

KJV/NIV Controversy and Consequences:

St. Paul's, Norfolk, Nebraska

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5/8/91

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KJV/NIV Controversy and Consequences:

St. Paul's, Norfolk, NE

When one pictures the congregation of St. Paul's Evangelical Lutheran Church it is not very surprising that this controversy happened in Norfolk, Nebraska. When one looks at the people and families that make up the congregation and the history of the congregation it was almost inevitable that the NIV translation would cause the congregation problems.

The congregation of St. Paul's is a family church. It started with about six families 125 years ago and it still is 6 families. These families are intermarried and just about everyone is related. They say it takes two members of a family to really fight and here we have about 725. Discipline in a case such as this is difficult. There is always support for the erring brother or sister. There is always support for a patriarch's opinion and stubbornness.

The congregation's history points out this fact for it took the congregation 40 years to switch from the German language in the services to the English. When speaking to some of the shut-ins in the congregation they remembered very well the German services and some commented that they remembered sitting through services and not understanding more than a word or two here and there.

It is not surprising that St. Paul's is the site of this

controversy. In a congregation of that size and makeup things take time. I'm not blaming anyone for this controversy. I feel that every effort was made to avoid it. I also feel that the controversy would have been almost impossible to stop, if not impossible to stop in the most advantageous times. The controversy, however, didn't start at the most advantageous time. It started when the congregation was experiencing troubles in the school and a vacancy in the church.

#### KJV/NIV Controversy

Most controversies start because of a lack of education and/or understanding and the KJV/NIV controversy at St. Paul's Evangelical Lutheran Church in Norfolk, Nebraska probably started in the same way. Although the controversy started because of ignorance, it continued because of a limited understanding and a natural fear of something new that could erode the faith of the congregation.

During the late 1970s and the early 80s the New International Version became more and more popular with the congregations of the Wisconsin. Because of this it soon became clear to Northwestern Publishing House that a choice had to be made whether the KJV or the NIV would be used in its publications. To use both would be too costly, especially with there being a smaller and smaller demand for school materials using the King James Version.

With the availability of the NIV materials to use in the classroom (which were easier for the children to understand) St. Paul's Lutheran Grade School teachers ordered some NIV school

materials from NPH without consulting the Board of Education. There are several possible reasons for this error. The faculty was in a state of total disarray because of personality conflicts. It could have just been a simple oversight. They may have thought it was a small matter and wouldn't cause any problems. The church was also experiencing a rather lengthy pastoral vacancy. This use of NIV materials in the school caused a stir in the congregation for many of the members had great love for the KJV and a fear of any change to the status quo. Therefore the school and faculty was told that they could use only KJV materials for teaching.

In 1981 shortly after Pastor Philip Zarling accepted the call to serve St. Paul's the controversy started to flicker. The motion was made to use the NIV translation in some of the church services. This motion died for lack of a second.

On July 27, 1982 at a special Council meeting there was a discussion about a possible use of the NIV in school materials for KJV materials were getting more difficult to obtain. It was decided that no action could be taken in that direction until after the Elders could review the material and make a recommendation. With this stalemate situation a motion was made that the NIV translation be placed on the next Council agenda. This motion died because of a lack of a second.

For nearly two years the elders under the guidance of Pastor Zarling studied the NIV in order to make its recommendation to the Church Council and the Voters' Assembly. Included in this study of the NIV was a reading of the translation, a review of Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary's course material on hermeneutics and a

discussion of other related articles and questions that had been raised by various members and elders.

On June 10, 1984 at the summer quarterly Voters' meeting Pastor Zarling reported that the Elders had studied the NIV translation and that they would be presenting a recommendation on the use of the NIV to the Church Council and at a Voters' meeting. It was acknowledged that it probably would be necessary to have some special meetings concerning this matter.

During July's Council meeting the elders presented their recommendation in the form of two sheets that are found at the end of the paper and are labeled Appendix A and Appendix B. After considerable discussion about the NIV translation the Church Council agreed to the proposal at the bottom of Appendix B. These meetings were scheduled for August 22<sup>nd</sup> and 26<sup>th</sup>. These meetings were advertised in the bulletins and the August "Epistle" (St. Paul's Newsletter). The "Epistle" note read as follows:

At the Request of the Board of Elders, two special meetings have been set to discuss the use of the NIV at St. Paul's. These meetings will be Wednesday, August 22, at 7:00 P.M., and Sunday, August 26, at 2:00 P.M. Two meetings were scheduled with the hope that most of our members will be able to attend one; since the same material will be discussed at both, it is not necessary to attend both meetings. These meetings have been called for the purpose of informing everyone of what the Elders have done in their special meetings and of giving everyone a chance to learn, think, and talk about this matter. The decision of which translation(s) to use in our worship service will be made at one of the voter's meetings later this year. Since this is an issue that will make a strong impact on our worship life, we encourage everyone to attend one of the special meetings to become better informed.

At these two meetings the information that the Elders and the Church Council went through at their meetings was expounded upon

so that everyone could understand the difference between the translations. Pastor Zarling also attempted to answer all questions asked. Strong opinions were expressed by some that the KJV remain the translation that St. Paul's would use in its church and school. Those in favor of the NIV translation were not as vocal. No records were kept of these two meetings.

The agenda for the fall quarterly Voters' meeting on Sept. 16, 1984, had the NIV/KJV question on its docket. However it was placed as the final item on the agenda and the meeting was recessed until Sept. 30 when it was reconvened to discuss the use of the NIV Bible at St. Paul's.

During the interlude before the recessed meeting was reconvened the Church Council met in order to have some questions answered by Pastor Zarling concerning the transmission of the Scriptures. At this Sept. 20 meeting Pastor Zarling handed out Appendix C. With this explanation the Council voted to recommend to the Voters that they accept the Elders' proposal (Appendix B).

On Sept. 30, 1984 36 voting members were present to vote on the Elders' proposal. After a synopsis of the church council meeting of Sept. 20<sup>th</sup>, the elders' proposal was reviewed. At this time some people attempted to delay the vote by raising the question whether the Council's recommendation was valid for only a few members had been present at the Sept. 20 meeting. Questions were then raised about: the existing NIV Bibles of some of the school children, what would happen to the old KJV Bibles, whether there would be a new translation every couple years, and what effect the NIV would have on future liturgies, and hymnals. After

a lengthy discussion a ballot vote was taken. It would take a two-thirds majority vote for the Elders' proposal to be set in action. The motion to accept the NIV failed by a 13-yes to 22-no vote. The KJV would be St. Paul's translation, but the students who had NIV Bibles at the school were permitted to use them as a resource. This, however, meant that they would have to memorize from the KJV found in the Gausewitz Catechism and not that which was in their Bibles.

This rejection of the NIV was accepted by most of its supporters, but not by all. A period of quiet in the controversy was reached for several years only to be broken occasionally by families transferring their memberships to Shepherd of the Hills, the WELS mission across town, which used the NIV.

