak Park, Ill., president of the synod, together with the four vice-presidents and presidents of the 34 synodical districts to confer with President Emmanuel Poppen of the American Lutheran church, his vice-presidents and district presidents. These men would attempt to see how uniformity in church practice could be brought about.

The convention stated its conviction that the Missouri synod should "seek a God-pleasing unity with all Lutherans" and that it found "nothing that contradicts the Scriptures" in the "common confession."

It declared that if the American Lutheran church accepts the agreement in its national convention in October in Columbus, Ohio, the "common confession" will be recognized as "the statement of agreement" on "certain doctrines" between us and the American Lutheran church.

Subjects in Agreement

The "common confession" itself enumerated these subjects in which the committees from the two groups expressed agreement: God, man, redemption, election, means of grace, justification, conversion, sanctification, the church, the ministry, the Lutheran confessions and the last things (such as the last judgment).

The synod convention allowed the possibility that additional statements "originating" in the same manner as the present confession may be submitted to both church bodies for adoption.

A member of the committee on doctrinal unity assured the convention, however, that all doctrines previously at issue between the two churches were treated in the document adopted. Other speakers pointed out that doctrinal discussions are continually in progress within the Missouri synod and that such discussions, no doubt, would continue with the American Lutheran church on a formal and informal basis.

Goes to Other Synods

A third resolution provided that the synod submit the newly accepted document to fellow members of the Lutheran Synodical conference "in order to secure the consent" of these three synods (Wisconsin synod, Slovak synod and Norwegian synod) to the course of action adopted by the Missouri synod.

The convention asked Dr. Behnken to inform the president of the American Lutheran church of its action and to request him, if the American Lutheran church acts favorably on the document, to place the agreement before its sister synods for approval and agreement.

A fourth resolution called attention to the fact that mere acceptance of the agreement did not establish church fellowship with the American Lutheran church. It authorized the president of the Missouri synod "when by the grace of God everything necessary for fellowship has been accomplished" to announce that fact officially.

Until then, the resolution stated, "no action is to be taken by any member of the synod which would overlook the fact that we are not as yet united."

Lutheran Split Widens

A new church group which has quit the Missouri synod of the Lutheran church because it is "too liberal" may link up with the Wisconsin synod, a conservative Lutheran group whose stronghold is Milwaukee. Such a move would widen further the breach between Wisconsin and Missouri synod Lutherans.

The Rev. John Brenner, pastor of St. John's Evangelical Lutheran church here and president of the Wisconsin synod, refused to comment Monday on reports that the new Orthodox Lutheran conference was seeking to affiliate with the Wisconsin synod.

"The matter is undeveloped and confidential until the organizations themselves have had an opportunity to act," Mr. Brenner said.

The Orthodox Lutheran conference was formed last September at Okabena, Minn., by a group of Missouri synod pastors. The new conference met again last week at Crete, Ill., and fired a new blast, charging the Missouri synod with "a high handed, Bible defying spirit of church dictatorship."

10 Ministers Seceded

H. A. Strumpler, St. Louis, Mo., a spokesman for the new group, said three congregations and 10 ministers had joined thus far. Seven more congregations are preparing to secede from the Missouri synod, he said. The orthodox conference has no followers among Missouri synod churches in Milwaukee. Missouri and Wisconsin synod churches are both very strong here.

The new conference issued a statement charging that Missouri synod officials were using improper tactics to keep other congregations within the fold. It said the synod was "invading congregations, taking over their internal government and even threatening to deprive them of their property." The conference promised to "take an open stand against anything that smacks of hierarchial government."

"Confession" an Issue

The Missouri synod alienated this group last year by adopting the "common confession," a general statement of doctrine drawn up to promote agreement among several branches of the Lutheran church. The confession statement was to pave the way for unity with the American Lutheran church. It was repudiated by the Wisconsin synod, however, which is associated with the Missouri synod in a group called the Synodical conference. The future of this conference association is now considered doubtful.

The breach between the Wisconsin and Missouri synods was widened here on Oct. 24 when a group of Wisconsin synod churches refused to join with Missouri synod churches in building a new Milwaukee Lutheran high school. Acceptance of Boy Scout activities by Missouri synod churches was the basis of much disagreement.

Would Be "No Surprise"

A Missouri synod spokesman said Monday that the rumored linkup between the new Orthodox conference and the Wisconsin synod "would come as no surprise." He said Missouri synod leaders knew when the common confession was adopted that it would drive out a few more conservative members, and that the Wisconsin synod was a natural place for them to go.

"The fellows who organized that group were always more Wisconsin synod in their thinking," he said.

Synod Dispute Erupts Anew Confusion Charged

The smoldering dispute between the Missouri and Wisconsin Lutheran synods had a fresh eruption Thursday with a Missouri synod blast at its sister church for causing a "state of confusion" in intersynodical affairs.

The Badger Lutheran, a Milwaukee publication of the Lutheran church-Missouri synod, charged that students in the Wisconsin synod's theological seminary at Thiensville had been denied permission to assist at the altar in Missouri synod congregations.

The two synods are partners in the Lutheran synodical conference and have had altar and pulpit fellowship for many years. The Wisconsin synod has charged the Missouri synod with un-Scriptural conduct and has threatened to pull out of the conference.

Project Hits Snag

The group's general synodical committee met in Milwaukee Thursday to draft a confessional statement giving the synod's position, but the project ran into a snag and was tabled until October, 1956.

The Rev. Irwin J. Habeck, Milwaukee, vice-president of the synod, said action was postponed because "everybody is tense now" and "the feeling would not be objective."

The meeting, which a reporter for The Milwaukee Journal was asked to leave, produced a denial that any order had been issued to seminary students as charged in the Badger Lutheran.

The Rev. Oscar Naumann, St. Paul, president of the Wisconsin synod, said that seminary students had been reminded of the "critical condition" in the synodical conference and advised that their continued service in Missouri synod congregations would only cause further confusion among church members. Students were free to make their own decisions, he said.

Other Charges Made

Other charges in the Badger Lutheran were that seminary students had been asked not to join the Milwaukee Lutheran's cappella chorus, and that the Rev. Paul W. Knickelbein, pastor of the St. Phillips interracial mission here, had refused to appear in Missouri synod congregations although the mission was a joint synodical program and about 85% of Pastor Knickelbein's salary came from the Missouri synod.

Pastor Knickelbein said Friday that the report was correct "as far as it goes." He declined to give any reason, saying that it "might be misunderstood."

Points in the synod's dispute include the Boy Scouts, service by Missouri synod pastors in the military, chaplains and co-operation on external affairs between the Missouri synod and other Lutheran bodies outside the synodical conference.

Wisconsin synod objections to the Boy Scouts are based on alleged religious tendencies in that organization. The Wisconsin synod also objects to preliminary union negotiations which have taken place between the Missouri synod and the American Lutheran church.

Pay Boost Advanced

A new salary schedule raising pay an average of \$35 a month for pastors and teachers in Wisconsin synod mission congregations was approved by the synodical committee.

The new schedule provides a base pay ranging from \$200 a month for beginning women teachers to \$325 a month in the first year for heads of institutions.

The committee authorized

President Naumann to all independent congregations in the synod, many of which reportedly had lower salary schedules than those of mission churches.

The meeting, held at the Northwestern Publishing house, 3624 W. North av., was attended by about 100 heads of boards, departments and institutions of the synod from 15 states.

Meeting of Pastors Reveals Differences Between Synods

APR 12 1956

Speakers at a pastoral conference Wednesday hurled back a charge that the Lutheran church-Missouri synod, by discussing doctrine and otherwise co-operating with other Lutheran church bodies, was causing a break with its synodical conference partner, the Wisconsin synod.

The Wisconsin synod has condemned the Missouri synod's stand as "unionistic" (seeming to indicate unity where no unity in fact existed). It accused the Missouri synod of breaking fellowship and said that unless the Missouri synod changed its stand, the Wisconsin synod would withdraw from its historical partnership in the synodical conference.

Panel Session Held

Points in the dispute were discussed by a panel at a meeting of the Missouri synod's south Wisconsin district pastoral conference at the Lutheran center, 1113 W. State st.

Prof. Elmer Moeller of Concordia college said that if the Wisconsin synod carried out its threat, that group and not the Missouri synod would be responsible for the break.

Prof. Moeller and the other speakers defended the common

confession, a doctrinal statement adopted by the Missouri synod and the American Lutheran church (ALC), and which the Wisconsin synod has asked the Missouri synod to reject.

The Wisconsin synod's request is "unreasonable, unfair and unscriptural," said Dr. Henry A. Grueber, pastor emeritus of Trinity Lutheran church. "It is beyond the mark for them to insist that I withdraw from something that I think is correct."

Views on Other Matters

Also defended were scouting, military chaplains, and joint prayer for certain purposes, including requests for divine guidance at unity negotiations with other Lutherans. The Wisconsin synod has insisted that pastors of different groups cannot pray together, even under such circumstances.

"The Wisconsin synod objects to the distinction we have made between prayer fellowship and joint prayer," said the Rev. Herbert Berner of Mount Olive Lutheran church.

He said that joint prayer under such circumstances did not presuppose unity but rather was an expression of hope for achieving unity.

Synod Sets Crucial Session

MAY 12 1956

A final decision on whether to break ties with the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod will be reached at a recessed convention of Wisconsin Synod Lutherans at Watertown Aug. 21 to 23, it was announced Friday.

The Wisconsin Synod has been marking time since it passed its resolution at Saginaw Aug. 17, 1955, threatening to break with Missouri over its long-standing doctrinal disagreements. At that time, most delegates thought it better not to sever relations until Missouri had discussed Wisconsin's attitude in its national convention.

The Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod will discuss the doctrinal issues at its national convention at the Municipal Auditorium, St. Paul, in June.

Members of the two Lutheran groups, which have shared church fellowship in the Synodical Conference, have long been at odds over such issues as Missouri's merger negotiations with bodies claimed to be unscriptural, toleration of Scouting, acceptness of the Common Confession, etc. Wisconsin Synod Lutherans believe the Bible forbids joint worship by church bodies who are not in complete doctrinal agreement.

The Missouri Synod denies its actions have not been in accord with the Scriptures, and have continually asked the Wisconsin Synod to re-examine its position.

The convention in August will be held at Northwestern College, where the complete break was nearly proclaimed in 1953. The college will also dedicate its new refectory, dormitory, recitation building and chapel.

Debate between the representatives of the two synods has been dormant since the Saginaw convention. The tradi-

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Synod Votes Approval of Common Confession

Missouri Group Move Considered Bid to Mollify Wisconsin Church Body

By DAVID A. RUNGE
Of The Journal Staff

St. Paul, Minn.—Delegates to the convention of the Lutheran church-Missouri synod unanimously approved Monday the common confession, a statement of doctrinal agreement with the American Lutheran church (ALC). JUN 26 1956

The resolution was obviously aimed at mollifying the Wisconsin synod and preventing the disruption of the Lutheran synodical conference, of which the Missouri and Wisconsin synods are members.

It referred to the proposed merger of the Evangelical Lutheran church (ELC), the ALC and the United Evangelical Lutheran church (UELC) in a new denomination scheduled to come into existence Jan. 1, 1960. Under the merger the ALC will no longer be an independent body, and presumably could not continue negotiations with the Missouri synod.

Ask Doctrine Parleys

In another resolution the delegates suggested that conferences with other members of the synodical conference and with European theologians be held with the goal of drafting a new statement of doctrine which would be acceptable to synodical conference members.

After the action, which followed less than half an hour's debate, the entire convention rose to its feet and the 1,000 delegates together sang "Praise God From Whom All Blessings Flow."

The Rev. Oscar J. Naumann, St. Paul, president of the Wisconsin synod, who was in the gallery during the voting, said afterward he believed that "in general, we're rather well pleased with the action, especially with the spirit in which it was done."

Some Want Repudiation

He indicated that members of the Wisconsin synod might cancel their threat to pull out of the synodical conference at their

adjourned convention Aug. 21 to 23 in Watertown, Wis.

The carefully worded resolutions were presented by the committee on doctrinal and inter-synodical matters, which had received more than 20 resolutions on the question, some of which demanded that the Missouri synod admit its "error" and repudiate the common confession.

