

A SURVEY OF THE  
EIELSEN SYNOD'S SPLITS  
1848 - 1876

Senior Church History  
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Without a doubt, the smallest existing, independent Lutheran Church body today is the minuscule Eielsen Synod. Unofficial statistics placed its 1964 status as the following: 3 pastors, 7 congregations, and 500 baptized members. More recent statistics are simply not available, as was demonstrated when this writer corresponded with the current President of the Eielsen, <sup>Synod</sup> but received no replies. However, the present condition of this church body is not the issue at hand. Instead, we will look at its early history, and try to find the answers as to why this synod split three times within the span of 28 years. The Eielsen Synod was indeed making gains in numerical growth, but just at the point of growth, there was division - first, in 1848; next, in 1856; finally, in 1876.

In order for us to determine why this synod split so much, we need to take a brief look at its founder. For, as we look at these splits, it becomes evident that the person, personality, and character of its founder, Elling Eielsen, played an important role. Born September 19, 1804, in Voss, Norway, Elling Eielsen (Sunve) soon came to adopt an attitude of resentment toward the clergy. He developed this attitude partly because he suffered from deep depression early in his life, having frequent thoughts of suicide. He felt that during his times of depression his pastor was not all that concerned about him. Eielsen finally did come out of his depression by reading Pontoppidan's Explanation of Luther's Large Catechism, or so he claimed.

When one takes into account the fact that Eielsen claimed to have helped himself out of his spiritual problems, combined with the alleged "lack of concern" by his pastor, one can easily see the makings of an anti - clergy movement. Another factor to be taken into consideration is that Eielsen had leanings toward Haugeanism as a result of his father's strong influence upon him.

Eielsen brought this lay - movement attitude with him when he came to America on September 3, 1839. It wasn't long before Eielsen began his efforts to gather (as opposed to "organize") Norwegian Lutherans. Immigrants from Norway had basically two options of church membership at this time: they could join Dietrichson's church body, which was an attempt to duplicate a state church, similar to the one these new citizens of America knew from back home. Or, they could join Eielsen's group. Eielsen gave the sales pitch that "If you have come to this great country to seek a new beginning, then become 'American' as soon as possible, in all areas, and change your ideas of the church as you knew it in Norway." Eielsen soon discovered that he would have to alter his ideas about a church body. Although he detested the whole idea of the clergy of the church in Norway, with "their formal liturgy and garb," yet Eielsen "realized that the Norwegian immigrants would not be satisfied unless they could get regularly ordained pastors, at least to administer the Sacraments." 1

But why Eielsen of all people, in spite of his Haugean leanings, agreed to be ordained is really puzzling - but then, that adjective is characteristic of this synod's entire history.

A possible explanation of the mystery of Eielsen's ordination is that his friends may have advised him to do that, and, as will be seen later, Eielsen could be influenced very easily. Another hypothesis suggests that Eielsen became ordained out of selfishness - wanting to beat Claus Lauritz Clausen to the claim of being the first Norwegian Lutheran pastor to be ordained in America. From the viewpoint of Eielsen's personality, this possibility cannot be automatically ruled out either.

Whatever the reasons may have been, Elling Eielsen was ordained on October 3, 1843, in Chicago, Illinois, by Rev. Francis Alexander Hoffmann. It is known that Hoffmann served as the secretary for the Ministerium of Northern Illinois, but shortly after Eielsen's ordination, Hoffmann left the ministry to pursue a career in banking. As a result of this latter action, a cloud of suspicion was thrown over Eielsen's ordination, and it was questioned whether he had indeed been properly ordained. Most historians, however, seem to believe that Eielsen's was indeed a proper and legitimate ordination.

Even after Eielsen was ordained, there was no attempt by him to organize his followers into congregations. In fact, when the first of the trained ministers from Norway came to America, Eielsen and his followers opposed them. Eielsen and his <sup>1</sup>followers favored an extremely low-church position, bordering on Quakerism. Because of Eielsen's intense dislike for the Norwegian Church's "formal liturgy," he had no liturgy whatsoever - the officiant (for lack of a better term) simply spoke as he was moved.

