

# *A History of Edmund C. Reim*

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In the year 1521, a man by the name of Martin Luther found himself standing before a group of German princes at a meeting called the Diet of Worms. In the previous years before this meeting took place, Martin Luther had made quite a name for himself with his preaching and teaching that adhered to the truth and purity of the Word of God, but did not fall in line with what the church was teaching at the time. Summoned to the Diet of Worms, the emperor hoped that Martin would admit that his beliefs concerning the Bible were wrong. After prayerful consideration, Martin vehemently stated that he would not recant unless his beliefs could be proven wrong by the Word of God. There would be no other way, his conscience was bound by the Word of God, and based on it, he could not and would not take back anything he had said. For Martin this refusal to do so incurred some pretty severe consequences, including an edict by the emperor which declared him an outlaw, giving anyone the right to kill him after twenty days.

To say that Edmund Reim and Martin Luther were exactly alike might be stretching things a bit far. To say that Edmund Reim and Martin Luther shared nothing in common would be unfair. No matter how many connections may be drawn, the most important characteristic Edmund Reim and Martin Luther shared was unyielding adherence to the truth and purity of God's Word. When one takes a close look at the life of Edmund Reim, the first thing that stands out is the utmost esteem which he had for the Word of God. In fact, he held the Word of God so near and dear to him that when its

truth and purity was seemingly being compromised in the Wisconsin Synod's dealing with the Missouri Synod over doctrinal differences, he could not by conscience allow himself to be part of the Wisconsin Synod any longer. This paper will focus on the history of Edmund C. Reim as he strove to defend the truth and purity of God's Word. Heeding the words of Jesus who tells us in the book of Matthew, "*let your light shine before men, that they may see your good deeds and praise your Father in heaven,*" Edmund Reim was a faithful servant of the Lord who remained "evangelical to the end."

"Pastor, teacher, scholar, student, gentlemen, friend --- Professor Reim was all of these. But above all, he was a Christian man who gave all glory to God through the grace that is in Christ Jesus."<sup>1</sup>

Edmund C. Reim was born on February 12, 1892 in New Ulm, Minnesota to Professor and Mrs. Adolph Reim. It was in New Ulm that young Edmund spent his earlier years. Following in the footsteps of his father, Edmund enrolled at Northwestern College in Watertown, Wisconsin where he began his studies for full-time service in the pastoral ministry. Upon graduation, Edmund went to the Lutheran Seminary in Wauwatosa, Wisconsin where he completed his studies for the ministry. In 1914, Edmund graduated from the Lutheran Seminary and later that year accepted his first call to Kenosha, Wisconsin where he served as an associate at Friedens congregation. In 1915, the Lord united Edmund Reim and Selma Schaller in marriage, and in the years to come the Lord would bless this marriage with one daughter and three sons. Pastor Edmund Reim's mission work in the southwest part of the city of Kenosha eventually led to the establishing of another congregation by the name of St. Luke's. After establishing

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<sup>1</sup> Gullerud, C.M. *In Memorium*. Journal of Theology. (Mankato, MN: Publication Church of the Lutheran Confession. 1969.) Volume 9. Number 1. Page 1.

another congregation in the southeast part of Kenosha called Bethany, Pastor Edmund Reim accepted the call to St. John's of Fox Lake, Wisconsin.

Realizing the value of Christian education and following the words of Jesus who says in Matthew 19, "*Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of heaven belongs to these,*" Pastor Reim tried at length to convince the members of St. John's to establish a Christian Day School for bringing up children in the training of the Lord. Pastor Norbert Reim, Edmund's son, remembers the situation well.

"He tried for years to get the congregation in Fox Lake to agree to call a teacher for a school. The members said they could not afford two salaries, but agreed that they would call a teacher later if he would start the school by teaching it himself, while continuing to carry on the work of the ministry as well."<sup>2</sup>

Longing to make his desire for a Christian Day School in Fox Lake a reality, Pastor Reim took the members of St. John's up on their offer. Reim started the school and became its first teacher. Not only was he now carrying the full-time responsibility of shepherding the Lord's flock as pastor of St. John's, but he was also carrying the responsibility of teaching in its school on a full-time basis! Norbert remembers his father's work ethic which carried on into his later years at the Seminary as well.