In 1986 St. Paul's didn't participate in the review of the Hymnal Sampler because of the use of the NIV and a contemporary liturgy in the Sampler. In Nov. 1986, Elder Doug Ohlman submitted his resignation. He stated in this letter that the reason he was resigning was that he disagreed with the position of the use of the NIV and the Hymnal Sampler. He felt that he would not be able to represent the Elders' position fairly on these matters. Mr. Ohlman soon transferred to Shepherd of the Hills.

On Dec. 13, 1988 Richard E. Brauer resigned as elder after serving only one year of a five year term. There were two reasons for this resignation. The first and more pronounced one was that He was dead-set against having Open Forum meetings where women could come and discuss church issues (there was no formal voting at these meetings). Second, he had a personal dislike for Pastor

Zarling.

The first Open Forum meeting was held in the spring of 1989. It is of no importance for this paper. The second Open Forum on Feb. 18, 1989, is of great importance. The topics for these Open Forum meetings were topics that had been picked by members themselves and the topic for the second meeting was: NIV/KJV and St. Paul's.

I was at this meeting and it was very interesting for great emotion was in the air. It wasn't however well attended. There were slightly less than 50 people present.

The meeting was moderated by John Kouba, who had been drafted to do this by Pastor Zarling. Pastor Zarling was there as a consultant and to reacquaint the people with Appendix A, B, and C. During this meeting there was a larger majority in favor of using the NIV translation, but although they voiced their opinions they were in effect the silent majority. Those who were in favor of staying with the KJV were by far the more vocal and adamant. Richard Brauer, the foremost KJV supporter, was not present at the meeting. But his son Steven Brauer spoke several times and forcefully about staying with the KJV. But he wasn't the only one speaking in favor of the KJV. At one point one older man stood up and said, "If St. Paul's ever uses the NIV translation, I'm leaving." He then sat down.

This meeting did nothing but get people angry on both sides of the issue. Family members raised their concerns and opinions in opposition to each other. It ended with Pastor Zarling reminding everyone that we are a united body of believers in Christ



and although we may have some disagreements in form, we are united in faith and in the purpose of spreading the gospel by the best possible means.

From the time of this meeting until the end of my vicar year at St. Paul's I was continually confronted by people who were interested in my taking sides in the issue. This was done both with subtlety or very bluntly by asking me which translation I preferred. People were not only concerned with the issue, but also disgusted with it for many people did not consider it as great an issue as it was turning out to be. Those who were in favor of the NIV were not pushing the translation, but were willing to be patient as long as they saw some sort of action. It was more the overbearing headstrong attitude of some of the KJV supporters that were causing the problems.

This leads us to the Richard E. Brauer part of the controversy. This doesn't mean that he hasn't been involved up to this point. Just that he now stands out as the antagonist.

#### Richard E. Brauer

In order to understand Richard Brauer I believe you have to meet him. Talking to him is actually like talking to a brick wall. Once he has made up his mind about anything there is no talking to him. He is persistent. He is stubborn. He is talented and outspoken. He has some charisma, but he also can turn people away by his single-minded blindness. He was described to me by several people as having a chip on his shoulder. Yet he loves his Savoir greatly. And he loves the KJV and considers the NIV a tool of the

devil. There is no trickery or tact in this man. If he doesn't like you or what you say or whatever else he will let you know.

#### KJV/NIV Controversy (con't)

After Brauer resigned as Elder of the congregation, he practically disappeared from congregational life. His Sunday attendance became negligible and he didn't partake of the Lord's Supper. It was known that he went down to Salina, Kansas, several times a month to a church that used the KJV. Pastor Zarling tried to talk with him several times during this period and although Pastor saw him a couple of times most of the time Brauer would not meet with him.

During the month of July 1990 Brauer completed writing and publishing a book that he entitled: "A Layman's View of the NIV." The research and writing of this book had taken him two years. Brauer took over 100 copies of this 58 page book and gave them out to selected members of the congregation and sent them to various people throughout the WELS, the CLC, and the LC-MS. He failed to provide a copy of the book to either Pastor Zarling, any other pastor in the area or to me.

This book came to the attention of Pastor Zarling and me almost immediately as Trustee Herb Mantey, who had received a copy, gave his copy to Pastor. Herb Mantey said that he knew that it was "schlecht" and he wanted nothing to do with it. Pastor Zarling having obtained a copy did not read it, but decided to talk first with Brauer. Brauer agreed to meet with him and finally gave him a copy of the book. Brauer also agreed to stop sending out copies

of the book until Pastor Zarling had an opportunity to look at it. It was found out later that he did not stop sending the book to people. Attached as appendix D are four sheets that Pastor Zarling received from Pastor Norman Greve of Redeemer Ev. Lutheran Church of the CLC.

The Elders of St. Paul's were made aware of the book at that month's Elders' meeting on July 10. There was a discussion on what should be done, but it was decided to wait until all had the time to read the book and until Pastor had met with him again before discussing the matter further.

The contents of this book are slanderously biased to say the least and could easily anger anyone in the WELS. Brauer slanders Pastor Zarling, Prof. Jeske, Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary, and the WELS. Richard Brauer discredited himself by his seemingly vicious display of emotion against the WELS in this book.

Brauer attempts to discredit the NIV in his book by pointing to the manuscripts from which it was translated from and by using Reformed writers books in favor of the KJV as proof of it being the only good Lutheran Bible. By this Brauer shows himself to be inconsistent. He also shows that he was writing about something about which he knew very little. The following are some quotes from Brauer's book.

Many church men, today, regard the Authorized King James Version of 1611 much more authoritative and scholarly than any Bible that came after it; whether it be Greek or English. It had been questioned why the Westcott-Hort Greek and the Nestles Greek would be any more reliable just because they were in the Greek language. The King James Version of 1611 preceded them by 250 years. It was translated by dedicated translators that subscribed to the divine inspiration of God. To the supporters of "The closest and oldest means purest" it

seems that it only applies when it suits them, making it quite obvious that purest really doesn't apply (page 13).

The facts may help us to understand why God gave us the KJV of 1611. It, also, helps us to see why the Devil is out to destroy the KJV of 1611 and to substitute a counterfeit series of Bibles. His objective is to neutralize Christianity in the English speaking world, stop real mission work (page 14)!

Is the NIV a good translation, worthy to be used in a conservative Lutheran Church of the Reformation? No it's not! Does the NIV support those doctrines of Scripture that we have been taught and which we believe to be vital for the Salvation of our souls? No it does not (page 45)!

We have two translations recognized to be Bibles. One is the King James Version of 1611, claiming to be inspired by God. The other is the NIV, which doesn't make that claim (page 51).

The New International Version (NIV) is not God's Word because it attempts to destroy the character of God. The NIV is a product of evil men, in what ever diluted form it may have arrived on the scene (page 57).

After reading the book Pastor Zarling decided against writing a response to the book and instead wrote down where he stood on the issues that were addressed by the book. This is Appendix E at the end of the paper. In order to get a second opinion concerning the book Pastor sent a copy of the book to Prof. Kuske at Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary for his input. The KJV/NIV Controversy at St. Paul's was no longer strictly a congregational matter, but was much larger because of Brauer's sending of the book to people outside of the congregation. This letter was returned by Prof. Kuske with his comments written on the back of the letter. This letter and Prof. Kuske's response is in Appendix F.