Rohne states that, "Anyone who had the inner call could preach, whether man or woman; indeed it was said that Mrs. Elling Eielsen preached better than her husband did." 2

Although Eielsen favored an uneducated, lay ministry, this is not to say that he ignored any kind of instruction at all for his people. Rather, Eielsen showed great concern for the instruction of the youth, and it is in this area that he displayed the most quirks of his personality. For example, it was mentioned previously that Eielsen became familiar with Pontoppidan's Explanation of Luther's Large Catechism. Eielsen came to appreciate this work very much, and he intended to use this manual as a means for instructing the children of his following. There was one slight "problem," however, if he were to use this book: he only had one copy of this book, and he was determined to have copies of this book printed exactly like his - including the exact type of print used. Finding no printer with that type of print in Wisconsin, Eielsen walked the entire distance to New York, hearing that a printer there had the type of print he was looking for. Eielsen then carried the entire load of books back to Wisconsin. This incident shows one the relentless determination, in addition to the peculiar nature, of Eielsen.

Eielsen's personality did indeed play an important role in the splits which took place within his synod. He was a determined, even a stubborn man, but yet, one who was easily influenced by others. There is certainly a paradoxical nature about Elling Eielsen. For example, he was opposed to the regular clergy, but yet he himself became ordained, for whatever reasons, he had.

Eielsen was opposed to organization, but yet, he was influenced by his friends, and finally yielded to their requests for organization. Two such friends who advised Eielsen to organize his followers into a synod were Paul Andersen and Ole Andrewson.

Paul Andersen, who had come to Wisconsin in 1843, came under the influence of a Rev. Lemuel Hall, a Presbyterian minister at Geneva, Wis. Hall persuaded Andersen to enroll at Beloit Seminary, and it was here that Andersen began to acquire theological views which simply were foreign to most Norwegians. Andrewson had been associated with the Franckean Synod and the Synod of Northern Illinois. He was of the opinion that the sooner Norwegians became more Americanized, including adapting their religion to a new environment, the better off they would be.

At any rate, Andersen and Andrewson finally, after associating with Eielsen for a short time, convinced Eielsen to organize. On April 13, 1846, these three men met at Jefferson Prairie, Rock County, Wisconsin, to organize a synod. Thus it can truly be said that, "The formation of Eielsen's Synod came about not because of Eielsen but despite him. His two young friends, having observed the efficient and orderly Dietrichson at work, pressed upon Eielsen the need of some kind of organization." 3 Of great importance at this meeting at Jefferson Prairie was the drafting of a constitution, called the "Old Constitution." This constitution was drafted solely by Eielsen, and if one were to look for a single common denominator in all three splits, this would be it. The "Old Constitution" (see Appendix "A") had several serious errors, and Eielsen's refusal to yield on any of the points in question was greatly responsible for the

splits which came about in his synod.

The "Old Constitution," for one thing, placed the Confessions of the Church on a par with Scripture. Also, it stated that only those people who had proof of their conversion could be admitted for membership. The constitution did not specify what the congregation's relationship to the synod should be. Nor did it say one word about the name of the organization, its officers, or yearly meetings. Following the 20 articles of the constitution was listed an "Agreement between Congregation and Pastor." This also was considered a part of the constitution, and it stated:

When a congregation has reached agreement concerning the selection of a pastor, there must be a careful investigation on the part of the elders as to whether the one selected has experienced a true conversion and rebirth and whether it is evident in his life that he has a true and living concern for his own salvation and for that of their's so that he stands in the unity of the Spirit in accord with the church's faith and doctrine. If this is true of the pastor, the congregation or church shall give him the following call:...4

As was stated previously, the errors of the "Old Constitution," combined with Eielsen's refusal to listen to any suggested changes, helped to break up his own synod. Nelson writes: "The document was the apple of Eielsen's eye, and when it was criticized, he suspected the critics of lacking genuine Christianity." 5

Paul Andersen and Ole Andrewson took great exception to the "Old Constitution" from the beginning; they saw the errors contained therein and they wanted the constitution revised.

When Eielsen refused to even listen to any suggested changes, Andersen and Andrewson saw no other option than to split from Eielsen. In the September 7, 1848, issue of the Nordlyset, a Norwegian paper, called, "The Northern Light," the following letter appeared:

Jefferson Frairie, Rock County, Aug. 24, 1848

Be it hereby known to the evangelical Lutheran church, which was organized April 13 and 14, 1846, by representatives of the people in convention, that the annual meeting, specified in the constitution, convenes the 29th of September, next (St. Michael's Day) in Middle Point, La Salle County, Illinois, to take under advisement the church's future needs. The various churches are requested to send such representatives as are elected by a majority vote, and not by encouragement of a single person. Likewise, that other individuals, of other Lutheran Synods are free to meet and offer resolutions, but have no right to vote. By agreement,

Respectfully yours,

O. Andrewson 6

It was a set - up. Somehow, the constitution, which was silent concerning yearly meetings, was now cited by Andrewson as calling for such meetings. The synod, which really was given no name by the constitution, was now called the "evangelical Lutheran Church" by Andrewson. The purpose of the meeting was said to involve "the church's future needs." The entire incident, including the meeting itself, was a farce of parliamentary procedure. Eielsen, who claimed to be the head of this body, did not call for this meeting to be held. But there were greater surprises in store for Eielsen once the meeting began.