"In our younger years at Fox Lake, when he was serving both as pastor and teacher he had little time to spend with us kids playing ball or going fishing. When we went over to our parents' home at the Sem to sample some of Mom's baking, we would almost always find the study door closed. Dad was busy."<sup>3</sup>

It was but by His grace that the Lord strengthened Reim and enabled him to carry out this double ministry for seven years. Norbert recalls the tremendous strain this workload placed on his father who managed to patiently endure it throughout those seven years.

"So he started an 8 grade school in a fellowship room behind the sanctuary. This continued for at least seven years, until he could no longer carry the double

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<sup>2</sup> Reim, Norbert. *Letter*. ( Sun City, Arizona. March, 1999 ), 2.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid*, 2.

load. The congregation could not afford to pay two salaries, so the school was closed. Meanwhile, he drove his children 9 miles away to a parochial school in Beaver Dam.”<sup>4</sup>

Unable to carry the double load and remain one hundred percent faithful to both callings, Pastor Reim stepped down from teaching in the school. Fortunately, this did not squelch Reim’s zeal for Christian education though. In fact, it increased his fervor all the more. His commitment to Christian education was so strong that Norbert remembers the time that his father said he would accept the first call to a church that also had a school.

“Dad said he would accept the first call that came to him from a congregation with a Christian Day School, and so he did. The thought has come to me often that my father was so strongly committed to parochial education during a time when the public schools were models of virtue compared to what they are today.”<sup>5</sup>

In 1930, the Lord saw fit to call Reim to serve him at St. Paul’s located in the town of Calvary, Wisconsin. Believing that it was the Lord’s will for him to serve at this church which also had a school, Reim accepted the call to St. Paul’s.

“The first congregation with a school and a teacher to call my father was St. Paul’s congregation in a rural area ( Calvary, WI ) east of Fond du Lac WI. My sister Jeannette contributes the fact that a day after Dad accepted the call to St. Paul’s, he received a call to teach at Northwestern College!”<sup>6</sup>

In 1935, Pastor Reim accepted a call to serve at Trinity Lutheran congregation of Neenah, Wisconsin. Reim’s daughter Jeannette remembers the increased workload her father took on himself. At the same time, she also remembers the good humored and fun loving spirit of her father.

“When we moved to Neenah the congregation he served was larger and he seemed to develop a great capacity for work. He did have a funny bone, as evident on Saturday night when, after spending hours in his study he would come stomping down the stairs, sounding as if he had two wooden legs. This

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<sup>4</sup> *Ibid*, 2.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid*, 2.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid*, 5.

sound would put our bulldog into a frenzy of joyful anticipation. We all enjoyed the break which meant his sermon was progressing satisfactorily.”<sup>7</sup>

During his years at Neenah, Reim served on the Synod’s board of trustees. No matter how great his workload seemed Pastor Reim continued to place his family first, remaining a loving father who always wanted the best for his children.

“I can’t imagine my father without his love for his Lord being the guiding star for his and all our lives. It permeated his and our lives. He was a gentle father and preferred to let us learn by our mistakes.”<sup>8</sup>

In September of 1940, Pastor Edmund Reim became Professor Edmund Reim, accepting the call to serve at Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary. Reim was called to fill the position that would be left vacant by Pieper’s retirement. Originally, the Board at Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary wanted someone who was highly competent in German in order to continue the emphasis on the German language studies. Norbert tells us how Pastor Reim wrote the Board inquiring as to why they would choose to do so.

“My father wrote to the Board to question the wisdom of that decision, since the students were preparing to serve congregations in English speaking areas where use of German would gradually be decreasing. The Board came to agree with this viewpoint, and called Reim to the vacant position.”<sup>9</sup>

At this time, Norbert was in his middle year at the Seminary. Upon hearing the news that his father had been called to serve as a professor at the Seminary, he was a bit reluctant to approve of his father taking the call.

“I must admit that I was hoping that he would decline the call, since I was very conscious as to how rough the Sem students were on Profs that they thought were not giving them as much ‘meat’ as they thought they should be receiving.”<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> Reim, Jeannette. *Letter*. ( Waupaca, WI. April, 1999 ), 2.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid*, 1.

<sup>9</sup> *Norbert Reim Letter*, 2.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid*, 2.