In late August 1990 Pastor Zarling with Elder Wayne Hebb had a four hour meeting with Brauer with nothing being accomplished to

resolve the matter. This was reported to the Elders at the Sept. 4 meeting.

On Oct. 2 the Elders met at Trinity, Hoskins, with Pastor James Nelson for Pastor Zarling had accepted the Lord's Call to Overland Park, Kan., at the end of September. After much discussion the elders decided that the situation with Brauer had to be addressed. It was decided that Pastor Zarling would draft a letter to Brauer with the Elders' input. This letter was to be signed by all the Elders.

This letter was reviewed and signed by all the Elders on Nov. 6, at which time a meeting was set up to meet with Brauer to deliver the letter. Two days later Brauer was given a copy of the letter (Appendix G), as it was read to him in the company of the Elders. Brauer was asked to retract many statements that he had written in his book and given thirty days to do so. After Brauer left the meeting the Elders continued to discuss the procedures that needed to be followed. It was also decided that Brauer should not partake of Holy Communion until the matter was resolved in a God-pleasing manner.

On Nov. 10 Brauer sent a letter (Appendix H) to the Elders asking them to clarify the positions they had taken in their letter. To this letter the Elders responded on Nov. 15 with a letter (Appendix I) that said that their first letter was very clear. This letter also informed Brauer that he was not eligible to partake of Holy Communion until this matter is resolved.

On December 18 the Elders informed the Voters' Assembly with Richard Brauer in attendance of the action that they had taken in

the Brauer case. Brauer then asked to speak to the Assembly. He was allowed the opportunity to speak and he related to the group the contacts he had with the Elders. He also requested that all allegations against him be made known to the congregation. He also said that he was attempting to provide a response to the Elders and the congregation regarding the concerns that had been expressed to him.

At the January monthly Elders' meeting on January 2, 1991 the Elders drafted and approved a letter to be placed in the bulletins and in the "Epistle." This letter (Appendix J) set Jan. 15, 1991, at 7:00 PM as the date and time for a special voters' meeting to address the Brauer case.

At the special voters' meeting 54 voters were present along with Pastor Winkel of Good Shepherd, Omaha, NE, the circuit pastor. After the history of the case was presented to the voters the elders posed this question to Brauer: "In light of the information that has been presented are you willing to retract your remarks noted in the booklet?" Brauer stated that he still didn't feel that the slanderous remarks that he had supposedly made had been clarified to the point he felt he could make a proper response. However, he did have a 61 page handwritten response that he wished to read. He stated that it probably would take 2 1/2 hours to read. He was allowed the opportunity to read this paper as long as it focused on his slanderous remarks and didn't deviate from them. It was only minutes before Brauer was stopped because he was focusing on the KJV and NIV. The meeting started to get very heated with some words being said in favor of Brauer and others in

opposition to him. Finally the Elders restated their question and Brauer refused to answer.

At this point Brauer accused Pastor Winkel of defaming him in public. Pastor Winkel stated that segments of the letter that had gone to Brauer had been discussed at the Circuit Pastors' meeting.

The motion was made that Richard E. Brauer be suspended from fellowship due to statements he had made. After some discussion on the appropriateness of suspension and its difference from excommunication the ballot was taken and Brauer was suspended from fellowship. The motion carried 26-yes, 22-no.

Pastor Winkel wrote (Appendix K) Pastor Zarling about what had occurred at the meeting. Pastor Winkel felt that already after the meeting had ended that he could detect signs of healing for people on both sides of the issue even though they still disagreed on some things.

Brauer appealed his case to Nebraska District President, Pastor Joel Frank, who has set up a committee to look over the records to see that everything was done decently and in order. At the present time to the best of my knowledge a verdict has not been reached. Brauer also is still trying to influence the church by inviting members over to a friend's house (this person is a member) to listen to him read his paper that he tried to present to the Voters Assembly. However, this group of Brauer supporters is gradually diminishing in size.

St. Paul's Lutheran Church in Norfolk, NE, still uses only the King James Version. This probably will remain this way for a while, but I believe that the path is now open for another period

of education in the difference of translations to take place. This education will have to take its time, but following this education St. Paul's probably will follow the recommendation that the Elders and the Church Council put forward in 1984.



### Bibliography

All information for this paper was found in the St. Paul's "Epistle," the Elders' minutes from 1990-91, the Church Council minutes.

Pastor Philip Zarling assisted me in this paper by sitting down and telling it to me from his perspective.

I was advised that it would be wise not to talk directly with Richard E. Brauer.

The letter that Mr. Brauer started to read at the Voters' meeting during which he was suspended was given to me on loan from a member. This copy of the letter is not supposed to be in my hands.

Richard Brauer's book, A Layman's View of the NIV, is also on loan to me and is not to be in my hands.

# NEW INTERNATIONAL VERSION OF THE HOLY BIBLE

## I. REASONS FOR USING THE NIV AT ST. PAUL'S.

1. God's true Word.
2. Clearer communication of God's Word - Easier to understand.
3. More efficient teaching of God's Word to children - Children able to retain truths of God's Word more readily.
4. Less of an obstacle to visitors/mission prospects.
5. Cooperation and harmony with many other WELS churches and publications.
6. More directly parallel to the way God communicated His Word in the original Greek and Hebrew and in previous translations.

## II. REASONS FOR NOT USING THE NIV AT ST. PAUL'S AT THIS TIME.

1. King James Version still God's true Word.
2. Familiarity and love of KJV by many members.
3. NIV does not have same beauty of expression as KJV.
4. Use of extensive footnotes for alternate readings causes confusion between NIV and KJV.
5. May cause controversy/division among some members who do not want to switch to NIV.

Other contemporary English Translations (partial list)  
 Revised Standard Version (RSV)  
 New American Standard Bible (NASB)  
 New English Bible (NEB)  
 An American Translation (Beck's)  
 Phillip's Modern English

PROPOSAL TO CONSIDER USE OF NIV

I. THE REASON

Many current Bible translations; Synod request for evaluation of translations to determine faithfulness to original Greek and Hebrew and suitability for use; Recognition of NIV as a faithful contemporary translation by Seminary faculty; Synod approval for use of NIV in Synodical publications if desired; Current use of NIV in WELS: Meditations, NWL quotes, Sunday School materials, Catechism; therefore: What should we do?

NOT - Someone pushing for NIV saying we should be using it, and if we don't we're old fashioned and not doing what we should.

BUT - In view of current circumstances in which NIV is recognized as a faithful translation and widely used in our Synod, should we use it also? In school in order materials? In church services?

II. ELDER'S STUDY

Meetings held occasionally for about a year; review of Seminary's course material on hermeneutics: (study of methods and principles use in interpreting the Bible); discussion on related articles and questions (i.e. Bynum tract, etc.) pros and cons.