Paul Andersen was immediately elected President, and Ole Andrewson was now officially recognized as Secretary. Secretary Andrewson began the business portion of the meeting by reading a long list of charges against Eielsen. The contents of these charges are not known, however, in 1843 Claus Lauritz Clausen had recorded in his diary that Eielsen was thought to be "an adulterer, a liar, and a deceiver." So it appears that the charges which were brought against Eielsen were directed at not only his doctrine, especially the "Old Constitution," but also at his morals.

After the list of charges was read, Eielsen asked if he might be granted a certain amount of time in order to prepare a defense for himself. When that request was denied, Eielsen stormed out of the meeting. Rohne has this interesting sidelight on Eielsen in matters such as this: "Eielsen was an easy man to slander; first, because he cared little what people might think of him; second, because he took no pains to defend himself; third, because he gloried in persecution, as he considered it, for Christ's sake." 7

For all practical purposes, Andersen and Andrewson were now in charge. They were soon joined by Ole J. Hatlestad, who had come to America in the summer of 1846. These men now began to look for a possible merger with another Lutheran synod. It should be noted that Andersen and Andrewson had not taken all that many people away from Eielsen - the majority of the people did not see the errors of Eielsen's Synod, and they were content to remain with their leader. Andrewson, who had been ordained by the Franckean Synod, urged the other two men to merge with the Franckean Synod, and that became a reality.

However, about two years later, Andersen had second thoughts about having joined the Franckean Synod.

At the time of this first split, Eielsen was 44 years old, while Andrewson was 30, and Andersen was only 27. It seems almost unbelievable that two young men could completely take over control from Eielsen, but they did exactly that. Of the two men, Paul Andersen was the more violently opposed to Eielsen - he saw the errors in the "Old Constitution," and he was correct in assuming that Eielsen would not yield. From his training at Beloit Seminary, Andersen picked up ideas which simply were not compatible with Eielsen's.

After the meeting at Middle Point (and the subsequent split) Eielsen regarded himself as the only right person among all the American Norwegian Lutherans. He now had no ordained assistants, Andersen and Andrewson having left his synod. But almost as quickly as Eielsen lost his ordained assistants, he attracted another one (or one to be ordained shortly) to his following. Peter Andreas Rasmussen, a Haugean, came to America in 1850. The story of how Eielsen came to get Rasmussen into his fold is an interesting one. Rasmussen settled in Muskego and was interested in doing church work. He went to talk to Rev. H.A. Stub, the pastor of the church in Muskego. However, Stub was on the verge of embarking on a 2 - 3 week pastoral tour of the area, so he directed Rasmussen to Claus Lauritz Clausen, the pastor who had recorded the alleged immoral conduct of Eielsen. Clausen, at this time, was residing in Luther Valley (Rock Prairie) Wisconsin. Just by chance, when Eielsen was traveling on the

Racine - Beloit stagecoach, he met Rasmussen at Yorkville. After Eielsen discovered Rasmussen's destination, Eielsen felt it was his duty to inform him that both Stub and Clausen were Grundtvigians - people who believed that the Apostles' Creed was divinely inspired, and that there was the possibility of conversion after death. Rasmussen was greatly impressed by Eielsen, and he soon agreed to join Eielsen's church body.

On October 15 and 16, 1850, Eielsen called a meeting of his synod to order at Koshkonong, Wisconsin. The "Old Constitution" was put into its final form, with Eielsen having added articles denouncing Stub and Andersen into the final product. Its doctrinal errors were still there, however. This constitution was signed by 37 men, including Rasmussen, but of all these men, only Eielsen was an ordained pastor (and even that title was questioned by some).