The committee offered a resolution instead which said that the common confession should be "recognized as a statement in harmony with the sacred Scriptures and the Lutheran confessions."

Pledge Invitations

During the debate, one delegate requested a "full and frank admission" that the common confession had failed in its original purpose by not settling doctrinal differences between the ALC and the Missouri synod.

A motion to that effect was overwhelmingly defeated.

In its second resolution the Missouri synod pledged in the future "not to enter discussions or negotiations with other Lutheran synods" without first informing other members of the synodical conference and inviting them to participate.

The Rev. William H. Kohn, Hyattsville, Md., president of the southeastern district, and formerly of Merrill, Wis., said that it should be made clear that the Missouri synod was not waiving its right to negotiate with other synods.

Prof. Martin H. Franzmann of Concordia theological seminary, St. Louis, and formerly of Watertown, Wis., praised the resolutions for introducing a "spirit of repentance and charity" between the synods.

Brings ELC Greetings

Earlier Monday, Dr. Fredrik A. Schioltz, president of the Evangelical Lutheran church, voiced

Lutheran Synods' Breach Unhealed

AUG 22 1956

By JAMES M. JOHNSTON
Sentinel Staff Writer

WATERTOWN, Aug. 21—(Special) — The Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod was praised Tuesday for its change of heart toward the Wisconsin Synod Lutherans, but indications were that some Wisconsin Synod leaders will still insist on a break in relations between the two synods, as the Wisconsin Synod opened its recessed convention.

"The Lord, through His holy spirit, has brought about a change in the Missouri Synod," declared the Rev. Oscar J. Naumann of St. Paul, Wisconsin Synod president.

A change in doctrinal interpretation by the Missouri Synod is what the Wisconsin Synod is waiting for, he said, adding that the Wisconsin Synod's 17-member Church Union Committee now favors continued affiliation with the Missouri Synod.

It had threatened to break relations, complaining that Missouri had been out of step in its support of the Common Confession, follows his negotiations with other Lutheran bodies and toleration of Scouting.

President Naumann said the change of heart took place at Missouri's national convention in June at St. Paul. Then, Missouri declined an invitation to

join the Lutheran World Federation and shelve the Common Confession.

(The Lutheran World Federation and the Common Confession are opposed by the Wisconsin Synod.)

Indications that the committee's recommendation will meet opposition appeared, however, after President Naumann reported that seven out of nine districts favored continued affiliation with the Missouri Synod.

The presidents of the two dissenting districts, the Rev. Paul Albrecht of Bowdle, S. D., of the Dakota-Montana District, and the Rev. M. J. Witt of Spokane, Wash., of the Northwest District, voiced non-concurrence with the union committee's report.

"I am certainly going to consider your evaluation, but I reserve the right to disagree and oppose the report," said the Rev. Mr. Albrecht.

President Naumann also read pleas from Evangelical Lutheran Church of Australia and the Evangelical Lutheran Free Churches of Germany that a conclave of world Lutheran theologians be held before any suspension of relations is effected by either Missouri or Wisconsin Synods.

The gravity of the split as it would affect laymen was pointed out in an essay by President J. E. Kowalko of Northwestern College, Watertown.

"A break between Missouri and Wisconsin would effect inter-marriage, families, business contacts and even business partnerships," he said.

Lutheran Council Says It Regrets Bid Refusal

MJ FEB 4 '66

Convening Body Asks That Missouri Synod Reconsider So Unity Talks Can Be Held

The National Lutheran council Tuesday responded with "surprise and regret" to the refusal of the Lutheran church, Missouri synod to discuss unity proposals.

At the same time, the council expressed hope that the Missouri synod would reconsider, "so that conversations looking toward a solution of the present fragmentation of this witness may not be unduly delayed."

There are 16 separate Lutheran bodies in the United States. The council represents eight denominations with a combined membership of more than five million persons. The Missouri synod, with 2,228,000 members, is the largest Lutheran body outside the council.

Holding 41st Convention

In a letter to Dr. John W. Behnken, St. Louis, president of the Missouri synod, the council said that all Lutheran bodies were no less concerned than the Missouri synod over the question of doctrinal soundness.

The council is holding its 41st annual convention at the Astor hotel.

Dr. Paul C. Empie, New York, executive director of the council, said in the letter: "However, we have the conviction that progress toward further Lutheran co-operation on such a basis can be best made through conversation."

He added: "We deem this time during which several Lutheran bodies are remodeling their organizational life as holding particular opportunity for a clarification of position on this subject, which could be of immense mutual benefit to all concerned."

Action Came Earlier

The Missouri synod earlier in the day had "respectfully declined" an invitation from the council for exploratory talks leading to possible affiliation.

Dr. Empie, in reporting this development to the council, said that the Missouri synod had taken up the question with its fellow members of the synodical conference, the Wisconsin, Slovak and Norwegian synods. He defended this action as precisely what any constituent member of the National Lutheran



—Journal Staff

The National Lutheran council Tuesday elected Dr. Norman A. Menter, 60, of Berkeley, Mich., its new president. He succeeded the Rev. F. Epling Reinartz of New York city. The council is meeting at the Astor hotel.

council would have done under similar circumstances.

He said that no information had been received from the other three synods. Presumably their attitude would be the same as the Missouri's synod, he added.

Dr. Empie's letter said that under these circumstances, "the church bodies participating in

the council have no choice but to proceed by themselves to study and lay plans for the pattern of Lutheran co-operation in the years ahead."

Two speakers Tuesday night praised the role played by the council in producing such co-operation as has been achieved between Lutherans in this country.

Dr. Alvin N. Rogness, president of the Luther Theological seminary, St. Paul, Minn., said that without the council, the Lutheran church would have been crippled by the many critical tasks which it faced.

Speak at Dinner

Dr. Carl E. Lund-Quist, Geneva, Switzerland, executive secretary of the Lutheran World Federation, said that one by-product of the council was Lutheran participation in the world-wide ecumenical movement.

They spoke at the anniversary dinner of the council attended by about 400 persons in the Memorial Center. The Milwaukee National Lutheran Council Ministerium sponsored the event.

Dr. Rogness said that gigantic hostile forces were afoot in modern society, seeking to destroy the church. In the face of these, he said, churches must re-examine themselves and ex-

amine one another "for the unity that may be hidden by disagreements or misunderstandings which may not in themselves be divisive of true Christian fellowship, or, if they are, may by conversations and understandings be removed."

Earlier, the council elected Atty. Harold Le Vander, South St. Paul, Minn., as its new secretary. He is the first layman ever elected to the post. Fred C. Eggerstedt, New York, a retired banker, was re-elected treasurer.

Continue Discussions, Lutheran Synod Urged

Committee Calls On Wisconsin Group to Carry Its Doctrinal Talks to Conclusion

By DAVID A. RINGE
Of The Journal Staff

Saginaw, Mich.—The Lutheran Wisconsin synod was urged here Monday night to continue discussions of doctrinal differences with the Lutheran church (Missouri synod) in an effort to avoid an open break between the church bodies.

A report to the Wisconsin synod's 35th biennial convention from the floor committee on church union said recent discussions had shown a "receptive attitude" on the part of the Missouri synod and should be continued and accelerated.

Three Members Dissent

The Wisconsin synod's representatives were urged to continue their efforts "until agreement on doctrine and practice has been reached, or until an impasse is reached and no agreement can be brought about."

Eighteen members of the committee on union joined in the recommendation. Three members dissented.

The synods have more than 100 congregations in the Milwaukee area. Both are members of the Lutheran Synodical conference. A break between them would threaten many joint welfare and educational projects.

False Doctrine Charged

Troubles between the synods involve the Wisconsin synod's charges of false doctrine to its sister synod.

Specifically, the Wisconsin synod objects to the Missouri synod's tolerance of acouthis and its approval of military chaplains. The Wisconsin synod also has criticized the Mis-

souri synod for praying with other Lutherans at unity conferences.

In recommending continued negotiations, the floor committee disregarded numerous requests from pastors and lay members contending that conferences had continued long enough, and that the Wisconsin synod should immediately sever relations between the groups.

MJ AUG 11 '59

Approve Junior College

Delegates approved without a dissenting vote the establishment of a two year coeducational junior college in Milwaukee in the fall of 1960.

The college, which will be operated in conjunction with the Wisconsin Lutheran high school, will train teachers for the synod's parochial schools.

Approval also was given for a \$1,530,000 modernization program at Dr. Martin Luther training college for teachers at New Ulm, Minn.

Delegates approved overwhelmingly an appropriation of \$137,600 as the synod's share in the cost of an addition to the chapel and student center operated by the Lutheran Synodical conference at the University of Wisconsin in Madison.

The name of the Lutheran Theological seminary at Thiensville, Wis., was changed to the Wisconsin Lutheran seminary.

Northwestern Publishing House, operated by the synod in Milwaukee, reported a substantial increase in business in the last year and made a contribution of more than \$30,000 out of its profits to the synod's treasury.

Synod Heads Plan Meeting Hope to Mend Split

Milwaukee was chosen Wednesday as the site for a top level conference at which national leaders of the Wisconsin and Missouri synods of the Lutheran church will try to mend the growing split between their synods.

The presidents of the two synods met here Wednesday and Thursday, and set Jan. 12-15 as the time for the conference. The Northwestern Publishing House, 3624 W. North av., will be the site of the January meeting.

Two Presidents Confer

The Rev. Oscar J. Naumann, St. Paul, Minn., president of the Lutheran Wisconsin synod, and Dr. John W. Behnken, St. Louis, Mo., president of the Lutheran church-Missouri synod, conferred for several hours Wednesday afternoon at the publishing house. They resumed their conference Thursday, and also attended meetings of the intersynodical relations committee, a closed meeting attended by representatives of the Wisconsin, Missouri, Slovak and Norwegian synods, which comprise the Lutheran Synodical conference.

The presidents announced that the Jan. 12 meeting would be attended by themselves and the vice-presidents of both synods. Also attending will be the eight district presidents of the Wisconsin synod, and eight presidents from Missouri synod districts in the areas in which the Wisconsin synod is represented.

Wisconsin Synod Makes Charges

The Missouri synod has 1,900,000 members spread over most of the nation, while the Wisconsin synod's 344,000 members are concentrated mostly in Wisconsin,

Minnesota and near-by states. Each synod has approximately 50 churches in the Milwaukee area.

The January meeting grows out of charges by the Wisconsin synod that the Missouri synod "brought about the present break in relations that is now threatening the existence of the Synodical conference and the continuation of our affiliation as sister synods." The charges were made at a special Wisconsin synod convention held here Oct. 9.

The Missouri synod was accused of engaging in "unionistic practices" by discussing merger with the American Lutheran church and approving acts of religious fellowship with persons of different belief, such as Boy Scouts, joint prayer and military chaplaincy work.

Dr. Behnken, a guest at the Oct. 9 meeting, proposed that the Wisconsin synod send its highest officers to a meeting with Missouri synod officers to see if the differences could be settled, before the synods broke their long standing fellowship.

Pastor Naumann said Thursday that the Wisconsin synod had considerable hope for the January conference. NOV 12 1953

Hope for Understanding

"The fact that we are organizing the meeting shows that we still do hope and pray that some good will come of it, and that we will be able to arrive at an understanding. If we had no hope, we would not be doing this," he said.

It is expected that the January conference of the synod officers will be followed by another conference which pastors and laymen may attend. Formal presentation

of the charges is set for the 1954 meeting of the synodical conference.

Convention Took No Action

Some Milwaukee Lutheran leaders expressed doubt that the conference of officers would have any marked effect on the strained relations between the synods. Most of the charges of "religious unionism" have already been laid before the Missouri synod, and there has been no indication that it would shift its course because of them.

The charges were presented last summer to the highest authority in the church, the triennial convention of the entire Missouri synod, and no action was taken to satisfy the Wisconsin synod.

The dispute is based on an apparent change in attitude between the two synods. The doctrine is still almost identical.

accept a greater degree of fellowship with persons of other churches than the Wisconsin synod believes is allowable.

The Wisconsin synod believes it should follow a Bible injunction to "admonish" persons who seem to be flirting with heresy, and then reject and avoid them if they do not change their ways.