However, guided by the Lord in his preparation for class and in his lecturing, Professor Reim went on to faithfully serve as professor at the Seminary, winning the respect of the students he taught. For Norbert, this hard-earned respect which his father had won calmed his apprehensiveness about his father's decision to accept the call to the Sem.

“Well, he did accept the call, and ultimately I was very happy that he did, because he did spend long hours on preparation for his lectures, and he was respected by the students.”<sup>11</sup>

While serving as professor at the Seminary, Reim earned the love and respect of his students, mainly because of his love and respect for them. Reim knew that these students were devoting their lives to the Lord in full-time service in His kingdom. One of Professor Reim's students, retired Pastor John Brenner, remembers the love for the Lord which Professor Reim sought to instill in his students.

“He wanted to instill love for Scripture truth. I have given away a lot of my library but my Triglot which Reim outlines. Even though I have been retired for years, I still study the confessions guided by his outline and notes.”<sup>12</sup>

Professor Reim's love for Scripture dominated his years of teaching at the Seminary. He was a professor who, despite his vast knowledge of Scripture, remained humble and positive in the way he conducted his teaching, as Pastor Brenner recalls:

“He was a humble, yet positive teacher. He, like the rest of the faculty, taught us to respect the ministry as well as loving the calling.”<sup>13</sup>

Professor Reim's love for his students was evident in his preaching, teaching, and in the way he conducted his life. Reim spoke in an evangelical manner, letting God's Word serve as his guide. Even after the Lord called him home, his evangelical manner and love of God's Word was remembered by those who knew him.

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<sup>11</sup> *Ibid*, 2.

<sup>12</sup> Brenner, John. *Response to Questionnaire*. (Saginaw, MI. March 1999), 2.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid*, 2.

“For this we learned – when Professor Reim spoke to us it was ever the product of careful study and a conscientious weighing of every word of the Scripture text. Whether in the pulpit, in the lecture hall, or on the synodical scene, his carefully chosen words revealed that this was not a mere academic display or a striving for effect but came from a heart that was filled with a passion for souls. The message came from a heart that had experienced the love of the Savior and the providential care of a heavenly Father so many a time in days of trial and sore distress.”<sup>14</sup>

Reim’s dedication and devotion to the Word of God led him to defend that Word when it came under attacks by those who did not adhere to its truth and purity. This was evident in his early writings in the Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary Quarterly, which back then was known as the *Quartalschrift*.

“Our flesh is quick to suggest the policy of reasonable compromise, of give and take. To take a little here, to give a little there! This seems to be the essence of sound common sense, the sensible solution to all our troubles – until we remember that these are the matters in which the Word of God is involved, the Word which stands as an Absolute, far beyond petty policies of ‘give and take.’”<sup>15</sup>

It was standing firm on this “Absolute” necessity of keeping God’s Word pure which would eventually find Reim involved in the fellowship issues facing the Wisconsin synod and its then sister synod Missouri in the 1940’s and 50’s. No matter what he did in life, Reim’s greatest joy was the Gospel and he strove to keep that Gospel pure.

“For his greatest joy was in the proclamation of the Gospel, and the polemics entered into the picture only because of a desire to keep the Gospel pure. He served the Wisconsin Synod for many years as secretary of the Standing Committee on Church Union. In this capacity he rendered great service in those troublous years in the Synodical Conference when the liberal spirit was showing itself particularly in the sister synod of Missouri.”<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>14</sup> Gullerud, C.M. *He Preached Christ Crucified*. Lutheran Spokesman. ( Van Nuys, CA: Publication of the CLC. 1969. ) Volume 12. Number 4. Page 4.

<sup>15</sup> Reim, Edmund. *The Problem of Scriptural Proof*. *Quartalschrift*. ( Milwaukee: NPH. 1957. ) Volume 54. Number 1. Page 3.

<sup>16</sup> *In Memorium*, 1 – 2.



When the truth and purity of the Gospel seemed to be in danger of being compromised, Reim went into action. In the 1930's, Missouri began theological discussions with the American Lutheran Church in hopes to eventually establish fellowship with them. While not in full fellowship with the American Lutheran Church at the time, Missouri began joint mission work with them, among other endeavors, and continued to do so throughout the 1940's. In 1950, Missouri joined the ALC in adopting "The Common Confession." In essence, "The Common Confession" that Missouri had adopted did not fully adhere Scripturally to the truth and purity of God's Word. Because Missouri had done this, despite admonition from Wisconsin not to, the Wisconsin Synod declared itself to be in a state of protest with Missouri in 1953. It was during the 1950's that Reim found himself at the frontlines of the battle between Missouri and Wisconsin.