The second split of Eielsen's Synod, occurring in 1856, was primarily the doing of Rasmussen. Since this is the case, it is necessary that his career be looked at. After the 1850 meeting at Koshkonong, Rasmussen made his residence in Lisbon, Illinois, where he was a school teacher. Rasmussen proved to be a very good teacher and leader - so much so, that the people who knew him encouraged him to be their preacher. Rasmussen consented and went to Fort Wayne, where he took a one - year course in theology. During this time, Rasmussen studied under Dr. Wilhelm Sihler. In fact, it was Sihler who ordained Rasmussen on Palm Sunday in 1854.

As a result of his theological training, however short it might have been, Rasmussen now began to see Eielsen's errors, especially the errors contained in the "Old Constitution."

Rasmussen faulted Eielsen especially for the Donatist errors in the constitution. Rasmussen and Eielsen began to have differing views on many points as time went on. Again, it was a case of a theologically trained clergyman going against Eielsen, who remained adamant in all parts of his doctrine. Rasmussen was also of the opinion that the best way to provide workers for the synod would be to establish a worker - training school. Eielsen, on the other hand, preferred to use laymen, so here was another cause for division between the two men.

In June of 1855, a series of meetings took place between Eielsen's group and the Preuses of the Norwegian Synod, concerning a possible merger between the two groups. As in the past, a major barrier in the way of negotiations was the "Old Constitution" and its serious errors. A committee consisting of Eielsen, Rasmussen, and Torger Olsen Ryg made a study of paragraph 2 of the constitution - the most offensive article to most people, since it contained the Donatist error. As one might very well expect, no definite action was taken: Eielsen stuck to his guns and refused to yield on any of the points in question.

Rohne sheds some interesting light on who received the brunt of the verbal attacks from the Norwegians at these meetings - it was Rasmussen: "Throughout the controversy the Synod pastors singled out Rasmussen as the target for their attack, both because he was a worthy foe-man, and because they wished to draw him out and drive a wedge between him and Eielsen." 8 As a result of this treatment from the Norwegians, Rasmussen soon published reports of the Norwegian Synod's alleged false

doctrine which he detected during his meetings with them. It came as no surprise then, that during its meetings of October 1 - 3, 1855, the Norwegian Synod decided to halt its meetings with the Eielsen Synod. Herman Amberg Preus, President of the Norwegian Synod at the time of these meetings, came away with bitter feelings toward Eielsen, and these feelings increased as time went on. He said this of Eielsen in 1867 in Syv Foredrag (Seven Lectures):

Eielsen's activities in the first period could have been justified, if he had taught pure, sound Lutheran doctrine. But it is his greatest sin that he never has done this but much rather has opposed and persecuted orthodox teachers and congregations. If he had been concerned only about the salvation of souls, he would have rejoiced when able and orthodox laborers came into the fields where he of necessity had begun the work. Either he would then have retired from the responsible work which he had undertaken of his own accord, or he would have limited himself to the places where there was need, or, if he had been found capable of continuing in the work of the ministry, he would have accepted a call from some individual congregation and admonished his followers to adhere to the orthodox pastors and congregations. But he did none of this. It was his desire to form a faction. He tried by errors, slander and palpable lies to keep his followers away from our Synod, yes, to make the gulf between us greater and greater. He sought continually to gain more followers by forcing himself into our congregations. For a long time he laid claim only to an inner call; but later on he found that it might be good for his work to have something more to rely on. So he asserted that he was ordained. --- We do not attach much importance to whether Elling was ordained or not; the principal thing to us is that he is a false teacher and the founder of an erroristic sect." 9

In October of 1855, Rasmussen, in spite of Eielsen's opposition, began to operate a seminary in Lisbon, Illinois.

Also, at this time, Rasmussen was chosen to edit the Eielsen Synod's periodical, Kirkelig Tidende (Church Times). One can see only trouble coming from this, but yet, Eielsen had only himself to blame for allowing this to happen. (Besides the "Old Constitution," this is another reason why Eielsen's Synod split so much - the fact that Eielsen showed very little leadership, and allowed himself to be stripped of his authority.) It wasn't long before Kirkelig Tidende soon published articles which were critical of Eielsen's beloved "Old Constitution." This action had nothing but a divisive effect on the two men involved, as could only be expected. The attacks on Eielsen began to be more and more serious, until Rasmussen finally came out and declared that Eielsen was teaching false doctrine.