*(nearly two years)*

III. ELDER'S RECOMMENDATION

	<u>Use in School</u>
1st year	K - 4
2nd year	K - 5
3rd year	K - 6
4th year	K - 7
5th year	K - 8

Use in Church  
 1 service/mo.  
 2 services/mo.  
 3 services/mo.  
 4 services/mo. (one per Sunday)  
 Half the services each month  
 Sermon text: Pastor's choice  
 Special services, Passion readings, etc. were not discussed.

IV. PROPOSAL

- A. Bring results of Elder's study, recommendation, and proposed method of bringing matter to the attention of the congregation to Church Council for its consideration.
  - B. Hold two open meetings for anyone in congregation to attend (one weeknight, one Sunday afternoon) to discuss points I - III above. Get feelings of members about the question of using the NIV (Take straw poll of those in favor and those opposed?) Go through pros and cons.
  - C. Bring results of open meetings to church council for their consideration.
  - D. Church Council takes a position on recommendation of Elders for consideration at a specially called voters meeting.
- ...above meetings in bulletins and newsletter.

## I. Hand Copying

Before the invention of the printing press in the 1500's all books and writings were written out by hand. Also, any copies that were made of books had to be done by hand. It is for this reason that books were very valuable because hand copying was a very time consuming, laborious task. The most frequently copied book (or portions of it) were the Scriptures. The word "scriptures" comes from the Latin word, scribo, which means "to write."

## II. Diffent Types of Copies

None of the original "autographs" or original writing by the author himself of the Scriptures have been preserved. All that we have in the way of early writings of the Bible are hand written copies of the original autographs. There are many of these copies, literally thousands, dating from around 200 - 1500 AD. Before 200 AD we have only a few small fragments of writings of the Bible. After 600 AD almost all of the copies of the Bible in Greek came from Byzantium: area of the world where Christianity had not been replaced by the Mohammedan conquests. Rome and Italy made their copies in Latin. After 1500 AD hand copying was replaced by the printing press.

Copies that were made of the Bible, or portions of it, are called witnesses. There are different types of copies, or witnesses.

### A. Papyri.

These are copies made on writing material which came from the Egyptian papyrus plant. They are the earliest copies. There are more than 80 such copies that have been found, but none of them are of the entire New Testament, and most are small fragments of the New Testatment.

B. Uncials. These are copies of the Bible that are made in all capital letters. They, also, are earlier copies (although not as early usually as the papyri witnesses) often dating from the 300's AD.

C. Minuscules. These are copies of the Bible that are written in small Greek letters. They are of a later date than the uncials and papyri witnesses, and are much more numerous. Almost all of the copies of the New Testament that we have from after 600 AD are Byzantine minuscules

D. Lectionaries. These are copies of portions of the Bible that were used in public worship services, containing the specific Scripture readings for the day.

E. Translations. Besides the different types of copies of the Bible, (New Testament) into Greek, translations were made into other languages, and copies of those translated manuscripts were made also. Major versions are Syriac (Antioch, Syria); Coptic (Alexandria, Egypt); Old Latin, (Carthage, North Africa).

F. Church fathers. In their writings, the early church fathers often quoted the Scriptures.

## III. Different Practices in Copying.

A. Continuous Scriptures. One of the common practices in ancient writings seems strange to us today. This was the practice of writing with no spaces between words and no punctuation to distinguish sentences, clauses, questions, quotations, etc.

B. Contractions. Because copying by hand was a tiresome job, it is not surprising that the copiests began to use contractions. This was especially true of words which occurred often. Thus θεος (God) became θς, ΙΗΣΟΥΣ (Jesus) became ΙΗC.

C. Professional Copying. As Christianity grew and the demand for copies of the Bible spread, professional book making (copying) shops began to produce copies of the Bible as well as other books.

D. Monks. One of the common tasks of monks in monasteries was to make copies of the Bible.

E. Remarks. It was common practice to write remarks on the copies that were made. Notes at the end identifying who made the copy, date and place; explanations of difficult words or passages, comments made on the side, are examples of such remarks.

F. Sections. Although continuous copying (above) was the rule, it became customary to mark off larger sections, in order to make finding passages easier.

*Redeemer Ev. Lutheran  
Church and School*

1906 Garrett Avenue  
Cheyenne, Wyo. 82001

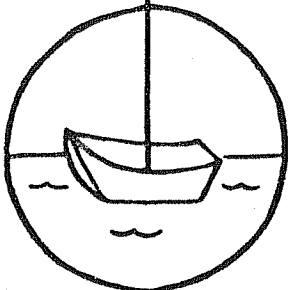
October 29, 1990

Dear Pastor,

I am the pastor of Redeemer Lutheran Church in Cheyenne, WY, a member of the CLC. Recently a member of your congregation, Mr. Richard E. Brauer contacted me when he sent a copy of his booklet expressing his concerns over the NIV along with a letter expressing like concerns. An identical mailing was also sent to Pastor Mike Sprengeler in Loveland, CO. This was unsolicited and quite a surprise since I have never had previous contact with Mr. Brauer. I imagine that he had a number of these booklets printed and then found a directory and started mailing. It seemed a matter of courtesy to acknowledge its receipt. It also seemed necessary to respond, at least briefly, to some of his statements since he has placed them before me and they can hardly be ignored. I am a mind to respond rather more fully, but I do not wish to fan flames, if such there be, in your congregation. If this is an "active file" into which I would be meddling, wave me off. Otherwise, I will fell free to pursue this a bit further, keeping you informed along the way.

Sincerely,

*Pastor Norman Greve*  
Pastor Norman Greve



Dear Sir:

to introduce myself: my name is Richard E. Brauer. I am a member of St. Paul's Ev. Lutheran Church, Wisc. Synod, Norfolk, Neb. I became a member of St. Paul's (Wels) Waver Neb. quite sometime ago. to be exact I cannot recall the number of years. I became a member of the Wisc. Synod prior to the time that the Wisc. Synod withdrew its fellowship with the Mo. Synod. I was active in the Church enough to know and understand, even though I had attended a Christian day school and was confirmed in the Mo. Synod that the action taken by the Wisc. Synod to withdraw from fellowship with the Mo. Synod was scriptural, proper, and necessary; not according to that which I had learned as a member of Wels, but as a member of the Mo. Synod. I thank the Lord for the men that I was privileged to have had as my Pastor and associates through those times. Now we find ourselves in a similar situation within our own church and synod of which we accused others not that many years ago. A deviation from the simple truths of Scripture. Deviations which will bring many changes to the church as we have known it, placing many souls in jeopardy. Hope you can find the time to read of a layman's concerns. R.E.B.