MS JUN 24 '60

Hits Missouri Synod

If the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod persists in alleged "unscriptural" church practices, the Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod should suspend relations with its delegates to the Southeastern Wisconsin District convention of the Wisconsin Synod recommended Thursday.

Meeting as the new Wisconsin Lutheran High School, 330 Glenview Av., the delegates recommended their Synod act either at its 1961 convention in Milwaukee or at a special convention. The district recommendation

came after hearing a report of President Carl Lawrenz of the Lutheran Theological Seminary in Thiensville and chairman of the Wisconsin Synod commission on doctrinal matters.

President Lawrenz reported an "impasse" had been reached in the long-standing debate with the Missouri Synod. He said in a recent conference, Missouri Synod theologians defended the participation of their leaders in three meetings with National Lutheran Council groups:

•The Conference of Lutheran Professors of Theology this month.

•The National Lutheran Educational Conference in January.

•The Inter-synodical Committee on Parish Education meetings in February.

"All of these are conferences between Missouri Synod leaders and leaders of other Lutheran bodies with whom they are not in doctrinal unity and hence not in Confessional fellowship," President Lawrenz reported.

INVITATIONS SPURNED

"Our Wisconsin Synod men have been repeatedly invited to participate in these conferences. The meetings mentioned are in each case held within the framework of devotions."

The Wisconsin Synod, however, has declined invitations because it regards them as "unionistic," President Lawrenz said. By that, the Wisconsin Synod means the bodies worship together without first agreeing fully on doctrine.

"Unionism," according to both Wisconsin and Missouri Synods, is sinful.

CONCERN EXPRESSED

Meanwhile, the South Wisconsin District of the Missouri Synod Thursday also expressed concern over the strained relations and hoped for continued unity.

Meeting at Concordia College, the Missouri Synod District formally requested leaders of the Missouri Synod to keep the pastors in south Wisconsin informed in writing on all doctrinal discussions with the Wisconsin Synod.

MS JUN 21 '60

2 Synods Stalemated In Doctrinal Talks

By JAMES M. JOHNSON

Discussions on doctrinal matters between the Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod and the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod have reached a stalemate, the Wisconsin Synod Commission on Doctrinal Matters reported Monday.

The commission, headed by President Carl Lawrenz, of Lutheran Theological Seminary, Thiensville, made the statement in a printed report issued to 216 pastoral, teacher and lay delegates to the Southeastern Wisconsin District Conference of the Wisconsin Synod, which opened Monday at Wisconsin Lutheran High School, N. 84th St. and W. Blue Mound Rd.

GIVEN TO DISTRICTS

The report is being given to all districts of the Wisconsin Synod and will also be submitted to the Evangelical Lutheran Synodical Conference, meeting here in August. Both Wisconsin and Missouri Synods belong to the Synodical Conference.

The report ends one more phase of the debate in which Wisconsin has charged Missouri with unscriptural church practices in tolerating activities which involve joint prayer

before full agreement on doctrine is reached.

In 1956 the Wisconsin Synod empowered its commission to discuss the differences with the Doctrinal Unity Commission of the Missouri Synod.

Because Wisconsin has continued in relationship with Missouri it has lost 3,100 communicants, the printed report of the Synod president, Oscar J. Neumann, disclosed. Also, 44 pastors, two professors, four high school instructors, 10 teachers and a majority of members in 20 congregations have withdrawn.

PICTURE BRIGHTENS

The picture in the Southeastern district is much brighter, however, reported President Arthur E. Halboth, pastor of St. Matthew Lutheran Church.

Not only has the district lost no congregations, pastors or teachers, it has gained 933 communicant members since 1959, for a total communicant membership of 50,937 in the southeastern part of the state. The district has a baptized membership of 73,383 in 113 congregations, served by 111 pastors. A total of 8,127 pupils study in 52 Wisconsin Synod day schools.

Synod Is Criticized

Clergymen of the Lutheran church-Missouri synod have engaged in numerous "unionistic" practices in recent years, spokesmen for the Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran synod complained Wednesday.

Missouri synod representatives denied the charges in general although they acknowledged some instances of conduct which, they said, could not be condoned by the synod.

The accusations and the replies were made at an international conference of conservative Lutheran theologians at Wisconsin Lutheran seminary, Thiensville, Wis. JUL 28 '60

A major part of the sessions Wednesday and Thursday was devoted to a review of differences between the Missouri and Wisconsin synods, the principal constituent bodies of the Lutheran synodical conference.

Accuse Missouri Synod

The Wisconsin synod has accused the Missouri synod of "unionism" — that is, engaging in church fellowship with other Christians not in doctrinal agreement with them.

Specifically, it has objected to joint prayer by Missouri synod Lutherans at intersynodical meetings with other Lutherans outside the synodical conference.

The differences are vital to Lutherans, who historically have remained aloof from close co-operation with other church bodies.

Briefly, the dispute revolves around these principal points:

1. The Wisconsin synod defines church fellowship as "every joint expression, manifestation and demonstration of the common faith in which Christians on the basis of their confession find themselves to be united." This includes virtually every area of church activity, including prayer, worship, church work, missions, education and Christian charity.

Opposes Joint Prayer

The Missouri synod, on the other hand, believes it can cooperate with other church bodies to a degree in so-called externals without involving itself in church fellowship.

2. The Wisconsin synod opposes joint prayer with outsiders in all instances. It regards prayer as an act of worship and an expression of existing unity.

The Missouri synod asserts that joint prayer may be justified in some instances if it constitutes an admission that differences exist and asks for God's help in removing those differences.

The Wisconsin synod recently reported an "impasse" in negotiations between the two groups. The conference of theologians seeks some measure of agreement before the biennial convention of the Lutheran synodical conference, scheduled here next week.

The Rev. Irwin J. Habeck, a Milwaukee pastor and first vice-president of the Wisconsin synod, said Wednesday afternoon that "we dare not allow ourselves to be carried away by the spirit of unionism."

Warns Against Zealots

He said that a breakdown in church discipline could be the cause for a low level of spiritual life in the congregation.

Pastor Habeck said strong admonition was necessary in the case of an erring member. Nevertheless, he warned against "zealots who want to clean house." He said that "our purpose must be to gain the sinning brother."

In an obvious reference to the dispute over church fellowship, Pastor Habeck said that "obedience to the Lord's command does not mean that we are denying the possibility or the fact of existence of saving faith even in those with whom we do not practice fellowship."

Clarification Is Asked by Wisconsin Synod

By DAVID A. RUNGE
Of The Journal Staff

The Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran synod requested clarification Saturday before voting on a plan to submit its doctrinal dispute with the Lutheran church-Missouri synod to an international study commission of theologians.

The synod's delegation caucused for an hour on the proposal, which was presented Friday night by overseas delegates attending the 10 day conference of theologians at Wisconsin Lutheran seminary, Thiensville.

"Can't Say Yes or No"

Prof. Carl Lawrenz, president of the seminary, then told the conference that his group was

not clear on several points with regard to the resolution.

"We can't say yes or no to the resolution as it now lies before us," he declared.

Picking up his lead, a Missouri synod delegate moved to postpone action until Wednesday night. The conclave of theologians ended officially Saturday noon, but its members will be in Milwaukee for the biennial convention of the Lutheran synodical conference Tuesday through Friday at Wisconsin Lutheran high school.

The postponement was approved unanimously.

One reason for the request was believed to be the Wisconsin synod's hesitancy to agree to

further study unless a brand new approach was indicated.

The synod told its membership recently that negotiations had reached an impasse and that continued discussion appeared to be pointless.

Bodies Are Confessional

The synodical conference bodies are confessional Lutherans and place great emphasis on biblical authority for their actions.

The Wisconsin synod and the Evangelical Lutheran synod have accused the Missouri synod of unscriptural conduct in praying and working with Lutheran bodies with which it did not have doctrinal agreement.

Bible verses were quoted to

back the charges. But the Missouri synod says the verses do not apply. The Synod of Evangelical Lutheran Churches, the fourth member of the synodical conference, agrees in general with the Missouri synod.

Speaking for the Wisconsin synod delegation Saturday, Prof. Lawrenz said that the discussions had "given us no reason to believe that the impasse has been removed, either in principle or in practice."

Could Jeopardize Setup

A spokesman who refused to be quoted said that unless the church bodies agreed to continued study, the future of the synodical conference appeared to be in serious jeopardy.

Dissolution of the 88 year old conference would have many ramifications, especially in Milwaukee, where there are more than 100 Wisconsin and Missouri synod congregations.

If the synods dissolve fellowship, families which belong to both synods could not commune together. In theory they could not even pray together, since the Wisconsin synod contends that prayer is an act of worship and an expression of existing unity.

The synods conduct numerous joint welfare projects. The Home for Aged Lutherans in Wauwatosa and the Bethesda home at Watertown are examples.

Lutheran Theologians Wrestling Impasse

Revised Plan Is Asked at Synodical Parley; May Affect Future of Conference

By DAVID A. RUNGE
Of The Journal Staff

Theologians from the conservative Lutheran synodical conference and allied churches overseas asked Wednesday night for a revised proposal aimed at ending the impasse over doctrinal relations between the Lutheran church-Missouri synod and two smaller groups. The plan is scheduled for presentation to the 46th biennial convention of the synodical conference which will end Friday at Wisconsin Lutheran high school, 330 Glenview av., Wauwatosa. Continuation of the conference possibly hangs on the result.

AUG 4 '60

Charges of unscriptural practices have been brought against the Missouri synod by the Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran synod and the Evangelical Lutheran synod. The two groups object to joint prayer with other Lutherans not in doctrinal agreement with them.

Asks for Clarification

The Wisconsin synod has asked for clarification of a proposal from foreign delegates calling for an international study commission to examine the dispute. At their meeting Wednesday night the theologians asked the synodical conference convention's floor committee on doctrinal unity to recommend a procedure to be followed.

Lutherans were described in an address before the convention as being willing at any time to enter into conversation concerning their faith with others under circumstances that make a true testimony possible.

The statement was made by the convention's essayist, the Rev. H. J. A. Bouman of Concordia seminary, St. Louis, Mo. He said that the ecumenical (church co-operation) movement was one of the most significant developments of church history and gave every indication of being here to stay.

Sees Great Disservice

"No professing Christian, no church, or group of churches can permanently ignore it. . . . All will have to make some contribution to it, however positive or negative it may be," Prof. Bouman said.

"It is unfortunately true that

much of the preoccupation with (it) proceeds from false premises and therefore renders genuine ecumenicity a great disservice."

Prof. Bouman said he did not question the objectives or sincerity of purpose of the World Council of Churches, which includes most of the Protestant, Anglican and Eastern Orthodox churches.

However, he questioned "an ecumenism that seems to encourage or tolerate the side by side of mutually contradictory theological emphasis, and ecumenism that appears to suppress religious differences by reducing Christian confession to a single, umbrella type affirmation of Jesus Christ as Son of God and Savior."

Prof. Bouman said that Lutheran doctrine was ecumenical because it was "based firmly on a norm to which all of Christendom gives at least lip service" the Bible. On this, he added, is a "common ground, a platform for all Christians to stand on and proceed from."

Delegates adopted unanimously a resolution encouraging the conference's missionary board to explore the possibilities of beginning work among the Mohammedans in the northern area of Nigeria. Missionary work in Africa long has been the chief endeavor of the synodical conference.

Reports Moslem Gains

The resolution said that seven out of ten converts in Africa were becoming Moslems. Only one out of ten becomes a Protestant, it was said. The resolution noted that "we already have a foothold in the Mohammedan area of northern Nigeria, with a rest house in Jos, 900 miles from the home compound."

Plans were announced for the establishment of a mission at Tema, which may become the largest port in West Africa, and two missions at Accra, capital of Ghana. The Lutheran Laymen's league was commended for sponsoring broadcasts of the Lutheran Hour radio program in Africa. The league is an affiliate of the Lutheran church-Missouri synod.

The conference re-elected as vice-presidents the Rev. Carl Zorn of Closter, N. J., representing the Missouri synod; the Rev. Karl Krauss, Lansing, Mich., of the Wisconsin synod, and the Rev. Julian J. Anderson, Chicago, of the Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran synod.

The four constituent synods of the conference customarily are represented in the praesidium. The fourth member for the next two years will be the new president, the Rev. John Daniel of Bethlehem, Pa., representing the Synod of Evangelical Lutheran Churches.