By the spring of 1856, Rasmussen was looking for help, as far as what course of action he should take. He sought advice from Walther, and the answer Rasmussen received, dated May 13, 1856, "Indicated that Rasmussen had charged Eielsen with both doctrinal and moral deviations. In view of these, Walther suggested that Eielsen be disciplined." 10 Receiving such advice from Walther, and assuming that Eielsen would not yield, only strengthened Rasmussen in his belief that he could not remain in Eielsen's Synod. Walther suggested that Eielsen be disciplined, and now Rasmussen now brought new meaning to the verb, "to discipline." At the Eielsen Synod's meeting of June, 1856, at Primrose, Wisconsin, Rasmussen raised charges against the "Old Constitution" and the person of Eielsen. Seeing that Eielsen was not going to change his views, Rasmussen saw no other choice but to withdraw from the Eielsen Synod.

Rasmussen and Eielsen were so different in their views that it was impossible for them to remain together: Rasmussen wanted lay activity restricted, while Eielsen wanted free and unrestricted lay activity. In addition, Rasmussen had been schooled at Fort Wayne, so he was doctrinally different and superior than Eielsen. He saw through Eielsen's "Old Constitution" and all its many errors.

This second split from Eielsen's Synod was far more serious than the previous one. In the split of 1848, it was mainly Andersen and Andrewson who left, taking along very few lay people with them. This split of 1856 was far more serious in that fully half of Eielsen's followers voted to follow Rasmussen. Rasmussen and his followers eventually joined the Norwegian Synod in 1862, in spite of what had happened between Rasmussen and the Norwegian Synod during the merger meetings of 1855.

The effect of this second split on Elling Eielsen was that he was even more committed to the "Old Constitution" and its doctrinal errors. It was true now, more than ever, that "Anyone who questioned its provisions was suspect." 11 The quarreling between Eielsen and Rasmussen did not cease when the two men split. Rasmussen continued to publish Kirkelig Tidende, and in the May 1857 edition, he has these remarks on the controversial second article of the "Old Constitution:"

The Ellingians here make no distinction between the visible and the invisible Church, but place for admission to Elling's church a condition which alone applies to membership in the invisible Church, the Communion of Saints. They err in that they believe that their church is composed only of converted and holy persons, without any mixture of hypocrites. 12

It had been mentioned previously that Eielsen's morals were questioned from time to time, and that this issue played an important role in the splits of his synod, along with the ever-troublesome "Old Constitution." In 1858, two years after he had left Eielsen's Synod, Rasmussen stated that he had withdrawn from Eielsen "both on account of Eielsen's false doctrine and his personal conduct." 13 However, it becomes clear that, if one were to look for one factor which was common to all three splits, the "Old Constitution" was the major cause of disagreement in Eielsen's Synod.

Eielsen tried to rebuild his synod after the devastating split by Rasmussen. In 1860, there were only 5 pastors in the Eielsen Synod, serving congregations in Illinois, Wisconsin, Minnesota, and Iowa. (By 1872, the number of pastors increased to 17, but then another split 4 years later would greatly cripple Eielsen's Synod.) Now, Eielsen was again talked into opening another Seminary. Rasmussen had operated the first seminary among Norwegian immigrants, in Lisbon, Illinois, much to Eielsen's displeasure. Now, the split of 1856 had greatly reduced the number of clergy, and Eielsen was persuaded to purchase 120 acres of land near Deerfield, Wisconsin, for the purpose of operating a seminary there. The school opened in 1865 with an enrollment of 20 students. The principal and only teacher was Andreas P. Aaserod. After two years, Aaserod left, and the school was forced to close. Eielsen made one more attempt to build a seminary - this was in Chicago, in 1871. However, the great Fire which struck that city, in addition to the lack of sufficient funds, gave Eielsen no other choice but to abandon that project also.



But there was one more disappointment in store for Eielsen: a third and final split occurred - only this split was more like a coup d'etat. After Rasmussen withdrew from the Eielsen Synod, Eielsen managed to attract other followers - both pastors and lay people. Two of these men, Arne E. Boyum and Østen Hanson became critical of Eielsen and his "Old Constitution" almost as quickly as they had come to Eielsen's ranks. In 1874, a meeting was scheduled to discuss possible changes in the constitution. Eielsen had heard that story before, but what was new to him this time was that these two men wanted a completely new constitution. Eielsen was able to fend off this attack, but the end was near; too many of his followers were finally beginning to see his errors.