"By 1941 he was already serving as the secretary of the Union Committee. By 1950 the situation was already getting complicated and difficult to keep straight. Prof. Reim prepared a report for the Union Committee, 'A brief survey of the Intersynodical Situation' which was an attempt to clear the muddying waters. In the same year he edited and in part authored a booklet, 'Where do we stand? An Outline of the Wisconsin Position.'"<sup>17</sup>

Pastor Brenner recalls all the work that was piled onto Reim during these years of controversy between Wisconsin and Missouri.

"Reim became most involved in the many meetings and papers on the fellowship doctrines. He became so involved that my father felt that he ( Reim ) was like Atlas carrying the entire battle on his own shoulders."<sup>18</sup>

The purpose of the Union Committee on which Reim served was to evaluate the situation which existed between Wisconsin and Missouri. The Union Committee stressed the position on church fellowship which God himself lays out for us in his Word, namely full agreement in all areas of doctrine and practice.

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<sup>17</sup> Wildauer, Martin, *Professor Edmund Reim – A man of principle.* ( Mequon, WI. 1990. ), 4.

“...the committee is certainly in a strong position to insist on an uncompromising application of its declared principle: that true unity can be established ‘only by the removal of such differences and by full agreement in doctrine and practice on the basis of the Scriptures and the Confessions.’”<sup>19</sup>

The 1955 Saginaw Convention brought about a major awakening in regards to Wisconsin’s stance with Missouri. At this convention, it was reported how Missouri had continually rejected Wisconsin’s brotherly admonition to break fellowship with the ALC. Because they had not done so, it was the firm conviction of the Standing Committee and the recommendation of said Committee to the convention floor that fellowship with Missouri should be terminated. However, at this time, fellowship was not terminated. Instead, the motion was passed that the Saginaw Convention’s resolution would be presented to the “recessed convention” in 1956. This vote postponement upset Reim so deeply that he tendered his resignation. However, being urged not to resign at this time by his brothers in the ministry, Reim continued on in the Wisconsin Synod. Church historian E.C. Fredrich records it this way:

“Some fifty convention delegates formally protested the vote postponement to a special convention to be held in 1956 after Missouri’s had met. Among them was Professor Reim, who tendered his resignation as secretary of the Standing Committee in Matters of Church Union and also put his resignation as seminary president at the disposal of the synod and its seminary board. The convention voted unanimously to ask him to continue on the committee. It also urged the board not to accept the resignation.”<sup>20</sup>

In 1957, the New Ulm Convention met in hopes to finally resolve the matter in regards to Wisconsin’s continuing fellowship with Missouri. The convention majority in the Standing Committee still saw reasons to hope for the settlement of differences between Wisconsin and Missouri and desired to seek further negotiations. The

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<sup>18</sup> Brenner Questionnaire, 3.

<sup>19</sup> Reim, Edmund. *Committee on Doctrinal Unity Resumes Activities*. Quartalschrift. Volume 45. Number 2. Page 115.

convention minority in the Floor Committee took a different stance. It was their explicit desire to terminate fellowship with Missouri based on the work done at the Saginaw Convention. The Floor Committee presented this resolution to the convention for a vote. Unfortunately for the minority Floor Committee, the motion lost by a 61 to 77 vote. In its place the resolution passed that Wisconsin would continue doctrinal discussions in hopes that full unity would eventually be restored.

This vote cut Reim to the heart. He had been caught up in the battle for many years. Now he was convinced that his synod was not adhering to the principles laid down in Scripture concerning this matter. On August 15<sup>th</sup>, 1957, it was a matter of conscience that led Edmund Reim to tender his resignation once again. This time all the urging in the world would not be able to convince him otherwise.

“But there came a time when Prof. Reim was convinced that his synod was temporizing, using time for admonishing an erring church body when the Word of God called for separation; and so the painful hour came when, in obedience to Scripture, he withdrew from membership in the Wisconsin Synod.”<sup>21</sup>

Reim was convinced that the Wisconsin Synod had no other choice but to terminate fellowship with the Missouri Synod at that time. Why did Reim feel this way? Why did Reim feel compelled to resign? The reason Reim felt this way was based on the words the Holy Spirit wrote through the apostle Paul in the book of Romans.