Lutheran Parley Folds Into Recess

Debate of Doctrinal Dispute Put Off Till After Easter; Delay Brings Attacks

By DAVID A. RUNGE
Of The Journal Staff

The convention of the Lutheran synodical conference collapsed Friday to the accompaniment of charges of delay in solving a doctrinal dispute between individual synods of the conference.

The debate of the doctrinal issue was abandoned and the delegates approved a resolution calling a recessed meeting after Easter in 1961. That meeting will be devoted exclusively to the dispute.

Relations between the constituent synods have been strained by charges by the Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran synod and the Evangelical Lutheran church-Missouri synod engaged in unscriptural practice.

The Missouri synod was accused of praying and working with other Lutherans with whom they were not in doctrinal agreement.

Insufficient Time Cited

The recessed meeting was scheduled at the request of the presidents of the four synods and the president and vice-president of the synodical conference.

The resolution calling for the meeting said it was obvious that there was insufficient time to deal with the "central problems" of the synodical conference. The exact time and place of the recessed meeting will be set by the officials.

The Rev. Herman W. Cares of West Allis opposed adoption. He asked: "I just wonder if we are trying to postpone something we are afraid to face?"

The Rev. Edwin A. Jaster, Racine, charged that the convention, which has been in session at Wisconsin Lutheran high school since Tuesday, had wasted valuable time. He said that committees should have begun preparation on the sensitive dispute over fellowship practices between Lutherans before the convention began.

Study Is Proposed

Pastors Cares and Jaster are clergymen of the Wisconsin synod.

Moments before the recess was requested the convention approved a compromise proposal calling for a study of the dispute by foreign theologians

representing conservative Lutheran churches allied with the synodical conference.

The study had been proposed as a means of throwing new light on doctrinal discussions conducted between the synods of the conference. The Wisconsin synod recently reported an impasse in the discussions and implied that future negotiations would be pointless.

The situation prompted one delegate to express his "sense of frustration that we couldn't get to this now."

The resolution calling for recess was adopted overwhelmingly.

Grim Picture Painted

At a convention session Thursday, a grim picture was painted of the conference's educational program for Negroes in segregated schools of the south.

Delegates capped two hours of debate by voting to close Immanuel Lutheran college at Greensboro, N. C. The resolution presented by the floor committee on educational institutions agreed with a study commission headed by the Rev. James P. Schaefer of Milwaukee that the institution was not fulfilling the expectations of the conference.

Delegate after delegate called for an end to the training of Negro pastors in a segregated seminary attached to Immanuel college.

"If we're going to work together, we should be trained together," declared the Rev. Les-

Turn to page 10, column 1.

Recess Voted by Lutheran Dispute Is Unsolved

From page 1, column 2

lie Frerking, a white pastor, Charlotte, N. C.

The four synods comprising the synodical conference were blamed by Pastor Schaefer for what he called "a stepchild approach to education" in the south.

The conference also included the Synod of Evangelical Lutheran Churches.

"There is no justification on moral or pragmatic grounds for continuing a segregated seminary," Pastor Schaefer declared.

The commission said that in spite of increasing and consecrated efforts by the president and the theological faculty, the college's enrollment showed a constant decline which reached an extreme last year of 72 students, most of them non-Lutheran.

The seminary graduated 11 ministerial students this year, was said, and "there is no immediate prospect of enrolling new ministerial students after the close of the 1960-1961 school year."

Under the timetable set by the convention the school will close after the spring term, 1961.

Impasse Seen in Fellowship Synod Group Reports

An impasse still exists between the Lutheran church-Missouri synod and the Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran synod in the dispute between the church bodies on questions of church fellowship, the Wisconsin synod's commission on doctrinal matters reported here.

The commission contended that a Missouri synod statement contained in the pamphlet, "Four Statements on Fellowship," was the same in substance as a preliminary study document. Changes in wording of the document, "if anything, make the objectionable viewpoints on fellowship even more apparent," the commission asserted.

Accused of Unionism

The 2,387,000 member Missouri synod and the 374,000 member Wisconsin synod are the principal members of the Lutheran synodical conference. The Wisconsin synod has accused the Missouri synod of unionism, defined as worship with others not in doctrinal agreement, in its relations with Lutherans outside the synodical conference.

The commission, headed by the Rev. Carl Lawrenz, president of Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran seminary, Thiensville, said that the same scriptural principles governed every joint expression, manifestation and demonstration of a common faith.

It said this applied not only to pulpit and altar fellowship, that is exchange of ministers and welcoming members to communion, but also to prayer under any conditions, worship, church work, missions, education and charity.

Discussions to Be Resumed

Specific objection has been stated by the Wisconsin synod to some of the Missouri synod's practices in the latter areas, including co-operation with other Lutherans in relief and other matters.

The Missouri synod contends that the propriety of joint prayer is determined by the situation, character, purpose and probable effect of the prayer.

Discussion of the synods' differences will be resumed at an adjourned meeting of the Lutheran synodical conference here May 17 to 19.

Lutherans Call Truce in Doctrinal Dispute

Synodical Conference Approves a Restudy of Issue, Apparently Delaying Break

MAY 20 61
The Lutheran synodical conference called a truce Friday in the dispute over false doctrine charges against the Lutheran church-Missouri synod.

After almost three days of debate, delegates finally approved a proposal from overseas theologians which called for a restudy and formulation of the doctrine involved. The action came in the final session of the group's three-day adjourned convention at Wisconsin Lutheran high school, 330 Glenview av. It apparently delayed the prospect of an open break in the 2,804,000 member conference, composed of the Lutheran church-Missouri synod, the Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran synod (Norwegian) and the Synod of Evangelical Lutheran churches (Slovak).

Calls All "Provocative"

Dr. John W. Behnken, St. Louis, president of the Lutheran church-Missouri synod, said that everyone present had been "provocative" and "contributed to the tensions which are threatening to tear us apart. Shamefully we must admit that we are guilty. May God in His mercy forgive us."

The resolution drew most of its support from the Missouri synod, which had 145 voting delegates at the meeting compared with 49 for the smaller Wisconsin synod. Approval came on a voice vote, apparently along synodical lines.

Throughout the debate, Wisconsin synod spokesmen stuck to their theme that the Missouri synod, by working and praying with other Lutheran church bodies with whom it did not have doctrinal agreement, was guilty of unionistic activity, which the synodical conference considers sinful.

"Our strength is in God's word, not in the size or solidarity of the synodical conference," said the Rev. Oscar J. Naumann, Milwaukee, president of the synodical conference.

Will Avoid Unionism

"We refuse to yield from what we are convinced is the scriptural position," he said.

Dr. Behnken contended that his synod's position was consistent with biblical instructions and the Lutheran confessions.

"Under God we shall cling to the infallible word of God as the only but also certain norm of doctrine and practice," Dr. Behnken said.

"The unionism, which God's word forbids, we shall avoid. The present day ecumenical (church unity) movements with their shocking compromises of biblical doctrine we shall continue to oppose with the word of God."

"However, in this connection let me say that we shall not become isolationists, but shall continue to embrace opportunities to bear witness."

Lutheran Conference Dissolution Is Asked

Editor Urges Breakup of Synodical Group; Says Top Members Are Incompatible

A Lutheran editor has proposed that the strife torn Lutheran synodical conference be dissolved and that its principal members, the Lutheran church-Missouri synod and the Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran synod, "shake hands, agree like Christian gentlemen to disagree, and then go their way without rancor."

Edward A. Beyersdorff made the suggestion in his column, "Typing Our Thinking," in the

current issue of the Milwaukee Lutheran, official magazine of Lutheran Men in America of Wisconsin, an intersynodical laymen's group.

Relations in the synodical conference have been strained for several years as a result of charges that the Missouri synod engaged in false doctrine by working and praying with other Lutherans without first establishing full agreement in doctrine and practice.

Beyersdorff said it was evident that the Wisconsin and Missouri synods were incompatible and the continuation of their partnership under an armed guard can bring nothing but harm to both.

"Bitterness has been growing between the clergy of both groups, with the result that they have been drifting farther apart as the charges leveled against each other increased," Beyersdorff said.

"The years have proven the synodical conference to be unbeneficial. Rather, it has become a burden on the backs of all concerned. Let's face it—while it sounded good in theory, it simply has not worked out in practice."

Delegates to the synodical conference voted at an adjourned convention here last week to continue a study of doctrinal issues, Beyersdorff said that although he wrote the article before certain was taken,

he had not changed his mind

Synodical Conference Preservation Urged

Lutherans at District Parley Call It Symbol of Strength in a Frag- mented World

The south Wisconsin district of the Lutheran church-Missouri synod expressed hope Thursday for the preservation of the 89 year old Lutheran synodical conference, which has been threatened by internal dispute.

Delegates to the district's 32nd convention at Concordia college unanimously adopted a resolution offering prayers to God for the continuation of the conference, of which the Missouri synod and the Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran synod are the principal members.

Called Symbol of Strength

The resolution expressed the district's "deep concern over the many possible results of a dissolution of the ties between these sister synods" in the welfare and educational field.

It said that "the synodical conference for several generations has stood as a world center of orthodox Lutheranism and a world symbol of the strength of that orthodoxy."

The resolution added that "destruction of that center and symbol may have the most far reaching results in the lives of many of Christ's faithful in our fragmented world."

President to Be Full Time

The Wisconsin synod has accused the Missouri synod of false doctrine in working and praying with other Lutherans. The synodical conference also includes the Synod of Evangelical Lutheran Churches (Slovak)

and the Evangelical Lutheran synod (Norwegian).

After a long debate, delegates voted in the final session of the four day district meeting to establish a full time presidency starting in 1963. A study committee report favoring the action was criticized because it noted that the district, under a part time presidency, ranked among the lowest in the synod in communion participation, average attendance and rate of growth. By a majority vote, the delegates ordered that statement stricken.

The Rev. Herbert Berner, pastor of Mount Olive Lutheran church, said the committee had not intended to embarrass the district. The committee noted that the Rev. Herbert W. Baxmann, district president, spent 163½ days a year away from St. John's Lutheran church, Plymouth, where he is senior pastor.

Revolt Is Developing Against Synod Chiefs

Resignations of Two Clergymen Blamed in Part on Disputes Over Doctrine

A revolt is developing in the Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran synod against the synod's leadership in the doctrinal dispute with the Lutheran church-Missouri synod.

Dissatisfaction with the synod's stand is said to have been a factor in recent resignations of at least two of the Wisconsin synod's clergymen and their transfer to the Missouri synod.

Because the resignations involved key posts held by individuals counted among the synod's younger leaders, others in the synod have voiced concern that the church body was losing some of its best talent.

Papers Make Protests

The synod's stand has been protested in several papers which accused the synod of misapplying Bible passages to support its position.

A central point in the dispute is the question of fellowship or the synods' relationship to other Christians and, specifically, other Lutherans.

The Wisconsin synod has accused the Missouri synod of false doctrine. The Wisconsin synod regards virtually every activity of the churches as an expression of faith which requires prior agreement on doctrine.

Liberal View Taken

The Missouri synod takes a more liberal view.

The Wisconsin synod has declared an impasse on this point. It threatened to withdraw from the Lutheran synodical conference, of which the synods, representing a majority of Lutherans in this area, are the principal members.

That the crisis has arisen over the Wisconsin synod doctrinal commission's presentation on fellowship "is indeed a tragedy," according to the Rev. Eldor Toepel, pastor of Jerusalem Lutheran church here. In a paper delivered at a pastoral conference, he called the document indefensible and its scriptural basis uncertain and inadequate.

Sees Loss of Identity

He said that if the statement was accepted by the synod as its confessional stand, "then I fear we shall have lost our claim to Lutheran identity, disowned the Lutheran confessions, and become a sect that is separatistic in nature. . . ."

"Regarding the practical application of the presentation, I would conclude that it means that I could not move, breathe, and have by being, in the exercise of my faith, in society, except with such people who agree with me in every iota of faith and doctrine," Pastor Toepel said.

The Rev. Oscar J. Naumann, president of the Wisconsin synod, said the fellowship statement was prepared in rhetorical form for committee discussion and was not meant to stand alongside the Lutheran confessions and other historic documents. He added:

"We definitely stand behind the principles enunciated because we are convinced they are the historical, scriptural principles of the synodical conference."