In the June 3, 1876, Eielsen Synod meeting at Chicago, there was a complete power shift. Boyum and Hanson were now clearly in the majority, and their faction (called the "new tendency" by Eielsen, as opposed to himself, the "old tendency") wanted to get rid of the "Old Constitution" once and for all. Not only did they vote to do that, but at the same time, they voted Eielsen out of office, and changed the name of the synod to "Hauge's Synod." Eielsen did not put up a fight at the Chicago meeting, probably because, as Rohne states, "Eielsen probably did not fully understand what was going on, as he was now an old man." 14

This action, in 1876, was really not a split in the true sense of the word. If anyone split, it was Eielsen who, along with a very few of his followers, withdrew from the newly-formed "Hauge Synod." Eielsen and six or seven others met at Jackson County, Minnesota (the present headquarters of the synod), to reorganize.

Eielsen was elected President, and the "Old Constitution" once again became the foundation of this group. Eielsen and his small group now vehemently attacked the Hauge Synod, saying that this new synod "Harbored new and dangerous tendencies in the direction of hierarchy and church formality." 15 Eielsen continued his attacks until January 10, 1883, when he died in Chicago, Illinois.

The "Old Constitution" and the person of Eielsen himself were the main reasons for the splits of the Eielsen Synod. Nelson, in quoting the Kvartalskrift 1877, offers another reason:

Each time his friends grew to greater numbers and and the question of an organization came up a split developed. And that [occured] because an orderly development of synod presupposes orderly congregations as a foundation. But orderly congregations resting on the Word of God and the sacraments with the mark, 'God knows his own' are contrary to Elling's principle of a group of believers gathered about him with the mark, 'We know our own.' 16

A lack of order in the individual congregations then, according to Nelson, also played an important part in the splits of Eielsen's Synod. There simply were no synodical ties for the individual congregations, except for the person of Elling Eielsen. The "Old Constitution" did not state the name of the synod, nor did it describe the individual congregation's relationship to the un-named synod. Men with theological training, such as Andersen, Andrewson, and Rasmussen, also took exception to this lack of order also, and this contributed to the reasons why there the three splits. Andersen himself had said that Eielsen's ways were characterized as "laxity and disorder." 17

Why did the Eielsen Synod experience three different splits within the space of 28 years? The following have shown to be major factors:

1) The "Old Constitution" and Eielsen's refusal to yield on any of its articles, 2) The personal conduct and character of Eielsen, 3) The ease with which outsiders managed to take over control from Eielsen, 4) The lack of organization within the local congregations, and its lack of ties with the synod.

The Eielsen story is somewhat a sad story - it's the story of a man who is caught up in errors, but yet he stubbornly refuses to renounce his errors. He experiences one set-back after another. On the other hand, when one reads of the underhandedness of Eielsen, the "errors, slanders, and palpable lies," which was charged to him by Preus, and apparently correctly so, one gets another impression of this man. The history of Elling Eielsen and the Eielsen Synod is indeed a unique and a sad one.

THE "OLD CONSTITUTION." CHURCH-CONSTITUTION FOR THE  
EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH AT JEFFERSON PRAIRIE, ETC.,  
IN NORTH AMERICA.

1. Whereas we, the united ones, have by the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ united and joined ourselves together into an official church body in the Lutheran Church, be it hereby firmly resolved and decided, that this our church body shall forever continue to be, just as it now is, in conformity to the genuine Lutheran faith and doctrine, and built on God's Word in the Holy Scriptures in conjunction with the *Apostolic* and *Augsburg Articles of Faith*, which together with the Word are the rule for our church order, and for our faith and confession, as living members under our Savior Jesus Christ, who is the Head of our Church.

2. In accordance with the order and method which the Holy Scriptures teach and convince, that nothing common or unclean can enter the New Jerusalem (Rev. xxi. 27, etc.), no one ought to be accepted as a member of our body, except he has passed through a genuine conversion or is on the way to conversion, so he has a noticeable sorrow for his sins, and hunger and thirst after righteousness, from which must follow an improvement in his conduct as a testimony of the living faith's activity in soul and heart, about which the Scriptures witness so expressly that they are the inescapable necessity for every true member of the true church body.

3. Every member in the church must consequently strive, in virtue of the power of faith, to walk piously and blamelessly, and have constantly a wakeful eye upon himself, because he in love must remind others, who walk faultily (Gal. vi. 1). Not to pass harsh and merciless judgments on his failing brother, as one who sees the mote in his brother's eye but is unaware of the beam in his own; but as a Christian, to whom it is becoming to seek the pure truth; and then one cannot possibly say good about the evil.