***“I urge you, brothers, to watch out for those who cause divisions and put obstacles in your way that are contrary to the teaching you have learned. Keep away from them. For such people are not serving our Lord Christ, but their own appetites. By smooth talk and flattery they deceive the minds of naïve people.” Romans 16: 17, 18 ( NIV )***

In Reim’s opinion, these were the words which made the need for immediate separation between the Wisconsin Synod and the Missouri Synod. By their actions, Missouri had

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<sup>20</sup> Fredrich. E.C. *The Wisconsin Synod Lutherans.* ( Milwaukee: NPH. 1992. ), 204.

proved time and time again that they were “causing divisions and putting obstacles” in the way of the truth and purity of God’s Word. The question was never “should we break with Missouri,” it was “when should we break with Missouri?” Reim writes concerning this matter in his “Open Letter to the Protest Committee.”

“Judgment indeed, but judgment of the most patient and careful kind, as long as we are studying the question of whether Romans 16: 17 applies to a given case. But when that has been determined, when a Synod speaks as ours did at Saginaw, when official word is sent out ‘that this passage does apply to the Missouri Synod because of its persistent adherence to its unionistic practices,’ when the Northwestern Lutheran in its post-convention number reports the unanimous adoption of ‘the Preamble, which reiterated the 1953 charges of our Synod and applied Romans 16: 17 – 18’ – when the situation becomes so clear, then surely Synod has by its own words recognized that it has passed out of the area of judgment into that of action, and that now simple obedience is indeed the only Scriptural course that is left, since it has been compelled to conclude that it has been dealing with ‘causers’ of divisions and offenses. Does that leave any alternative but to ‘avoid?’”<sup>22</sup>

Indeed there was no alternative but to mark and avoid Missouri in regards to practicing fellowship, these principles are laid out for us in Scripture. The exact timetable as to how fast fellowship must be terminated is not laid out for us in Scripture. In this regard we must use human judgment which falls in step with what is laid out for us in Scripture. Reim himself states this in his “Open Letter:”

“Do we ‘question whether the matter of applying Romans 16: 17ff. to Missouri leaves room at all for any human judgment?’ Is the record of the many years of patient dealing with Missouri to be so lightly set aside? Surely, the very duration of these dealings shows that we knew ‘of no simple mechanical formula’ which we might apply, but were trying to see the problem in its full scope and with all its implications, in the meantime exercising the best judgment of which we were capable.”<sup>23</sup>

When dealing with a controversy such as this, it has been said that we must be careful not to break fellowship at the drop of a hat. Brotherly admonition in the Lord

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<sup>21</sup> *In Memorium*, 2.

<sup>22</sup> Reim, Edmund. *Open Letter to the Protest Committee*. WLS Essay File. ( Rhinelander, WI. 1958. ), 5.

encourages us to work through it on the basis of Scripture in hopes that full doctrinal unity will be reestablished. Those who try to go about this too fast end up being legalistic, those who allow the process to go too slowly only allow the error to take root and spread. Reim himself makes this observation in an essay he wrote on church fellowship and its implications during the earlier years of his ministry.

“For in this matter Fellowship has no choice – if it would remain a true one. For Truth is at stake. Truth cannot compromise with Error. When the two meet halfway, Error is still error, but Truth has ceased to be truth. Testimony is at stake. When Testimony loses its note of certainty and conceded an equal place to Contradiction, Testimony is weakened thereby.”<sup>24</sup>

For the sake of Truth, error must not be allowed equal footing, if it is allowed equal footing, error will eventually dominate. It was always Reim’s hope during the doctrinal discussions between them that the Wisconsin Synod would resolve its issues with Missouri and that peace would result, but not at the expense of God’s Word.

“What will our answer be? Peace can be restored, - purchased at the price of surrender. But what kind of peace would this be? A peace purchased at the price of disobedience to that word of the Lord ( Ezekiel 33 ) which bids the watchmen unto the house of Israel to hear the Word at His mouth and to warn them from Him. That is a cost that none of us will want to assume – not even for the sake of perpetuating the Synodical Conference.”<sup>25</sup>

Because Reim feared that the Word of God was being compromised by the Wisconsin Synod, he left. Reim left, not wanting to go the lonely way of separation, but knowing in his conscience that for him, at this time, there was no other way.