The Rev. Carl Lawrenz, president of Wisconsin Lutheran seminary, Thiensville, and chairman of the doctrinal commission, said the statement contained a set of theses for discussion in a particular forum. "Whether the wording suffices for another function is a question," he said.

Teacher Fears Strife

One of the clergymen who resigned was the Rev. Dr. Richard Jungkuntz, a teacher at Northwestern college, Watertown, a pretheological school operated by the Wisconsin synod.

Dr. Jungkuntz was one of four Wisconsin synod members who issued a paper urging the synod to give serious and prayerful consideration before giving official sanction to the doctrinal commission's recommendations.

"Unless this presentation is rejected," the paper said, "it will split the synodical conference (and) cause disorder, offense and strife that will bring down the judgment of God."

Dr. Jungkuntz accepted a call

to teach New Testament exegesis (explanation) at Concordia seminary of the Missouri synod at Springfield, Ill. He said the paper was intended for private analysis rather than public dissemination. "I have no desire to stir up controversy," he declared.

Dr. Jungkuntz said he had decided to change posts "on the basis of where I can do the best work in the interest of the church as a whole." He added, however, "obviously, if I were in agreement with (the Wisconsin synod's) line of thinking, I would hardly accept the position."

Rev. Wegner Resigned

The Rev. Walter Wegner has resigned as pastor of Calvary Lutheran chapel and student center of the Lutheran synodical conference at the University of Wisconsin in Madison. He will leave the Wisconsin synod to become a professor in the department of Old Testament exegetical theology at the Missouri synod's Concordia Theological seminary, St. Louis.

Pastor Wegner got the first master's degree in Hebrew studies awarded by the University of Wisconsin in 1959. For the last year he has been a part time instructor in Hebrew studies at UW.

He said his basic reason for resigning was that his training would enable him to serve more effectively at the seminary. He declined further comment.

Sees "Various Dangers"

The Rev. Ernst Wendland, Benton Harbor, Mich., declared in a paper delivered at a recent pastoral conference that the Wisconsin synod's approach, "although pursued with the sincerest desire to defend a conservatively orthodox position, leads us into various dangers."

"First (is) a forced use of scripture passages as proof texts," he said.

Pastor Toepel said it appeared that the Wisconsin synod's doctrinal commission had first formulated the synod's theses and then went to the Bible to find passages to support them. He said it was poor policy "to use the Bible as an answer book."

"It is entirely probable and possible that two people could go to the Bible with the same question, consider the same Bible passages, and find two different answers," he said.

APPENDIX B

Milwaukee Sentinel Coverage of the Church Relations Debate
in Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod's 36th Convention
August 1961

Saturday, August 5, 1961

Saturday Religious Page

WISCONSIN LUTHERAN SYNOD CONVENES HERE TUESDAY

With the accent on a proposed missionary corps, higher education and the ever present question of the relations with the Lutheran Church - Missouri Synod, the Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod will hold its National Convention here Tuesday to August 17. One proposal to be discussed is a Christian Missioners' Corps.

(The rest of the article concerns Rev. Hoenecke's speech, our practice of starting indigenous churches. At the end of the article it continues.)

The question of continued relations with the Missouri Synod will be discussed with recommendations of the floor committee headed by Rev. Werner Franzmann, editor of the Northwestern Lutheran. The Wisconsin - Missouri situation has stood at a truce since the May meeting of the synodical conference here.

Wednesday, August 9, 1961

(Report on Rev. Naumann's opening speech. His was a call to rally around conservatism. Announcement was made that Rev. Werner Franzmann's floor committee would hold open hearings Wednesday and Thursday regarding future relations with Missouri.)*

Thursday, August 10, 1961

LUTHERAN UNITY - IMPASSE CITED

Lead. The impasse reached between Wisconsin and Missouri Synod Lutherans over joint prayer and church fellowship leaves little hope for agreement delegates to the Wisconsin Synod Convention were told at a hearing Wednesday at Wisconsin Lutheran High School, 330 North Glenview Avenue.

The Rev. Erwin J. Habeck, vice president of the Synod said the meetings between the doctrinal committees evidenced unyielding convictions on the part of both Missouri and Wisconsin representatives. The

*Articles which are not of primary importance to the church relations debate are summarized in parenthesis.

Rev. Ernest Wendland, Benton Harbor, Michigan said however, that the Synod's thesis on fellowship has not been clear to the overseas theologians whom both the Missouri and Wisconsin Synods called in to help resolve the differences.

Prof. Gerhard Franzmann, Northwestern College, Watertown voiced the need for clarification of the fellowship thesis by which the Wisconsin Synod doctrinal committee set forth its position.

Friday, August 11, 1961

SYNOD HEAD PLEADS FOR LUTHERAN ACCORD

James Johnson

The president of the Lutheran Church - Missouri Synod, Thursday voiced hope here that the Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Church would continue its fellowship with Missouri.

Personally giving his message of greeting to the Wisconsin Synod Convention at Wisconsin Lutheran High School at 330 North Glenview Avenue, the Rev. Dr. John W. Behnken of St. Louis declared "We are praying that God may graciously prevent the severance of our relations in the synodical conference. God grant you grace, wisdom, understanding and a rich measure of the Holy Spirit to guide you in your deliberations."

Wisconsin and Missouri Synods have differed in viewpoints of church practice.

Dr. Behnken emphasized that the issues "have arisen out of practice, not of doctrine." He pictured the Missouri Synod doctrine as conservative and in harmony with that of Wisconsin Synod.

"We are not a people who believe in a theistic evolution," he said. "We believe in a world created by God in six days."

He said the Missouri Synod believes the full account of the creation of the book of Genesis, such as the story of Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden, the fall of man, expulsion from the garden, etc.

Saturday, August 12, 1961

Saturday Religious Page

(Article covers E. Kowalke's address on Synod's educational standard.)

Tuesday, August 15, 1961

(Article covers convention discussion of pay raises for staff.)

Wis. Synod, Missouri Break Urged

By JAMES N. JOHNSTON
Sentinel Religion Editor

The floor committee on doctrinal unity Tuesday recommended that the Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod break relations with the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod.

A vote on the resolution is expected toward the end of the convention on Thursday. The synod is meeting at the Wisconsin Lutheran High School, 330 N. Glenview Av.

The resolution, however, provides that the Wisconsin Synod is "ready to continue our support of joint projects carried on by the Synodical Conference and by groups within the Synodical Conference until we can adjust to the new conditions brought about by the suspension."

FOUR LOCAL PROJECTS

These local projects include the Lutheran Children's Friend Society, Lutheran Institutional Missions, Bethesda Lutheran Home at Watertown and the Home for Aged Lutherans at 7600 W. North Av., each operated in conjunction with Missouri Synod congregations.

Others include joint projects in Michigan and Minnesota and overseas mission projects.

The resolution also preserves relations with both the Slovak and Norwegian groups in the Synodical Conference and welcomes "all who are of a like mind with us in this matter to rally to the scriptural, historical position of the Synodical Conference that this position may be preserved."

DOOR LEFT OPEN

The resolution adds: "We stand ready to resume discussions with the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod with the aim of re-establishing unity of doctrine and practice and of restoring fellowship relations; these discussions to be conducted outside the framework of fellowship."

"We are not passing judgment on the personal faith of any individual member of the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod."
(Please turn to Page 8, Col. 1)

LUTHERANS Fellowship Chief Issue In Dispute

(Continued from Page 1)

Synod, but we are addressing the stern admonition required by love to the Missouri Synod as a corporate body."

The doctrinal debate between the two Synods is in its 22nd year. A previous floor committee recommendation to break with Missouri Synod was voted down in 1957.

CHIEF ISSUE EXPLAINED

A Wisconsin Synod statement Tuesday said:

"The chief issue between the two synods is the doctrine of fellowship."

"The issue came to a head in the principles embodied in a recent document on fellowship prepared by the Missouri Synod's two theological seminaries. The doctrine of fellowship involves the question of religious fellowship—pulpit, altar and prayer fellowship—and joint church work with other Lutherans who are not in agreement with the Lutheran Synodical Conference."

ALL MUST AGREE

"The Wisconsin Synod maintains that there can be no religious fellowship or joint church work with other church bodies unless full doctrinal agreement has been reached. It further maintains that this has been historic, scriptural position of the Synodical Conference."

"It further maintains that the fellowship principles set forth in the document by the Missouri Synod theological faculties constitutes a radical departure from the scriptural principles on fellowship held and defended jointly for many decades by the Synodical Conference."

"Specifically, the Wisconsin Synod charges that leaders and official boards of the Missouri Synod have for a number of years engaged in joint devotions, prayer and church work with leaders and boards not in full doctrinal agreement."

"Because the Missouri Synod's doctrinal unity committee subscribes to and defends these principles and practices, the Wisconsin Synod's Commission on Doctrinal Matters has declared that discussions have reached an 'impasse.'"

Thursday, August 17, 1961

Second Front Page

LUTHERANS SPLIT - THESES RAPPED UNCLEAR

The theses on which a break between the Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod and the Lutheran Church - Missouri Synod has been recommended were called unclear, unscriptural and even "intimidating" in debate Wednesday at the Wisconsin Lutheran High School, 330 North Glenview Avenue.

The Rev. Henry Koch, Ph.D., Greenleaf, Wisconsin, associate editor of the Gemeindeblatt, German language Synodical publication, quoted from a letter to Synod President Oscar J. Naumann from Lutheran theologians overseas charging that the fellowship theses were "unscriptural." Dr. Koch said he concurred in this.

A visitor, the Rev. Jonathan Daniel, Bethlehem, Pennsylvania, president of the Evangelical Lutheran Synodical Conference (existence of which is threatened is the two synods suspend relations), clashed with President Naumann when he charged the Wisconsin Synod theses "intimidated" synodical discussions.

"I wouldn't allow that," said President Naumann. "I stand here before God to say that our men work in an evangelical manner."

Friday, August 18, 1961

Front Page

WISCONSIN SYNOD MISSOURI SPLIT

The Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod Thursday voted 124 to 49 to break relations with the Lutheran Church - Missouri Synod over a doctrinal dispute 21 years old.

The Wisconsin Synod thus ended a church fellowship with the Missouri Synod in the Synodical Conference which has lasted 89 years. Its action also indicated a conservative dissent against the post war church merger movements.

A proposal to put the break before the Wisconsin Synod's 800 congregations in a national referendum died on the table as the synod ended its convention at the Wisconsin Lutheran High School, 330 N. Glenview Ave.

Cause of Dispute

Crux of the dispute, which has consumed scores of meetings, discussions, conventions and even colloques with theologians as far as Australia, is the doctrine of church fellowship.

Wisconsin Synod contends there can be no religious fellowship or joint church work with other church bodies unless full doctrinal agreement has been reached. The Missouri Synod differs in the stringency of

application of those principles.

The resolution to break, passed by a standing vote, declared "we now suspend fellowship with the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod on the basis of Ro 16:17,18 with the hope and prayer to God that the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod will hear in this resolution an evangelical summons to 'come to herself' and to return to the side of the sister from whom she has estranged herself."

Linked in Agencies

Cooperative ventures in the Milwaukee area to be affected include the Lutheran Children's Friend Society, the Lutheran Institutional Missions, the Home for Aged Lutherans, and the Bethesda Lutheran Home at Watertown.

But the resolution provides, "We are ready to continue our support of the joint projects carried on by the Synodical Conference and by groups within the Synodical Conference until we can adjust to the new conditions brought about by the suspension of fellowship."

Members Get Charge

Members are also called upon to "manifest the understanding, consideration, and patience of love during this period of change."

The REv. Werner Franzmann, chairman of the floor committee on doctrinal unity, said this meant not only material things, such as financial support and committee membership, but certain spiritual adjustments.

The Rev. Erhard Pankow, pastor of Garden Homes Lutheran Church, remarked that he might have to tell his parishoners in a certain institution that worship is forbidden and they can't take communion if served by a Missouri synod pastor.

Adjustments must be made in world missions, too, the Rev. Edgar Hoenecke, missions chairman pointed out.

Supporting the suspension, Pastor Franzmann said:

"We owe it to God to take this step. We will cause confused and troubled consciences among our members if we do not do so."