*Redeemer Ev. Lutheran  
Church and School*

1906 Garrett Avenue  
Cheyenne, Wyo. 82001

October 29, 1990

Mr. Richard E. Brauer  
706 Linden Ln  
Norfolk, NB

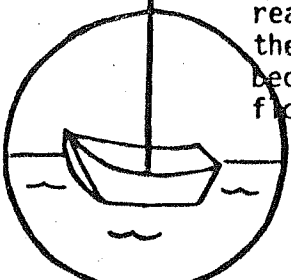
Dear Mr. Brauer:

I have recently received the booklet you sent to me on the NIV, and have read it. It is not possible for me to respond at length at this time (though perhaps a more complete response may be forthcoming, if time permits.) I now just wish to acknowledge the work you have quite evidently put into writing this and to acknowledge also the very evident concern that prompted you to write. The obvious effort you put into writing this booklet clearly demonstrates a deep concern about and zeal for the welfare of the church of God. Such a concern dare never be ignored. It is always in place to "test the spirits," even and especially the spirit of one's own church.

I too am not entirely satisfied with the NIV, though I "inherited" its use here in Cheyenne. I too have some feeling of being "forced" into using it, since materials available so commonly use it. (We often use WELS materials though ourselves members of the CLC.) I do not like the footnotes in the NIV explaining textual choices -- they often overstate their case. Some passages are too interpretive to find my approval. Others show a Reformed bias in that they add words like "ought," or "must." Thus far we probably are on common ground.

But I greatly fear that you are overstating your case for the KJV. No translation is perfect, or inerrant, or inspired. This dare not be claimed for Luther's German translation, nor for the KJV, nor for any other translation. Nor does the KJV claim this for itself. Your statement to that effect on page 51 is at best misleading, and is really plain wrong. The teaching that God is the author of Scripture, that Scripture is inspired is reflected in the KJV translation, but this claim dare not be made of the translation itself.

Rather I appreciate your concern over the general neglect of the Word, that people in general are not reading the Bible regularly, are not studying it for themselves in their homes, applying themselves to it diligently. This is truly the source of a great many problems. This more than the choice of translation, is the key. If they are not reading their Bibles, then it doesn't really matter which translation they are not reading. It is also possible that some do not read because they find they do not understand the KJV. And blessings would flow even from the diligent use of the NIV.



I believe I would have profited more from your paper had you given more examples of passages you find to distort the teachings of Scripture. Which doctrines are now longer to be found in this translation? I still find the diety of Christ taught, for example, in spite of the textual question over the Timothy passage.

0501 I will be sending a copy of our correspondence to your pastor. I believe this is proper. I don't want to be guilty of counseling another's member, and certainly not without his knowledge. Nor do I wish to stir a boiling pot within a congregation. If this should become the effect of my writing, I will naturally need to cease.

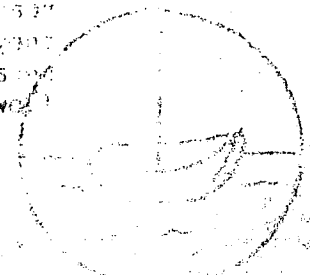
Sincerely,  
Pastor Norman Greve  
Pastor Norman Greve

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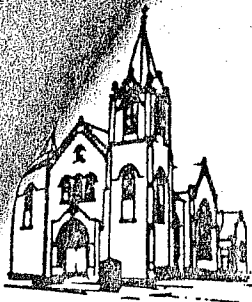
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## St. Paul's Ev. Lutheran Church



WISCONSIN EV. LUTHERAN SYNOD

11TH AND GEORGIA AVENUE  
NORFOLK, NEBRASKA 68701PARSONAGE  
1108 GEORGIA AVENUE  
(402) 371-1854

Philip E. Zarling, Pastor

DAY SCHOOL  
1010 GEORGIA AVENUE  
(402) 371-1233

August 15, 1990

Prof. David Kuske  
11833 N. Luther Lane  
Mequon, WI 53092

Dear Prof. Kuske,

Enclosed is the booklet entitled A Layman's View of the NIV by Richard Brauer which I spoke to you about at our recent supervising pastor's workshop. I've also enclosed a sheet of statements that I have drawn up to share with those who ask me about the booklet. The statements are not meant to be arguments against the viewpoints showing how they are wrong or inaccurate, just statements about what my position is in contrast to the booklet.

I really don't feel too comfortable asking you to do anything other than what you have the time and desire to do by way of responding. If you end up feeling that the booklet is too slanderously biased to dignify with a response I would understand. There are a number of times I've felt the same way myself. Once a person starts reading through the booklet and trying to determine what might be said by way of response, you end up with a possibility of disagreeing with just about every paragraph - either as the accuracy of the information presented, or to its conclusions. I ended up with making the statements I did on the enclosed sheet somewhat out of frustration. Rather than try to argue a lot of points, or contend against them in some way, I finally decided to simply put down where I stand on the issues (by no means all of the issues I could have made a statement about). The very last statement I made I did because at this point in time it was more effort that I wanted to put forth to try to take each of the incidents in which I was referred to erroneously and try to explain what really was said or meant.

If you would be willing to at least review my statements and change, delete, improve, add to, etc., any that you feel you couldn't fully endorse that would be appreciated. Whatever you end up doing, or not wasting time with, is fine. Thanks for any time you give to this matter.

I'm sending a copy of this letter to Pastor Marc Frey in Seward, NE because I've been led to believe he would be willing to put forth some time in disputing some the things in the booklet, (It has been showing up in various parts of our district), and I want him to be aware of what I have communicated to you.

C.C.: Pastor Marc Frey  
President Joel Frank

Sincerely,

We Preach Christ Crucified

1. The Byzantine MSS fall into three periods. The ones used for the KJV are from the third period. These MSS from the third period of Byzantine are not completely identical with those of the first Byz period which begins about 900 A.D.
2. If you use only the Byzantine MSS, you have no preservation from ~~the~~ the originals until 900 A.D. It is not true that there are early testaments from the 1st, 2nd + 3rd centuries which are Byzantine.  
(p6 bottom)
3. Aleph + B did not fall into ~~the~~ disuse because they were rejected (the translations into Latin, Coptic + Ethiopic in the 300's + 400's agree with them.) They were taken out of consideration by the Mohammedan conquests which hid all the MSS of the Bible in Asia Minor, Palestine, Antioch, Egypt + N Africa from use by the Christian church.
4. Only Reformed people today (no Lutherans) consider the KJV "authoritative."  
(Why is E.L. Bynum, a Baptist, believed instead of several generations of faithful Lutheran pastors??) (p13)
5. The Seminary did not initiate the study of the NIV. The Synod in convention requested the Sem to do so.
6. His quotes from the Sem Textual ~~and~~ Criticism notes are either incomplete or total misquotes resulting in slanted accusations (p36) or an outright lie (p30).

Date October 28, 1990

Board of Elders  
St. Paul's Ev. Lutheran Church  
1100 Georgia Ave.  
Norfolk, Nebraska 68701

Mr. Richard E. Brauer  
706 Linden Lane  
Norfolk, Nebraska 68701

Dear Mr. Brauer,:

This letter is being written by Pastor Zarling on our behalf and at our request. We have suggested points that we wanted included in this letter and have reviewed its contents so that it properly reflects our position. We have also sought the advice and counsel of Circuit Pastor Timothy Winkel and Vacancy Pastor James Nelson before proceeding. They have reviewed the contents of this letter, are in agreement with it, and support the position we are taking.