“I note the obvious sincerity of your closing paragraph in which you plead with those of us who have severed our relations with the Synod to reconsider the step which we felt bound to take. Nothing would please me more than such a solution – if it could be done without violating the very conscience and the very

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<sup>23</sup> *Ibid*, 5.

<sup>24</sup> Reim, Edmund. *Church Fellowship and its Implications*. WLS Essay File. ( 1934 ), 32.

<sup>25</sup> Reim, Edmund. *Where do we Stand?* ( Milwaukee: NPH. 1950. ), 64.

principles for the sake of which I have chosen the lonely way of separation from a Synod which for so many years I have tried faithfully to serve.”<sup>26</sup>

Against the urging of his brothers in the ministry to stay, Reim left the Wisconsin Synod after many years of faithful service to the synod he loved so dearly. His daughter Jeannette recalls the void she sensed in her father’s life after his traumatic split with the Wisconsin Synod.

“At the time my father left the WELS it was not to join the CLC. He felt there was nothing but a void ahead of him but that God would lead him. He and mother felt they had no home. In the fall he was asked to assist in the Rhinelander congregation since their pastor was ill. He had no feeling of where his life was heading but had faith that the Lord would direct him.”<sup>27</sup>

The Professor/President went by the name of Pastor again and served the Lord by becoming an assistant pastor in a congregation in Rhinelander, Wisconsin. After a year of service in Rhinelander, Reim went on to serve in the church body known as the Church of the Lutheran Confession.

“The Church of the Lutheran Confession ( CLC ) is made up largely of pastors, teachers and congregations who withdrew from our Synod after our 1959 convention because the Synod was not yet ready to terminate fellowship with the Missouri Synod. Since the close of our 1961 convention at which we did suspend fellowship with the Missouri Synod, representatives corresponded and twice met with the CLC Board of Doctrine.”<sup>28</sup>

The Church of the Lutheran Confession was formed by those who, like Reim, had also severed ties with the Wisconsin Synod when Wisconsin refused to terminate fellowship with Missouri. The main difference between the Church of the Lutheran Confession and the Wisconsin Synod lies in the following statement by Fredrich.

“The CLC contended and still contends that this can only be done, once the error is marked, outside the framework of fellowship. Wisconsin always contended and still contends for the duty to admonish the brother that is erring as a weak

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<sup>26</sup> *Open Letter to the Protest Committee*, 1.

<sup>27</sup> *Jeannette Zemlock Letter*, 2.

<sup>28</sup> Reim, Edmund. *Wisconsin Replies*. Journal of Theology. 1964. Volume 5. Number 4. Pgs. 42 – 43.

brother while that is possible. The necessity to break when such admonition is no longer possible confronted the Wisconsin Synod in 1961. The members of the CLC judged that to be too late.”<sup>29</sup>

Despite the fact that Reim did not know how he would serve the Lord in his years after the break with the Wisconsin Synod, his Lord did. Reim’s Lord proved that he would continue to guide and direct his faithful servant’s footsteps according to His Word, and indeed he did, finding a place for his servant to continue to serve him. His daughter Jeannette recalls what the Lord’s plans were for her father.

“However the Lord did have plans for him. The pastors who were forming the CLC asked him to come to Mankato to help teach future teachers and pastors. When the CLC schools relocated in Eau Claire he continued to teach until he died.”<sup>30</sup>

In 1959, the Church of the Lutheran Confession had started its own school in Mankato, Minnesota. This school, which was called Immanuel at the time, would later be moved to Eau Claire, Wisconsin. Reim would serve as a professor in this school until the day the Lord saw fit to call him home to himself in heaven. In addition to these duties at Immanuel, Reim served in many other capacities as well.

“When the Church of the Lutheran Confession was organized, he served in many capacities: as Dean and Professor of its Theological Seminary which he helped establish, as editor of its Theological Journal, as essayist at conventions and pastoral conferences, as member of the Board of Doctrine, as counselor and a Christian brother.”<sup>31</sup>

In 1961, the Church of the Lutheran Confession started its own theological journal which was called the Journal of Theology. Reim served as editor of this publication. Reim’s evangelical attitude permeated the pages of this journal. In the forward to the

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<sup>29</sup> Fredrich, 207 – 208.