"Owe it to others"

"We owe it to the Missouri Synod, with whom we have pleaded, admonished, protested, and with whom we have formally declared ourselves to be in vigorously protesting fellowship. We have gone the 'long mile.' Today a sterner expression of love is demanded of us by God that's expressed in Romans 16:17,18 that says:

'Now I beseech you, brethren, mark them which cause divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned; and avoid them. For they that are such serve not our Lord Jesus Christ, but their own belly; and by good words and fair speeches deceive the hearts of the simple.'"

Opposing the proposed suspension, a letter was read from Lutheran clergymen of Germany, who asked postponement of the break because they have not had a chance to study it fully.

Cites Overseas View

The Rev. James Schaeffer of Atonement Church 4521 N. 42nd St., opposed the break, declaring:

"I hear the pleading of our overseas brethren. I hear the questions they are honestly asking. I believe we certainly should take no action because of their questions.

"Furthermore I am opposed because Missouri Synod spokesmen have expressed willingness to propose to their synod that they set aside their fellowship formulations (one of the doctrinal bones of contention) and make a new approach with the overseas delegates who have been called into the discussions."

Pastor Schaefer had proposed the resolution for a referendum.

President Oscar J. Naumann said a referendum was in order, but it was tabled during the dinner recess.

Difficult to Decide

After the convention let it die, President Naumann said it would be hard for individual congregations to decide the issues without the reports and data that the floor committee possessed.

The resolution leaves the door open for future talks with the Missouri Synod

Synodical Conference president John Daniel of Bethlehem, Pa., said in an interview the break did not mean the end of the conference.

Saturday, August 19, 1961

Second Front Page

SYNOD SPLIT REGRETTED

Missouri Asks Wisconsin to Reconsider

The president of the Lutheran Church - Missouri Synod was "saddened" Friday that the Wisconsin Lutheran Church severed relations and said he hoped it would reconsider the action. From St. Louis, the Rev. Dr. John W. Behnken declared the split proclaimed in convention at Wisconsin Lutheran High School here Thursday "is to be deeply regretted."

"We sincerely believe that a difference of opinion between the Missouri and Wisconsin Synods on the application of the Christian principles of fellowship is not sufficient cause to sever a relationship which has existed for 89 years," Dr. Behnken declared.

More Talks Asked

"We hope the Wisconsin Synod will reconsider its action and continue the discussions which might lead to a God-pleasing solution. We humbly acknowledge that we too are sinners and are in need of God's mercy."

Dr. Behnken added that the Missouri Synod "rests its case with the gracious Savior who died even for the sins of error and judgment on the

part of church leaders."

The split will be discussed at the Missouri Synod convention, June 22 - 29, 1962 at Cleveland. Meanwhile, the doctrinal talks exploring union possibilities will be continued between the doctrinal unity committee of the Missouri Synod and other Lutheran groups.

Other Sessions Set

On August 31 and September 1 representatives will meet with churchmen of the National Lutheran Council at Chicago and in January meetings between Missouri and the new American Lutheran Church are scheduled.

President Oscar J. Naumann of the Wisconsin Synod commented Friday on the Synod's tabling of the plan to submit the proposal for the break to its 800 congregations:

"The bonds uniting individuals and the congregations in our synod are a common faith and conviction" he said. "The congregations and the individuals who have joined our synod have done so of their own free will."

Haven for Many

He added, "Freedom of worship and the right of one's own religious convictions have made this country a haven for many persecuted people. We intend to uphold the right of free choice of self-determination in these matters for every citizen of the land."

President Naumann added that the Synod congregations "bound only by the Word of God will study action of the convention carefully and I trust, calmly, in the light of the Word. They will also ask their delegates to give them a complete report on the convention."

Saturday, August 26, 1961

Saturday Religious Page

DOCTRINES KEEP TWO LUTHERAN SYNODS APART

James M. Johnson

To the post-war Christian world with its surge of togetherness resulting in denominational mergers, a relatively small group of Lutherans here last week voiced a resounding dissent. The 1961 convention of the Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod may become an historical event beyond its significance to the giant Lutheran Church - Missouri Synod with whom it broke relations.

The vote 124 - 49 to suspend relations points up the Lutheran insistence on 100% agreement in doctrine and church practices before real unity can mean anything.

The Missouri Synod stands beside the Wisconsin Synod in this insistence. So do the two smaller Lutheran groups, the Norwegian and

Slovak affiliated in the synodical conference. The difference lies in doctrinal interpretation of church practices.

A moot point involves the doctrine of church fellowship. Both Wisconsin and Missouri Synods agree there can be no religious fellowship or church work with other Lutherans who are not in doctrinal harmony. But Wisconsin and Missouri have different views on what church fellowship includes. The Wisconsin Synod holds EVERY expression, manifestation and demonstration of the common faith - communion, prayer, praise and worship, Christian charity, etc. - to be church fellowship under a "unit concept."

The Missouri Synod however does not accept the "unit concept" and declares many activities fall outside the realm of church fellowship. The Missouri Synod has met and held joint prayer with leaders of the National Lutheran Council whom the Wisconsin Synod claims are doctrinal "errorists." But in the words of Dr. Martin Franzmann, member of the Missouri Synod's doctrinal committee and a spokesman at the Wisconsin Synod Convention, "When a man is willing to submit to the scrutiny of the Word of God and the Lutheran Confessions, he is no longer a persistent errorist."

(The remainder of this article covers the trend of post-war denominations to mergers. Speaks of the former fellowship arrangement between Wisconsin and Missouri Synods and ends with a discussion of the future of the synodical conference.)

APPENDIX C

Milwaukee Journal Coverage of the Church Relations Debate in Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod's 36th Convention August 1961

Saturday, August 5, 1961

Saturday Religious Page

LUTHERANS TO WEIGH SOME CRITICAL ISSUES

Three Hundred are Expected to Attend the State Synod's 36th Annual Convention in Milwaukee

Critical problems affecting the future of the Lutheran Synodical Conference will be considered by delegates to the 36th Convention of the Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod here next week.

Some 300 delegates are expected to attend the session at the Wisconsin Lutheran High School, 330 North Glenview Avenue from Tuesday through August 17.

The Wisconsin Synod and the Lutheran Church - Missouri Synod, both with many congregations in this area are the largest members of the Lutheran Synodical Conference. They have had close relations over the years in worship, welfare, missions, colleges and seminaries.

Doctrinal Dispute Cited

Cooperation in these areas now is threatened by a doctrinal dispute between the synods. The Wisconsin Synod's commission on doctrinal matters has declared an impasse in efforts to resolve differences between the church bodies on the scriptural principles governing fellowship.

The Wisconsin Synod which has accused the Missouri Synod of false doctrine regards virtually every church activity as an expression of faith which requires prior agreement on doctrine. The Missouri Synod takes a more liberal view.

A resolution has been offered by Mt. Olive Lutheran Church, Lamar, Colorado urging the Wisconsin Synod "to obey God's word by at once severing all relations with the Missouri Synod."

Key roles in the dispute have been assigned to brothers, the Rev. Werner H. Franzmann, Milwaukee of the Wisconsin Synod and the Rev. Dr. Martin H. Franzmann, St. Louis, of the Lutheran Church - Missouri Synod.

Plan Several Hearings

Dr. Franzmann, formerly a Wisconsin Synod clergyman is now a teacher at Concordia Theological Seminary of the Missouri Synod. He is regarded as the chief architect of the Missouri Synod's presentation on the crucial question of fellowship. He will represent the Missouri Synod at the convention.

His brother is chairman of the Wisconsin Synod's floor committee on church union matters which will steer the discussion at the convention.

Pastor Franzmann said the committee probably would hold several hearings before the question reaches the floor.

(Article concludes with discussion of the upcoming opening service.)

Tuesday, August 8, 1961

Front Page

SPLIT WIDENS SYNOD HEARS

David Runge

**Split Widens
Synod Hears
Leader of Wisconsin
Unit Attacks Mis-
souri Branch**

By DAVID R. RUNGE
Of The Journal Staff

Recent events have severely shaken the Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran synod's confidence that there remains any common ground for discussions with the Lutheran church—Missouri synod, the Wisconsin synod president said here Tuesday.

The Rev. Oscar J. Naumann, president, made the statement in a report prepared for presentation at the opening of the synod's 36th convention at Wisconsin Lutheran high school, 330 N. Glenview av.

The Wisconsin synod has accused the Missouri synod of false doctrine and has threatened to withdraw from the Lutheran synodical conference, of which the two synods are the principal members. The problem of future relations between the synods is one of the principal items for consideration by Wisconsin synod delegates at the 10-day convention.

Synods Conservative

Both synods traditionally are conservative and have taken a literal view of Scriptures. Recently, however, the Wisconsin synod has accused the Missouri synod of liberal tendencies.

President Naumann said that a new statement on Scriptures prepared by the Missouri synod's theological faculties constituted an attack on the authority of the Scriptures.

"The time has certainly arrived for our synod to speak clearly and in unmistakable terms concerning this development," he said. "When confidence has been destroyed, it can be rebuilt only by the action of those who have destroyed it."

Convinced of Position

"Our synod's official representatives have repeatedly stated that they believe, teach, and confess the same historical, scriptural doctrine which has been the confession of the synodical conference since its organization.

"We have not been shown that our presentation on any doctrine has gone beyond the teaching of Scripture. Therefore, we must say with Luther that unless we are shown from the clear word of God where we

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Synod
From page 1, column 6

have erred, we cannot recant or alter our position.

"And since we are convinced that our position in doctrine and practice is the scriptural position, we ask all our confessional brethren around the world to rally around that doctrinal position."

Speaks of Mission Work

The speaker said that all the church's preaching depended upon the certainty of the Bible and its unchallenged authority.

"What kind of mission work could we do if we would listen to man's wisdom which denies the account of creation recorded in Genesis?" Pastor Naumann asked.

"How could we convince the heathen that we preach truth and bring lasting peace, if we were to tell them that the Genesis stories are fables?"

"If we denied that God saved Noah and his family by means of the ark . . . how could we assure the heathen that in Christ we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sin, according to the riches of His grace?"

Pastor Naumann said that Mount Olive Lutheran church, Lamar, Col., which had sent a letter demanding the suspension of relations between the synods, had since resigned from the Wisconsin synod. He said he considered the congregation's action tantamount to withdrawal of its request.

Thursday, August 10, 1961

DELEGATES DIVIDED ON SYNOD'S STAND

David Runge

Delegates Divided on Synod's Stand

Some Believe Views of Wisconsin Unit on Church Relations Are Not Clear

By DAVID A. RUNGE
Of The Journal Staff

Delegates to the 36th convention of the Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran synod split Wednesday night over their synod's stand in its doctrinal dispute with the Lutheran church-Missouri synod.

Synodical leaders have reported a deadlock in the negotiations and indicated that there was no point in prolonging the discussions between the church bodies.

However, an open hearing disclosed sentiment on the part of some delegates that the Wisconsin synod had not made its own stand clear, especially on the

issue of relations with other Lutheran groups.

The hearing was held at Wisconsin Lutheran high school, 330 N. Glenview av. The convention will be held here through next Thursday.

Asks About Tiredness

The Rev. William H. Lange, Wisconsin Rapids, asked whether it was possible that the synod's doctrinal commission, like Elijah under the juniper tree, had tired of its task.

The Old Testament says that Elijah "went a day's journey into the wilderness, and came and sat down under a juniper tree, and he requested for himself that he might die; and said, 'It is enough; now, O Lord, take away my life.'"

Pastor Lange reminded delegates that "it took the church 365 years to get the Nicene creed."

The Rev. Ernst Wendland, Benton Harbor, Mich., contended that the Wisconsin synod's fellowship statement, governing the question of relations with other church bodies when full doctrinal agreement is lacking, was ambiguous.

The Rev. Luther Voss, 3741 N. 21st st., expressed doubt that all avenues of negotiation had been exhausted.

However, the Rev. Irwin J. Habeck, 3301 N. 51st blvd., vice-president of the synod, said further discussions appeared to be fruitless.

Report Due Later

"You reach the point eventually where you don't edify, you begin to aggravate by continuing to discuss," he declared.