As elders of the church it is our God-given responsibility to assist in watching over the spiritual life of St. Paul's congregation of believers, both individually and collectively. Included in that responsibility is the unfortunate need, sometimes, to address those matters which harm that spiritual life. That is the reason for this letter. We are putting in writing the concerns which we hope we are able to express also to you in person.

It is our unhappy conviction that what has been expressed verbally, at times, but especially what has been put in writing in your booklet, "A Layman's View of the N.I.V.", has done spiritual harm to our congregation and, also, to the church-at-large. The viewpoints expressed in that booklet are not those which we, or our church, share nor can we permit them to stand unchallenged. To do so would allow false testimony concerning the Scriptures, our pastor and our church to go unanswered and run the risk of undermining the faith of our members. You have taken a position, in writing, which is not in agreement with what we believe and practice at St. Paul's and as members of the Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod. It is our duty, therefore, to admonish you in the Lord and on the basis of His Word concerning this matter. We do this with the hope and the prayer that in this way oneness in the fellowship of our faith may once again be reestablished. If it can not be reestablished, than it will be our sad duty to recommend that the separation in fellowship which has occurred among us be made public by your removal from church membership at St. Paul's.

Before citing the Scriptures that would direct us to fulfill our responsibility, we would like to make three preliminary points.

- 1) We are not accusing you of spreading any specific false teaching.

To our understanding you still know and confess the teachings of Scripture as confessed by the orthodox evangelical Lutheran church. This is encouraging to us. Nevertheless, by accusing St. Paul's, our pastor, and the Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod of false teaching, and of liberal practice, you have taken a position which is not in agreement with us and our teaching and practice. According to this position you have made it clear that you are not one with us in the fellowship of our faith.

2) We are not saying that you have no saving faith in Jesus Christ as Savior.

It is our belief that you do confess Christ as your Savior, and do want to hold fast to His precious Word. We believe that you are sincere in your convictions and are convinced that your position is correct. Nevertheless, by taking a position in writing that is not in agreement with us and our church and synod, you have shown that at the present time you are not united in the fellowship of that faith with us.

3) We are not saying that this is a King James Version of the Bible (KJV) vs. the New International Version of the Bible (NIV) issue.

This is the issue (and the corresponding Greek texts upon which their New Testaments are based) around which you have chosen to make your accusations that our pastor, teachers, and synod are in error and are guilty of intentionally subverting doctrine. But we do not agree that one translation should be held up in opposition to the other as if one were the true Word of God and the other were not. We believe that both of these translations are faithful and accurate translations of God's original, inspired Word and are based on trustworthy manuscripts that have been graciously preserved to us by our God from different centuries and areas of the world. We believe that neither translation changes or detracts from the doctrines of God's Word, and that both can be used with confidence by our members as the true, inspired, inerrant and infallible Word of God. (We are not saying by this that all other translations of the Bible are equally faithful and useful). For further reading on this subject which would support our position and take issue with the information and conclusions that are found in the reference materials you have cited, you may read:

- Carson, D.A. The King James Version Debate - A Plea for Realism. Baker Book House, Grand Rapids, MI, 1979.
- Daiches, David. The King James Version of the English Bible. University of Chicago Press, Chicago, IL, 1941.
- Kubo, Sakae and Specht, F. Walter. So Many Versions? Zondervan, Grand Rapids, MI, 1983.
- Lewis, Jack P. The English Bible/From KJV to NIV. Baker Book House, Grand Rapids, MI 1981.

Having made these three preliminary points, the admonition which we feel compelled to bring to your attention is based on the following passages of Scripture.

- A. ROMANS 16:17 "Now I beseech you brethren, mark them which cause divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine which you have learned, and avoid them."

As state earlier, the issue that we address is not that you are teaching a specific false doctrine. Rather, the problem comes from the false conclusions and false accusations that you have made in writing which are causing divisions and offences in the church. An offence, according to Scripture, is something that harms or destroys the faith of another. The controversy that surrounds your booklet is harming the faith of others by leading some to think that God's spokesmen who speak God's Word to them are not to be trusted and believed \* (Booklet, p. 38, l.17ff; (p. 49, l. 11ff) p. 50, l.10ff); and that God's Word as translated by the NIV can not be trusted and believed (Booklet, p. 45, l.43ff; p. 50, l.40ff; p. 51, l.7ff, l.19ff; p. 57, l.20ff). It is harming the faith of some by leading them possibly to think that the Word of God they have heard preached to them at St. Paul's and other WELS churches is suspect, mixed with falsehood, and comes from the mouths of those who have been trained by liberal professors and who knowingly have subverted doctrine with liberal intentions (Booklet, p. 23, l.24-35; p. 27, l.21ff; p. 31, l.1f; p. 34, 35; p. 42, l.38ff; p. 50, l.10ff; p. 52, l. 18ff). Your assertions and statements are causing divisions in that members not only at St. Paul's, but in other congregations are becoming divided over an issue that ought not divide them.

- B. Hebrews 10:25, "Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is..."

Even though you have made trips to Kansas to use the means of grace, you have forsaken assembling together with your fellow members here at St. Paul's. By this you have caused offence among members by implying with your actions that forsaking the hearing of God's Word among one's fellow members is justified when a person has a personal disagreement or feels that something in the church is not Scriptural. The proper course of action to be taken if a person is convinced there is something unscriptural going on in the church is to continue to hear the Word of God faithfully, speak out against that which is perceived to be wrong, and then if the admonition is not heeded, separate oneself from that fellowship which holds to something which one does not believe. *Since this letter has been written he has attended several times*

- C. Matthew 18:15-17 "Moreover if thy brother shall trespass against thee, go and tell him his fault between thee and him alone. If he shall hear thee, thou hast gained thy brother. But if he will not hear thee, then take with thee one or two more, that in the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established. And if he shall neglect to hear them, tell it unto the church. But if he neglect to hear the church let him be unto thee as an heathen man and a publican.."

In disputing an issue where one feels he has been wronged (including the teachings of his faith challenged) one should follow the procedure above. He should not speak, first of all, publicly in meetings and then write to others who are not a part of the congregation and who have no ability to hear both sides of a matter before forming a judgment. In matters of doctrine where the presence of saving faith is still possible and a fundamental doctrine of faith has not been subverted, the separation that then is to occur is a termination of fellowship.

- D. Colossians 3:12-13 "Put on therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, longsuffering; forbearing one another, and forgiving one another, if any man have a quarrel against any, even as Christ forgave you, so also do ye."

This is not to say we are to be forbearing of false teaching and simply forgive another without contending for the truth. But it does lay before us a spirit of meekness, humility and patience which when dealing with others is willing to forbear misunderstandings, not "put the worst construction" on things, as Luther would say, and take everything in the kindest possible way. (Booklet, p. 23, 24-35; p. 26, 1.5ff, 24ff, 29ff; p. 35, 1.15ff, 31ff;)

- E. James 4:11 "Speak not evil one of another, brethren. He that speaketh evil of his brother (slander), and judgeth his brother, speaketh evil of the law, and judgeth the law..."