4. One should according to Jesus's Word in Matt. xviii. 15-17, remind and punish the failing between himself and him alone, and not trumpet forth his hidden faults to his harm and to the offense of others; if he hear you, you have won your brother. But if he does not hear, then take one or two others with you, that the whole matter may be established at the mouth of two or three witnesses. But if he does not hear them, then tell it to the congregation; but if he does not hear the congregation, then he shall be for you as a heathen.

5. He who, with the prodigal son, repents of his trespass before God and man, he should be taken in again in the church body, and the church must not refuse that also that one is given absolution, that is, assurance of God's grace in Christ.

6. With popish authority and also the common ministerial garb we henceforth have absolutely nothing to do, since there is no proof in the New Testament that Jesus or his disciples have used or enjoined it. On the contrary, we can read in Matt. xxiii. 5, Mark

xiii. 38, and Luke xx. 46 that Jesus chastised those who went about in long clothes and performed [acts of] piety to be well thought of by men. Experience also teaches, that both minister and hearer [worshiper] often place a blind confidence in the dead church ceremonies and clerical garb, and through this do away with God's command because of their custom (Matt. xv. 6).

7. We believe that there is only one Master, who has left us an example to follow in doctrine, life and relations, namely, Jesus Christ, the Righteous One, who entered into the Holy [Place], and found an eternal propitiation.

8. We also believe that the teaching estate is a holy estate, and instituted by God; as Paul says: "We are ambassadors in Christ's stead, as though God did beseech you by us; we pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God" (II Cor. v. 20). But this estate is abused by many as a deadly poison, so that they cheat both themselves and also others of the hope of salvation, until they awake in hell (Is. iii. 12; Matt. vii. 15).

9. Teachers or preachers ought to be elected by the congregation in such a way that they at least are taken on trial one year before they are permanently and rightly elected. Those who are talented with aptitude for teaching must procure the necessary knowledge, as far as the circumstances permit; but this, as everything else, must be subject to the Lord in faith and obedience, that not ours but His will is done. Paul says: "Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today yea and for ever" (Heb. xiii. 8). He himself chose lay and unlearned men to proclaim his Gospel, which also was done with such power and wisdom, that the worldly wise in surprise had to ask: Are not all these which speak Galileans? And how hear we, every man in our own tongue, wherein we were born? (Acts ii. 7-11, iv. 13). Jesus likewise says, that He not only will be with His apostles to the end of the world, but also with all those who, on account of their words, believe on Him; and that He will give all those the Holy Ghost who humbly ask Him for it.

10. The young should be instructed in God's Word from their early youth. The A B C Book,<sup>31</sup> Luther's *Small Catechism* of the older unadulterated editions, and E. Pontoppidan's *Sandhed til Gud-frugtighed*<sup>32</sup> should be learnt and be explained for the young, so they can be enlightened concerning all of God's plan of salvation. Each master and mistress should diligently instruct their children and members of their household, and by prayer and the meditation on God's Word help along as much as they by God's grace are able, that they, as living branches, can grow into the true vine, into which they are grafted; and likewise become accustomed to prayer and to call upon the Lord, since the children especially are more easily induced to pray than grown-ups. The grown-ups should pray with a reverent mind; because also this will have influence on the hearts of the young and attune their minds to more sobriety; especially ought to be held forth the sweet love of Jesus toward those who call on him.

11. We should make it a point to further schools and instruction, and, as Christ's true followers, let God's Word dwell richly among

<sup>31</sup> A beginner's book in Norwegian.

<sup>32</sup> *Truth unto Godliness.*

ourselves, and, besides, do good to all, but most to those of the household of faith, who are united to help the needy as well in their physical as their spiritual need.

12. It shall also be the minister's duty, with the help of the congregation, to procure the necessary books, the wealthy paying the bill, since the needy must have them free of charge, who have not the means to pay.

13. The children must be educated in both languages, but in the mother tongue first, though in such a way that the district school is not neglected.

14. We united ones repudiate altogether the fearful sin of giving our consent to the slave traffic; but rather use all possible diligence in bringing about, and supporting, opposition to it, to the freeing of the negroes, since Jesus has said, "All things therefore whatsoever ye would that men should do unto you, even so do ye also unto them; for this is the law and the prophets" (Matt. vii. 12). They are also redeemed with the same blood and intended to inherit the same bliss, as other races. We advise that each one give this matter closer consideration.