In the discussion, complaints against the Missouri synod were reviewed, among them reports that Missouri synod clergymen had prayed with representatives of other Lutheran church bodies at meetings of the National Lutheran council, educational conferences and other places.

"The practice in the Missouri synod has become worse from year to year," said the Rev. Oscar J. Naumann, Wisconsin synod president. "More and more offensive things are not only occurring but are being defended. That is the discouraging thing."

The hearing was conducted by the floor committee on church union matters. The committee's report containing recommendations as to the future course of action for the synod is not expected until next week.

Earlier Wednesday the board of control of the Milwaukee Lutheran Teachers college recommended the purchase of 55 acres of land at the southwest corner of W. Blue Mound and Sunny Slope rds., Brookfield, as a permanent building site. Five new buildings with facilities for about 300 students are proposed. The college was opened last September at Wisconsin Lutheran high school.

Mission Problem Told

The Rev. Richard Seeger, Tokyo, said mission work in Japan was handicapped because people there did not readily accept the Christian concept of the individual.

He said, however, that Japan was "wide open" to the gospel. "The political climate is good for carrying on an intensive mission work. There is no discrimination."

A greater share of independence for the synod's "free church" in Germany was recommended by the board for world missions.

The Rev. Irwin J. Habeck was re-elected first vice-president of the synod.

The Rev. Oscar Siegler, Calvary, Wis., was elected Thursday for a two-year term as second vice-president. He is secretary of the synod's commission on doctrinal matters.

Friday, August 11, 1961

MISSOURI SYNOD HEAD DENIES DOCTRINAL RIFT

David Runge

Missouri Synod Head Denies Doctrinal Rift

RLJ AUG 11 '61

Assures Delegates to 36th Wisconsin Parley That Groups Agree on Creation

By DAVID A. RUNGE
Of The Journal Staff

The president of the Lutheran church-Missouri synod asserted Thursday that members of that body believe Adam and Eve were the first human beings and the parents of the entire human race.

The Rev. Dr. John W. Behnken, St. Louis, Mo., assured delegates to the 36th convention of the Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran synod that "the Missouri synod, with you, believes in the fiat creation of this world . . . that God made the world out of nothing."

Members of the Wisconsin

synod have accused the Missouri synod of doctrinal deviation. Their charges of liberalism in the Missouri synod have threatened the continuation of the Lutheran synodical conference, in which the synods have worked together for 89 years.

Addresses Delegates

Addressing delegates at the Wisconsin Lutheran high school, 330 N. Glenview av., Dr. Behnken said conservative Lutherans throughout the world were watching the convention anxiously and praying that "God may lead you to remain together with us."

He insisted that differences between the synods were not in doctrine but in the field of application of God's word.

"If there are errors in our midst," he pleaded, "then remain with us and help correct these errors."

Deploring those who would "make fables" out of the Bible, Dr. Behnken said that the Missouri synod held to the literal truth of the Genesis account of the beginning of the earth, including the six day creation and the fall of man.

"We are not people who believe in a theistic evolution," he said.

Answers Statement

He answered a statement by the Rev. Oscar J. Naumann, president of the Wisconsin synod, who complained in his opening report to the convention Tuesday that a new statement on Scriptures had been prepared by the Missouri synod's theological faculties.

President Naumann's report said the statement constituted an attack on the authority of the Scriptures.

In his reply, Dr. Behnken said this was a study document submitted to the Missouri synod's clergy for examination and still subject to correction. He pointed out that both synods had subscribed to the same official statement on the Scriptures.

Refers to Document

This was a reference to a document that reaffirmed the belief in synodical conference circles that historical passages of the Bible, including the miracles and the Genesis story of the creation, were "literal, historical facts."

A Missouri synod spokesman
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Synod

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said the statement did not require Lutherans to believe that the earth was only 6,000 years old, nor did it rule out the possibility that God created essential beings with a potential for development and adjustment according to their environment.

The document included a statement that "where Scripture speaks symbolically, metaphorically or metonymically (in the abstract) . . . it must be interpreted on these its own terms."

The Missouri synod never has taken an official stand on the age of the earth.

A spokesman for another Lutheran group told the delegates that their synod's name stood for a symbol in the world. He is the Rev. Julian Anderson, Mount Prospect, Ill., vice-president of the Evangelical Lutheran synod, which is also a member of the Lutheran synodical conference but has suspended fellowship with the Missouri synod.

Says Modernism Grows

"To some it is true that the Wisconsin synod stands for a reactionary type of orthodoxy," Pastor Anderson said. "But wherever there are those who love Scriptures . . . or love Lutheran doctrine, the Wisconsin synod is an honored name, a name to be respected and loved."

"In the church at large there is an alarming growth of modernism, liberalism, neo-orthodoxy, which have pervaded Lutheran bodies as well. In Lutheran circles there is also a slackening of the confessional spirit and an increased yearning for and activity in the ecumenical (church unity) movement."

"To go against the stream is

not a popular thing. You all know full well that to breast the current takes courage, and courage such as this is not something which we can find in ourselves. It is a God given thing."

The Rev. Norman Berg, Plymouth, Mich., was elected secretary of the synod to succeed the Rev. Theodore A. Sauer, Oshkosh, who will leave for northern Rhodesia next month to take a missionary post.

Saturday, August 12, 1961

Religion Page

SYNOD URGED TO PLACE EMPHASIS ON THEOLOGY

Ministerial Candidates Needn't be Trained as Social Workers Lutherans Told

(Emphasis of the article is on Rev. Edwin E. Kowalke's speech encouraging the convention delegates to uphold the high standards held by our school.)

Sunday, August 13, 1961

HINT SOME CLERGYMEN MAY PULL OUT OF SYNOD

Evangelical Lutheran Pastors Are Dissatisfied With Doctrinal Position

David Runge

The possibility that some clergymen might quit the Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod because of dissatisfaction with its doctrinal stand was hinted Saturday at the Synod's 36th convention.

It was cited as an argument against adoption of the 111 year old synod's first pension system which was approved by delegates meeting at Wisconsin Lutheran High School, 330 North Glenview Avenue.

The Rev. Dr. Henry A. Koch, Greenleaf, Wisconsin asked:

"What if a break in the synod should come about? Are we not binding consciences of individual pastors or teachers who might fear a loss of their pension rights?"

The Rev. Oscar J. Siegler, Mt. Calvary, Wisconsin, president of the synod's Northern Wisconsin District said that he agreed that "A pension system tied up with the church might restrict the consciences of some."

Two Hearings Held

The overriding issue of the convention is what course the synod should pursue in its doctrinal impasse with the Lutheran Church - Missouri Synod. Top leaders of the synod have indicated that they see no possibility of change in the Missouri Synod's attitude which would cause the Wisconsin Synod to withdraw its charges of false doctrine in the Missouri Synod.

The convention's floor committee on church union matters already has held two hearings on the questions. Its chairman, the Rev. Werner H. Franzmann, 2427 West Roosevelt Drive would not tell a reporter what recommendation the committee planned to make. He said the committee's report probably would be ready Monday.

One delegate said Saturday that the floor committee "may well come in with a resolution to sever connections with the Missouri Synod." He said later however, that his remark was entirely speculative.

Long Debate Expected

An open break with the Missouri Synod would practically seal the doom of the LSC, the cooperative agency of the synods in mission, welfare and educational activities.

Whether the floor committee recommends a split or not, its report is certain to touch off a long debate. Whatever the outcome, the inference was that some would be dissatisfied and might feel conscience bound to withdraw from the synod. Duty to conscience has a strong pull in the conservative Wisconsin Synod and is respected on both sides in any question.

About 45 pastors had resigned from the Wisconsin Synod before the present session.

The Rev. James A. Fricke said that pastors who quit the Synod would be permitted to draw out their share of the pension fund. "Such a man will be faced with difficulties but he won't lose his own money," he said.

(The article ends with further discussion of the pension proposal.)

Monday, August 14, 1961

Picture Page

SYNOD SEEKS GREATER GROWTH

The Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod embarked on a program Monday to gain a larger share of the growth reported by church bodies in the United States.

(The synod action described in this article is to extend production of evangelism materials through an evangelism committee to train laymen.)

Tuesday, August 15, 1961

FACULTY MEMBER QUILTS IN DISPUTE

David Runge

Another resignation from the faculty of Northwestern College was reported Tuesday as the 36th convention of the Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod neared a decision in its doctrinal dispute with the Lutheran Church - Missouri Synod.

The Rev. Dr. Ralph D. Gehrke, a teacher of religion, history and Greek for 13 years at the Wisconsin Synod's college in Watertown resigned to become professor of religion at the Missouri Synod's Concordia Teacher's College at River Forest, Illinois.

Dr. Gehrke said he and others in the Wisconsin Synod had been harrassed by the Synod's leadership for opposing the doctrinal commission's

recent statement of fellowship, the core of the inter-synodical dispute.

He refused to name anyone, declaring that "they're all responsible."

A statement issued by synodical officials in effect denied Dr. Gehrke's claim. A spokesman, the Rev. Oscar J. Siegler, Mt. Calvary said a study committee had held nearly 30 meetings with the protesting groups of individuals including Dr. Gehrke.

Pastor Siegler, secretary of the Synod's doctrinal commission said that Dr. Gehrke's criticism "went beyond matters that were in controversy." He said the committee repeatedly expressed willingness to continue discussions.

The Wisconsin Synod regards virtually every activity as an aspect of church fellowship requiring prior agreement on doctrine. It has leveled the charge of false doctrine against the Missouri Synod which takes a more liberal view.

May Sever Relations

The floor committee of the Wisconsin Synod's convention at Wisconsin Lutheran High School, 330 North Glenview Avenue has been considering whether to recommend severing relations with the Missouri Synod over the issue. The committee was expected to bring in its report late Tuesday.

Dr. Gehrke was the second member of Northwestern's faculty and the fourth member of the Wisconsin Synod to accept teaching positions with the Missouri in recent weeks.

"It is with genuine regret that I leave the synod and especially the college," he declared.

Dr. Gehrke said his position had been known for some time to synod officials. He said he had filed an official protest with the synod in 1955 objecting to the use of certain scriptural passages as a basis for his synod's argument.

"Simply Harrassed Us"

"When we criticize in a very careful way the fellowship thesis of the synod's doctrinal commission we are certainly criticizing a document which was up for discussion," Dr. Gehrke said.

"But the leadership did not wait for the synod to pass on this presentation. It simply harrassed us, claiming that our criticism was not just a criticism of the committee, but of the historic stand of the Wisconsin Synod."

(The article concludes with a discussion of action to suspend building projects at teacher colleges and the matter of whether to officially endorse the Girl Pioneers or not.)

Tuesday, August 15, 1961

Journal Final Edition - Front Page

STATE SYNOD ASKED TO CUT TIES WITH MISSOURI GROUP

A resolution calling for suspension of relations with the Lutheran

Church - Missouri Synod was presented Thursday afternoon to the 36th convention of the Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod.

Delegates in session at the Wisconsin Lutheran High School, 330 North Glenview Avenue received the recommendations from the convention's floor committee on church union matters. The committee has been considering the Wisconsin Synod's charge of false doctrine in the Missouri Synod.

The resolution is expected to set off a debate that might continue until the close of the convention scheduled for Thursday.

"Stern Admonition"

In its resolution the committee addressed a "stern admonition" to the Missouri Synod although it said it was "not passing judgment on the personal faith of Missouri Synod members."

It said the Wisconsin Synod, despite the recommendations, was ready to continue its support of joint projects of the Lutheran Synodical Conference of which the Missouri and Wisconsin Synods are principle members. These projects include activities in the educational and welfare fields. The home for aged Lutherans in Wisconsin is an example.

The chief issue between the synods is the doctrine of fellowship. The issue came to a head in the principles embodied in a recent document on fellowship prepared by the Missouri Synod's theological faculties. The doctrine involves the question of religious fellowship - pulpit, altar and prayer, and joint church work with other Lutherans who are not in doctrinal agreement with the synodical conference.

Full Accord Demanded

The Wisconsin Synod maintains that there can be no religious fellowship or joint church work with other church bodies unless full doctrinal agreement has been reached. It further maintains that this has been the historical scriptural position of the synodical conference. It contended that the Missouri Synod document constituted a radical departure from this scriptural principle.