To make accusations of wrong doing and evil intentions that are unfounded and untrue is simply nothing else than slander. This is not the spirit of Christ. (Booklet, p. 23, 1.24-35; p. 25, 1.5ff; p. 31, 1.1f).

- F. TITUS 3:9,10. "But avoid foolish questions, and genealogies, and contentions, and strivings about the law, for they are unprofitable and vain. A man that is an heretick after the first and second admonition reject."

In the Greek the word that is translated, "heretick," means literally one that is causing factions and divisions. So the point of Titus 3:9,10 is that when a person starts causing factions and divisions in the church by stirring up contentions and strivings over questions of the law and other matters that are "disputable" he should be admonished. If he does not cease after the first or second warning, he and his contentions should be rejected. Then, according to Romans 16:17, the rejection that is to be carried out by those who have admonished him for his contendings and strivings is to avoid him (separate from fellowship).

It is actions that are contrary to such teachings of God's Word as these that we feel that have contributed to the controversy surrounding your booklet. We do not mean to say that a person has no right to speak out on issues such as the KJV/NIV. Especially should he do so if he feels that there is something wrong. But his admonition and his attempts at resolving the issue should be carried out in keeping with Scripture - such as the passages listed above. It is actions that are contrary to such teachings of God's Word as these that we feel have caused divisions and offences in the church. And this we should not allow to continue.

Mr. Brauer, we are sure that you must realize that we take the Word of God' and our responsibility of upholding that Word seriously - even as you claim to want to defend the truth. We respect your right and Christian obligation to speak up for that which you feel is God's will. We reject your contention that the NIV and those who use it are undermining God's Word and are guilty of false doctrine and are in any way attempting to subvert the faith of God's people with liberal theology. This is simply not so. And the divisions and controversy that are stirred up by saying that it is so can not be tolerated. If, in fact, you continue to feel that it is so and there is not unity of faith in this matter, then recognition must be given to the fact that we are not united in our fellowship of faith, and a removal from church membership must occur. We do not want this. We believe that you do not want this. Let us pray and talk together that a God-pleasing unanimity may be reestablished that this does not need to be so.

In summary, Mr. Brauer, our position as elders of the church is this.

- 1) Our concern is not with the issue of KJV versus the NIV. We respect the desires of those who still prefer using the KJV. We support the use of the KJV as being a faithful translation of God's holy Word that can be used with confidence by those who continue to use it. However, we defend the use of the NIV as also being a faithful translation of God's Word by those who desire to use it.
- 2) Our concern is with the divisions and offences that are being caused in the church by your actions in staying away from church services and by what you have written in your booklet.
- 3) We maintain that there are unfounded accusations, unjustified conclusions and slanderous remarks made in the booklet which are unbecoming a child of God who is a sincere searcher of the truth. Since our church, called workers and synod have been accused of false doctrine, and according to your stated position are not at the present time holding to the same faith you are, this accusation, together with other slanderous remarks made in the booklet must be retracted in some way in order for a unity of fellowship to exist and church membership at St. Paul's to continue. We desire to meet with you in order that this may be accomplished in a way that we all may deem acceptable.

Mr. Brauer, may God's Holy Spirit working through the Word, help us to solve this issue in a God-pleasing way, to the glory of His name, upholding His truth, and building up of His kingdom.

In His service,

St. Paul's Board of Elders

*Rayne Kelle 11/6/90*  
*Kevin Dussler 11/6/90*  
*Andon Acheff 11/6/90*  
*John Schlueter 11/6/90*  
*George 11-6-90*

*Handwritten initials*



From: Richard E. Brauer  
 to: the Board of Elders  
 St. Pauls Lutheran Church

Date 11-10-90

Norfolk, Ne.

Sirs:

After having read and re-read your letter I find it most difficult <sup>to begin</sup> any sort of a response when I can not direct it to any specific allegation spoken or written.

In paragraph 3 page 1 you allude to "false testimony concerning the scriptures" that I have professed in the book. Would you be more specific so that I can address the issue.

In paragraph at the bottom of page 1 and on page 2 under section (B) would you be more specific in the accusation you make concerning, "by accusing St. Paul's, our Pastor, and the Wisconsin Ev. Lutheran Synod of false teaching."

In paragraph 2 page 2 quote "By taking a position in writing that is not in agreement with us and our synod you have shown that at the present time

①

you are not united in the fellows  
of that faith with us".

Would you please clarify that position  
that I have taken that is not in agree-  
-ment with St Paul's Ev. Lutheran Church  
Norfolk, Ne.

Page 3 paragraph 2. Would you please  
point out the false accusations that I have  
made in writing which are causing  
divisions and offences in the church.

On page 4 section (E) paragraph 2  
quote "to make accusations of wrong  
doing and evil intentions that are unfounded  
and untrue is simply nothing less than  
slander" end quote. Would you please point  
out those evil intentions, and the unfounded  
and untrue accusations that I have  
written, which is simply nothing else  
but slander, so that I can address those  
concerns specifically.

Again on page 5 section (3) paragraph  
4 would you be specific in quote "We  
maintain that there are unfounded accusations  
unjustified conclusions and slanderous

remarks made in the booklet"

If you would address these issues that you have raised in reference to my conduct and present to me in writing those statements I am to have made, and where they are located in the booklet, it will help me to respond to the overall letter in a more knowledgeable way rather than for me to speculate or to try and guess at just what you may be specifically referring to. Thank you

Yours Christ  
Richard E. Brauer

TO: Richard Brauer

We have read your most recent letter dated 11/10/90 regarding comment to the letter from the Elders to you dated October 28, 1990.

In your opening sentence you indicate it is difficult to respond since there is no direct, specific allegation written in that letter to you.

In the letter on page 3, there are three Bible passages written which are:

- A. Romans 16:17
- B. Hebrews 10:25
- C. Matthew 18:15-17

On that same page reference is made to your booklet many areas which need to be addressed. These areas are: page 38, line 17 and following; p. 49, 1.11ff; p. 50, 1.10ff; p. 45, 1.43ff; p.50, 1.40ff; p. 51, 1.7ff; 1.19ff; p. 57, 1.20ff; p. 23, 1.24-35; p. 27, 1.21ff; p. 31, 1.1f; p. 34, 35; p. 42, 1.38ff; p. 50, 1.10ff; p. 52, 1.18ff.

On page 4 there are three additional Bible passages written which are:

- D. Colossians 3:12-13
- E. James 4:11
- F. Titus 3:9,10

On that same page 4 reference again is made of your booklet many areas which need to be addressed. These areas are: page 23, line 24-35; p. 26, 1.5ff, 24ff, 29ff; p. 35, 1.15ff, 31ff; p. 25, 1.5ff; p. 31, 1.1ff..

Based on the above references to quotations directly from the Bible and also directly from your booklet "A Layman's View of the NIV" we believe the letter is very specific and that the summary in our letter as Elders on page 5 is quite clear regarding the need for a retraction of the accusations and slanderous remarks made in the booklet which are contrary to Scripture.