15. Likewise each one is reminded, who brings on dissension in the congregation and seeks to organize his own party, that those who are confirmed in the Lord and are what the Scriptures call "elders," ought then convene together, and use all possible diligence in bringing about unity in faith, doctrine, and relations. If this bears no fruit on the contentious, then do as Paul says: "A man that is an heretic after the first and second admonition reject; knowing that he that is such is perverted, and sinneth, being condemned of himself" (Titus iii. 10, 11). About such it is that John says: "They went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would no doubt have continued with us; but they went out, that they might be made manifest how that they were not all of us" (I John ii. 19).

16. Each congregation shall elect "elders," who shall supervise all things in the church, such as the members' daily relations and circumstances, whether the school is rightly conducted, and, besides, see to it that those who speak for edification do not go their own ways, and that they hold fast to the wholesome teaching and such other things as necessity requires; and, finally, that they are subject one to another in godliness.

17. Likewise ought the congregation to combine to support by freewill gifts those persons who are elected by the congregation to travel about and proclaim God's Word.

18. The congregation ought to use all diligence in getting "awakened" and Christian-minded school teachers, who stand with the believers in the unity of faith, to the end that the young might be taught and rightly catechized and be given a true enlightenment in their Christianity, so that they can comprehend and understand it rightly to the renewal of their baptismal covenant, and thereby be renewed and grow in faith and in love to God and their neighbor.

19. A pastor should, according to Paul's admonition in I Tim. iii. 2, be blameless. If he, accordingly, after his election fall into perverse doctrine or anything worthy of censure, then the same means be used here, as are described in paragraph four above. If

the milder ones do not bear fruit, so that one must perforce use the stricter, namely, expulsion from the congregation, then his errors should be publicly proclaimed in accordance with I Tim. v. 20; II Tim. iii. 7-9, etc., and thus in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, in the unity of faith, and with the power of our Lord Jesus Christ surrender such an one to Satan, for the destruction of his flesh, that his spirit might be saved on the day of our Lord Jesus Christ (I Cor. v. 45). In this, as in all things else, the Holy Scriptures are the only source from which the wholesome teaching flows out, especially when the Holy Spirit can get room to work in the hearts both of the teacher and the hearer, so they become subject to God and each other in the fear of God, and disposed to love each other mutually of a pure heart.

20. The Sacraments of Baptism and the Altar are administered according to the Ritual and Altar Book of the Church of Norway, which we in all parts follow as far as the blessed doctrine is concerned. Nevertheless, the laying on of hands at Absolution is not used, since it cannot be seen from Holy Scriptures that Jesus and his apostles have used this at the Lord's Supper; but as Paul reminds each to try himself, and so eat of the bread and drink of the cup. But when the pastor in his preparatory address has made plain the way of life and the way of death, as a true shepherd of souls, he concludes his preparatory address in this wise: "Accordingly, then, from God's Word is declared to all penitent, repentant, and believing souls the forgiveness of sins in the name of the Father, of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. Amen."

God give us all His grace to unite in Jesus's name and in Jesus's mind, that the power of his suffering and death might show itself in all our ways. Amen.

ENDNOTES

<sup>1</sup>Grace for Grace - Brief History of the Norwegian Synod, S.C. Ylvisaker (Ed.), pp 16-17, Mankato: Lutheran Synod Book Company, 1943.

<sup>2</sup>Norwegian American Lutheranism, J. Magnus Rohne, p 50, New York: MacMillan Company, 1926.

<sup>3</sup>The Lutheran Church Among Norwegian Americans, E. Clifford Nelson and Eugene L. Fevold, p 129, Minneapolis: Augsburg Publishing House, 1960.

<sup>4</sup>Nelson and Fevold, op. cit., p 130.

<sup>5</sup>Nelson and Fevold, op. cit., p 131.

<sup>6</sup>Rohne, op. cit., p 97.

<sup>7</sup>Rohne, op. cit., p 101.

<sup>8</sup>Rohne, op. cit., p 153.

<sup>9</sup>Ylvisaker, op. cit., pp 137-138.

<sup>10</sup>Nelson and Fevold, op. cit., p 142.

<sup>11</sup>Nelson and Fevold, op. cit., p 143.

<sup>12</sup>Rohne, op. cit., p 155.

<sup>13</sup>Rohne, op. cit., p 156.

<sup>14</sup> Rohne, op. cit., p 190.

<sup>15</sup>Rohne, op. cit., p 190.

<sup>16</sup>Nelson and Fevold, op. cit., p 145.

<sup>17</sup>Nelson and Fevold, op. cit., p 132.

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