Specifically, the Wisconsin Synod charges that leaders and official boards of the Missouri have for a number of years engaged in joint devotions, prayer and church work with leaders and boards of church bodies not in full doctrinal agreement with them. The Wisconsin Synod has objected particularly to Missouri Synod activities with churches of the National Lutheran Council which represents the majority of Lutherans in America.

Impasse Declared

Because the Missouri Synod's doctrinal unity commission subscribes to and defends these principles and practices, the Wisconsin Synod's commission of doctrinal matters has declared that discussions have reached an impasse.

Together the 2,500,000 member Missouri Synod and the 350,000 member Wisconsin Synod have more than 100 congregations in the Milwaukee area.

The Missouri and Wisconsin Synods are regarded as the most conservative of Lutheran bodies.

Wednesday, August 16, 1961

Picture Page

SYNOD OPENS DEBATE ON LUTHERAN DISPUTE

Indications Are That Issue Would Not Be Decided Until Last Hours of Meeting

The Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod late Tuesday began what may be a marathon debate on a proposal to sever relations with the Lutheran Church - Missouri Synod, its long time partner in religious education and welfare programs.

After more than two hours the discussion was still in a preliminary stage and convention officials set aside four periods in their agenda for the debate Wednesday.

There were indications that the issue might not be decided until the closing hours of the Synod's 36th convention Thursday.

Would Mean Disruption

Adoption of the resolution submitted by the convention's floor committee on church union matters would mean the disruption of the 89 year old Lutheran Synodical Conference, which includes the 2,469,000 member Missouri Synod and the 352,000 member Wisconsin Synod as well as the smaller synod of Evangelical Lutheran Churches and the Evangelical Lutheran Synod.

Under a suspended fellowship clergymen of the two synods no longer would exchange pulpits. Congregations would not admit members of the opposing synod at communion and in extreme cases it might mean that members could not pray together.

Has Different Contention

The Wisconsin Synod teaches that every expression of faith including worship, prayer and almost every phase of church work lies on the same plane and is governed by the same set of principles which require full agreement on doctrine.

The Missouri Synod contends on the other hand that prayer with other Christians may be permissible depending on the occasion, the character and the results to be expected from such prayer.

Other points of conflict between the synods include the Missouri Synod's participation in scouting and the military chaplain program and its cooperation in some areas with the National Lutheran Council, the cooperative agency of other Lutheran church bodies in the United States.

The Wisconsin Synod also objects to prayers the Missouri Synod has held with other Lutherans at meetings to discuss unity proposals and other conferences.

Explanation Given

The Rev. Erwin J. Habeck, the Wisconsin Synod's first vice president and pastor of Bethesda Lutheran Church here, explained that the Wisconsin Synod in refusing fellowship with other church bodies did not accuse the latter of denying God or salvation in Jesus Christ.

"When two people begin to practice fellowship including prayer, it means that they say to each other, 'We can be together and the differences that exist between us are not important.'" Pastor Habeck said.

The resolution noted that differences between the synods had been under discussion for the last 22 years and in that time the Wisconsin Synod "has lodged many admonitions and protests with the Lutheran Church - Missouri Synod . . . to win her from the path that leads to liberalism in doctrine and practice."

"Our admonitions have largely gone unheeded and the issues have remained unsolved," the resolutions added.

The floor committee said that in recommending suspension of fellowship "We are not passing judgment on the personal faith of any of the Lutheran Church - Missouri Synod."

A similar resolution was voted down by the Wisconsin Synod after a long debate in 1957. Since then the synod has been in a state of protesting fellowship with the Missouri Synod.

Thursday, August 17, 1961

SHARP DEBATE ERRUPTS AT LUTHERAN MEETING

Charge of Intimidation in Interpretation by Wisconsin Synod is Hotly Disputed

A statement that the Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod had "intimidated" others by its strict interpretation of the principles governing association with other Lutherans led to sharp words Wednesday afternoon at the Synod's 36th convention here.

His face white the Rev. Oscar J. Naumann, president of the Wisconsin Synod, interrupted to say, "those statements I will not allow. I stand before God that our men worked in an evangelical manner. I resent the word "intimidation,"

The Rev. John Daniel, Bethlehem, Pennsylvania, president of the Lutheran Synodical Conference started the exchange when he asserted that the Wisconsin Synod had presented its case to others in the conference as "authoritative, complete and scriptural."

Suspension Proposed

The argument occurred in the debate on a proposal that the Wisconsin Synod suspend fellowship with the Lutheran Church - Missouri Synod. It has accused the Missouri Synod of false doctrine which the Missouri Synod denies. The Lutherans are members of the Lutheran Synodical Conference along with the Synod of Evangelical Lutheran Churches, of which Pastor Daniel is a member, and the Evangelical Lutheran Synod.

The debate was still in progress as the convention drew near the scheduled adjournment Thursday at Wisconsin Lutheran High School, 330 North Glenview Avenue.

Pastor Daniel asserted that in the doctrinal discussions which led to the deadlock between the Wisconsin and Missouri Synods, the Wisconsin Synod's attitude was "You must accept this principle (the Synod's presentation on church fellowship) or else show us where we are wrong."

"These theses intimidated because they were presented as the final word," he added.

After Pastor Naumann's protest Pastor Daniel sought to smooth ruffled feelings, but refused to retreat from his charge of an unyielding attitude.

"I don't mean there was personal intimidation," he declared. "Personal relations on the doctrinal unity committee were very friendly. It was just that the statements at times were so final. I am glad to see here that there is some chance for give and take."

"There is as much chance for give and take as the scriptures allow," Pastor Naumann retorted.

Recess Halts Debate

"When one is granted the floor, I think he should be careful in his choice of words," the synod executive said.

A recess ended the exchange.

The Rev. Dr. Henry Koch of Greenleaf, Wisconsin quoted from a letter to President Naumann from overseas theologians who took part in the intersynodical negotiations. The letter said that the Wisconsin Synod's stand on church fellowship was unscriptural. Dr. Koch said he agreed.

The Rev. Ernest H. Wendland, Benton Harbor, Michigan was spokesman for another group of delegates who contended that the synod's position was unclear.

Presentation Queried

The Rev. Norman Berg, Plymouth, Michigan, secretary elect of the Wisconsin Synod said the confusion might indicate the Synod's presentation was inadequate.

The Rev. Carl Lawrenz, president of Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary, Mequon and chairman of the Wisconsin Synod's commission on doctrine matters complained that the Missouri Synod's representatives had not only prayed with Lutherans outside of the synodical conference, at various gatherings, but had held joint communion services. This was apparently a reference to communion services for service men. The Missouri Synod and the National Lutheran Council worked together in the military chaplaincy.

Complaints are Voiced

Many delegates took the floor to complain that the Missouri Synod had departed from the traditional and what the Wisconsin Synod regarded as scriptural practices followed for many years.

The Rev. Oscar Siegler, Mt. Calvary, Wisconsin, secretary of the Wisconsin Synod's doctrinal commission said that National Lutheran Council could be distinguished from "persistent errorists," with whom strict confessional Lutherans under a Biblical injunction should not cooperate.

Missouri View Given

The Rev. James P. Schaeffer, associate pastor of Atonement Lutheran Church here, asked the Rev. Dr. Martin H. Franzmann, St. Louis, the

Missouri Synod's official spokesman at the convention whether the Missouri Synod agreed that it might hold joint prayer with "persistent errorists."

"No," Dr. Franzmann replied. "But we do maintain that when a man is willing to submit to the scrutiny of the Word of God and the Lutheran Confessions he is no longer a persistent errorist."

This was a defense of unity discussions which the Missouri Synod has held with other Lutheran church bodies.

Friday, August 18, 1961

Front Page

WISCONSIN SYNOD VOTES TO SPLIT WITH MISSOURI

Lutheran Group Decides 124-49 to Cut Off Relations "False Doctrine" Blamed

The Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod voted late Thursday to sever relations with the Lutheran Church - Missouri Synod. The action was hailed as the "Hour of Decision" for the Wisconsin Synod. It was approved 124 - 49 by delegates in the final session of their 36th convention which dragged on 8 hours past expected adjournment at Wisconsin Lutheran High School, 330 North Glenview Avenue.

It formalized a split that had been in the making since 1939. A similar proposal was rejected by the Wisconsin Synod in 1957.

An eleventh hour motion by the Rev. James P. Schaeffer, associate pastor of Atonement Lutheran Church here to submit the issue to a referendum of the synod's 800 congregations in eight states and Ontario was tabled.

Denies False Doctrine

Members of the Wisconsin Synod have accused the Missouri Synod of false doctrine which the Missouri Synod denies. The Wisconsin Synod contends that it can't engage in church work with other Lutheran bodies - not even Lutherans - unless there is full doctrinal agreement between them.

It has complained because the Missouri took a more liberal view, prayed and worked with members of the National Lutheran Council which represents a majority of Lutherans in America. The Wisconsin Synod said that in doing this the Missouri Synod violated the historic scriptural practices of the Lutheran Synodical Conference of which the two synods are the principle members.

Won't Exchange Pulpits

The resolution adopted by delegates provided that "we now suspend fellowship with the Lutheran Church - Missouri Synod . . . with the hope and prayer to God that the (Missouri Synod) will hear in this resolution an evangelical summons to "come to herself and to return to the side of the sister from whom she has estranged herself."

Suspension of fellowship means the pastors of the two church bodies will no longer exchange pulpits and members of the denomination will be excluded from attending communion services in the other.

The suspension creates a doubt upon the future of numerous educational and welfare activities carried on jointly by the synods.

The resolution said the Wisconsin Synod was prepared to continue its support of these "until we can adjust to the new conditions" caused by the suspension.

Delegate Charges Hypocrisy

The resolution also left the door open for future negotiations to remove the deadlock on doctrine. However, a spokesman said that "there would have to be a reason At least there would have to be something so that we could say 'let us hold new discussions.'"

The Rev. Dr. Martin H. Franzmann of St. Louis, Missouri representing the Missouri Synod said the offer appeared to be so hedged that it made further discussions "all but impossible."

A lay delegate, Victor Hartung, Deerfield, Wisconsin, accused the Wisconsin Synod of hypocrisy for insisting on purity of doctrine while "we are letting lost souls slip by, lost forever." He asked, "which is the worse sin, to convey an impression of religious snobbery or to join in communal prayer with others who are more likely better Christians than we are."

Pastor Schaeffer declared that there was nothing in the history of the controversy "that indicated to me that today, 4:30 p.m., August 17, 1961 and no other day, we must break with the Missouri Synod."

Confusion on Definition

He argued that in order to justify the break it would be necessary for each to be so convinced "that it would be as preposterous to vote on that proposition as it would be to put the doctrine of the Trinity to a vote."

However, the Rev. Werner Franzmann, chairman of the floor committee that introduced the resolution, said the step was essential to avoid confused and troubled consciences in the synod. "We have gone the long mile of Christian love with the Missouri Synod with the course and kind of admonition we have given until now," he said. "Today a sterner kind of admonition and love is required."

Pastor Franzmann and Dr. Franzmann are brothers.

After the vote was taken it was apparent that there was some confusion among the delegates over the definition of suspension. Pastor Franzmann said it was used in the sense of termination but with the hope that it would not have the same final quality.

Saturday, August 19, 1961

Split Regretted by Synod Leader

Dr. Behnken, Head
of Missouri Group,
Hopes That Accord
Will Take Place

AUG 19 '61
The Rev. Dr. John W. Behnken, president of the Lutheran church-Missouri synod, said in St. Louis Saturday that the vote here Thursday by the Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran synod to split with the Missouri group was greatly regretted.

"It saddens us that the Wisconsin synod felt constrained to take that step," he said. "We hope and pray that agreement will take place."

Dr. Behnken said no meetings

were planned at present to try to heal differences.

The Wisconsin group has accused the Missouri synod of false doctrine because it has worked and prayed with other church bodies, including other Lutheran groups, even though there was not full doctrinal agreement between them. The Missouri synod has denied that it is guilty of false doctrine.

Dr. Behnken said Saturday: "God has given us agreement in practically all doctrines of Scripture. Our disagreements are in the practical field, the application of principles."

When two synods agree on scriptural matters, he said, "then by all means they ought to stay together."