<sup>30</sup> *Jeannette Zemlock Letter*, 2.

<sup>31</sup> *In Memoriam*, 3.

very first volume of the journal, Reim writes that the purpose of the journal would not be to feed on the controversy which existed between the Wisconsin and Missouri synods.

“For to live on controversy alone can become a monotonous diet. Or, to change the metaphor a bit, it would prove to be a sorry luxury, one that we simply cannot afford. By such a purely negative policy we would be depriving ourselves of the blessed benefits that come only through the positive study of Scripture and its saving doctrines. For it is this that serves so wonderfully for the edification, not only of the individual Bible student, but as we read in Ephesians 4, of the entire body of Christ.”<sup>32</sup>

Reim continued to warn those of the Church of the Lutheran Confession not to take smug pride in the controversy which was still plaguing the Wisconsin Synod, doing so would not be beneficial to them, nor would it be in keeping in step with the Spirit.

“In the meantime let us of the CLC look to our own state of mind – and heart. Let us not fail to see that this is a time of testing also for us. The very fact of our previous membership in, or fellowship with Wisconsin makes it impossible to be indifferent to what is happening within that body. Certainly, if there should be but a momentary flicker of smug or gleeful satisfaction over this painful spectacle, if we should but attempt a pose of superiority, we must recognize this for the diabolical temptation that it is and banish it accordingly. The harm that we ourselves would suffer thereby would be the greater evil.”<sup>33</sup>

It was always Reim’s hope that the Church of the Lutheran Confession and the Wisconsin Synod could rejoin in the broader fellowship they once shared as brothers and sisters in the same synod.

“doing this for the sake of preserving the truths that we once held jointly with so many brethren, and in the hope of serving, if God will grant His grace, toward a restoration of the wider fellowship that once we enjoyed.”<sup>34</sup>

However, Reim emphasized the fact that this fellowship could only be restored if Wisconsin found the strength to break with Missouri.

“Wisconsin has been through a long and wrenching struggle over the question of whether and when to withdraw from a fellowship that had lost its validity and

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<sup>32</sup> Reim, Edmund. *Forward*. Journal of Theology. 1961. Volume 1. Number 1. Page 5.

<sup>33</sup> Reim, Edmund. *Wisconsin Action*. Journal of Theology. 1961. Volume 1. Number 4. Pages 43 – 44.

<sup>34</sup> *Forward*, 7 – 8.



meaning. It will find reassurance in the Word that tells all of us that it is indeed right to separate, even as it is always right to avoid those that are causing divisions and offenses contrary to the doctrine that we have learned.”<sup>35</sup>

Indeed Reim knew what Wisconsin was still going through in its struggles with the Missouri synod. Reim hoped and prayed that Wisconsin would be strengthened by the Lord and enabled by Him to break with Missouri according to God’s Word. Finally, in 1961, it happened. On the basis of God’s Word, fellowship between Wisconsin and Missouri was terminated. Reim wrote in the *Journal of Theology* how the Church of the Lutheran Confession rejoiced upon hearing this news.

“When word reached our Spokane convention of 1961 of Wisconsin’s action in suspending fellowship with Missouri we rejoiced in the fact, but pointed to “issues that still lie between us,” listing three points pertaining to the questions of Fellowship, the Clarity of Scripture, and the Call.”<sup>36</sup>

For Wisconsin and Missouri, the split had finally been made. For Wisconsin and the Church of the Lutheran Confession, there were still differences which needed to be resolved. Reim knew the work that <sup>lay</sup> lie ahead of Wisconsin and the CLC. Reim desired to see an agreement, an agreement based fully on the Word of God.

“All this means work, work that is necessary, work that we dare not shun if any resultant agreement is really to be an honest one. For this then let us gird ourselves. As for the considerations that spring from the flesh, let us recognize them for what they are. If they be the weariness and indifference that would lead one to declare an agreement where there is no agreement, let us remember that such methods will never produce a cure.”<sup>37</sup>

Reim would never see the day when the cure between the Wisconsin Synod and the Church of the Lutheran Confession would be found. As of today, it still hasn’t been found despite meetings between the CLC and the Wisconsin synod over the years since Wisconsin’s break with Missouri.

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<sup>35</sup> Reim, Edmund. *Wisconsin – Alone?* *Journal of Theology*. 1963. Volume 3. Number 4. Pages 33 – 34.

<sup>36</sup> Reim, Edmund. *Wisconsin – How Big?* *Journal of Theology*. 1963. Volume 3. Number 4. Page 37.

Despite the fact that he would never see a cure brought about, Reim would remain evangelical to the end, continuing to serve his Lord throughout his final days here on earth as one of the Lord's peacemakers.

"He was one of Jesus' peacemakers. He worked with all his energies to prevent the CLC from becoming a belligerent sect. In the formative years he warned again and again of the dangers of legalism and pride."<sup>38</sup>

A full retirement in which he would have the opportunity to do nothing but relax was a luxury Reim would never enjoy. Instead, he continued to serve his Lord full-time, preaching and teaching the truth of God's Word.

"Even in the last year of his life, after he knew that he was dying of cancer, he continued to give of himself, teaching in the seminary and writing articles for the Journal of Theology and the Lutheran Spokesman."<sup>39</sup>

When at last it came time for the Lord to call him home, C.M. Gullerud remembers the following experience he shared at the bedside of Edmund Reim.

"The very last words I heard from his lips was a "thank you" for the word of prayer that the grace of God in Christ would remain with him to the end. And this is the way of faith, that our highest thanks is for the grace of God which is so abundant that it covers all of our soul's great need."<sup>40</sup>

Knowing the works of service prepared in advance for Edmund Reim to do in His kingdom were done; knowing Edmund Reim had served him faithfully for his time of grace here on earth; knowing Edmund Reim was one who had been called by the grace of God and made His own dear child and heir to eternal life through his baptism, the Lord saw fit to deliver Edmund from the suffering of cancer to himself in heaven. The notice in the Journal of Theology recorded Reim's passing in this way:

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<sup>37</sup> Reim, Edmund. *What still remains -- and why?* Journal of Theology. 1964. Vol. 4. Number 2. Pg. 34.

<sup>38</sup> Schaller, W. Jr. *Professor E. Reim Dies.* Lutheran Spokesman. 1969. Volume 12. Number 3. Page 5.

<sup>39</sup> *Ibid*, 5.

<sup>40</sup> Gullerud, C.M. *Sermon at the Chapel Memorial Service for Prof. Edmund Reim.* Journal of Theology. 1969. Volume 9. Number 1. Page 6.

“Professor Edmund Reim has been relieved of all assignments on earth. The Good Master put an end to the toils, the trial, the labors, and the suffering early in the morning of August 22, 1969 at Eau Claire, Wisconsin.”<sup>41</sup>

In today’s world, many go about living their lives serving themselves and getting the most that they can out of life. This wasn’t the case with Edmund Reim. Edmund Reim lived not to serve himself, but to serve his Savior. The words of comfort spoken to those in attendance at Edmund Reim’s memorial service emphasized his service to Christ.

“It is fitting and right that we should, in this remembering, in this memorial service for our teacher and colleague, Prof. Edmund Reim, center our attention upon these truths. This is the way he would have had it. And what better memorial can there be than to make this the occasion for the preaching of Christ in whose service our beloved teacher spent himself.”<sup>42</sup>

The Scripture which Edmund Reim sought to preserve in its truth and purity would continue to be sought out by those who followed him. The Scripture which Edmund Reim devoted his life to preach and teach would continue to be preached and taught. The Scripture which so filled the heart and soul of Edmund Reim would continue to fill the hearts and souls of those to whom it is preached today. In the way he conducted his life out of service to his Lord, indeed Edmund Reim was a faithful servant of the Lord who remained “evangelical to the end.” May God continue to give all of His servants of the Word the ability to go and do likewise.

“In Professor Reim, the Lord gave much to the CLC, and much had now been taken away. Professor Reim was our theologian, and thanks be to the Spirit of God, he was a biblical theologian of the first rank. Before he spoke, he always listened with a carefully trained ear to what his Lord was saying in the Scripture.”<sup>43</sup>

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<sup>41</sup> Schaller, 5.

<sup>42</sup> Gullerud, *Sermon*, 5 – 6.

<sup>43</sup> Schaller, 5.

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