In addition to that we would also very strongly like to inform you that because we are not at this present time united in our fellowship of faith, you are not eligible to partake of Holy Communion until this matter is resolved. Let us pray and talk together that a God-pleasing unanimity may be reestablished as soon as possible

In His service,

cc: Vacancy Pastor Nelson &  
Pastor The W...

St. Paul's Board of Elders

# FROM THE ELDERS

January 2, 1991

Dear Members,

The Elders of St. Paul's have requested a special voters' meeting on January 15, 1991, at 7:00 P.M. The reason for this meeting is to address slanderous remarks made by Mr. Dick Brauer in his booklet, "A Layman's View of the N.I.V."

The meeting is being called because Mr. Brauer has taken a position in writing which is not in agreement with what we believe and practice at St. Paul's and as members of the Wisconsin Ev. Lutheran Synod.

Our concern is not with the issue of K.J.V. verses the N.I.V. We maintain that there are unfounded accusations, unjustified conclusions and slanderous remarks made in the booklet which are unbecoming a child of God who is a sincere searcher of the truth. Since our church, called workers, and synod have been accused of false doctrine and according to Mr. Brauer's stated position are not at the present time holding to the same faith, this accusation, together with other slanderous remarks made in the booklet, must be retracted in order for a unity of fellowship to exist and church membership at ST. Paul's to continue.

This is a serious matter and we sincerely encourage all voting members to attend this meeting.

In Christ's service,

The Elders of St. Paul's Ev. Lutheran Church

NEBRASKA DISTRICT  
CENTRAL CONFERENCE

Timothy Winkel, Circuit Pastor  
5071 Center Street Omaha, NE 68106  
(402) 553-6512 (402) 553-4299

January 16, 1991

Rev. Philip E. Zarling  
First Vice President Nebraska Dist.  
9530 Perry Ln  
Overland Park, KS 66212

Dear Philip,

Last night I met with the voting assembly of St. Paul's Ev. Lutheran Church of Norfolk, Nebraska. I was there at the invitation of the Elders of St. Paul's. I'm writing this letter to inform you of what transpired at that meeting. It is very possible that many of you may hear varying accounts of the meeting and I wanted you to be able to respond to any questions that may be raised.

Enclosed with this letter you will find the agenda of the meeting along with other materials that were read at the meeting. Allow me to give you a synopsis of the meeting. I began the meeting with a devotion based on Ephesians 4:10-16 stressing the thought brought out in verse 15 of speaking the truth in love. Following that the chairman brought the meeting to order and asked everyone to register their attendance (there were 50+ people there). The chairman then asked permission to have the meeting tape recorded at the request of the Elders. This was granted and the Elders agreed to make these tapes available to anyone who would like to hear them. Then the agenda was presented. It was noted that no opportunity for Mr. Brauer to respond to the Elder's question (There was a point for him to respond included in the handwritten draft of the agenda which I saw but it inadvertently was left off when it was typed up.) The agenda was adopted with the addition of 7b. Mr. Brauer's Response. Then the head Elder once again presented why the meeting was requested as it is stated in the letter that had been sent out to all members of St. Paul's. The Elders then presented their steps in trying to deal with Mr. Brauer. The time that was spent with Mr. Brauer by Pastor Zarling and also with Pastor Zarling and one of the Elders was mentioned. Then the letter that was written by Pastor Zarling on behalf of the Elders of St. Paul's was read (this is letter "A" in your packet). There were also examples from Mr. Brauer's book that were referred to in this letter that were read by an elder. This was followed by the reading of Mr. Brauer's written response (this is letter "B" in your packet). Then the Elders read their response (this is letter "C", in conjunction with this the explanatory pages "D" and "E" were also read).

Following this report the chairman asked me for any response. I basically said that the slanderous remarks made by Mr. Brauer, which the Elders

had noted, called into question the credibility and faithfulness of the pastors and teachers of the WELS, the administration of the WELS, and the professors of our seminary. I also noted that this situation has a wider scope than just a congregational matter because of wide distribution of the booklet that Mr. Brauer wrote.

The Elders then addressed their question to Mr. Brauer. They asked if he was willing to retract in writing the slanderous statements made in his booklet (this is not a direct quotation of their question but is a paraphrase of it - I do not have the exact wording with me).

Mr. Brauer was then given the floor and stated that he had a written response that in his words would take two and one half hours to read. He was reminded that his comments were to be to the point of the slanderous remarks and not to turn it into a KJV and NIV debate. Mr. Brauer had numbered copies of his response handed out to everyone (it was hand written and lengthy but I did not count the number of pages). I believe Mr. Brauer was into the third page when he began to mention the KJV and NIV. One of the members of the congregation called a point of order and the chairman said that Mr. Brauer would have to keep his remarks to the point of the issue for which the meeting was called. At that Mr. Brauer took his seat saying he could not continue then because to him the KJV was the issue.

Quite a bit a debate then ensued as to whether Mr. Brauer should continue to read his response. Even some of the Elders said they were prepared to hear Mr. Brauer out if that was what was desired. A motion was made to allow Mr. Brauer to continue. That motion was defeated (not overwhelmingly however - I believe the vote was 28-23 something like that). The debate continued. During the debate it was suggested by one member that the Elders needed more time to study Mr. Brauer's response since they had not seen it before (the Elders had asked him to meet with them on Jan. 3 to present his response but he had refused). Mr. Brauer said he would not allow them to study it. All of the copies of Mr. Brauer's response were collected by Steve Brauer.

The head Elder then made the motion that since Mr. Brauer was unwilling to retract his statements in his booklet that he be suspended from fellowship. This motion was seconded and the debate continued. There was quite a bit of discussion about what was meant by suspension as opposed to excommunication. I explained it as best I could. Suspension (or termination) is the term used on the district and synodical levels when it comes to terminating fellowship with those who persist in doctrinal error. Suspension is different from release. Release implies that the person no longer desires to continue his membership in the congregation. Suspension implies that the individual needs to be excluded from membership in the congregation contrary to his wishes. Suspension is forceful in its warning that what a person is holding to with his beliefs is contrary to that which is held by the congregation and could be damaging to his faith. Excommunication was not to be used because the Elders in no way were making the judgment that Mr. Brauer denied that which is essential to saving faith - that Christ is his Savior, etc.. Excommunication declares that a person is lost in his sin, and no saving faith in Christ is evident. Suspension does not deny the possibility that saving faith is still present. (Incidentally it was implied that I was the one that put these words into the Elder's mouths. The truth is that in meeting with them they were the ones that brought up suspension and said they felt this was the course to follow rather than excommunication, if it came to that. They did ask if I agreed that suspension was appropriate rather than excommunication and I simply agreed with them.) The question was called. It was clarified a couple of times to be sure everyone knew what they were voting on. The motion for

suspension carried. Again it was not an overwhelming majority. The motion for suspension having carried, Mr. Brauer walked out and the Elders moved for adjournment. This was passed with a standing vote. I closed the meeting with some concluding thoughts and the Lord's prayer.

I do not know what all the ramifications of this meeting will be. Perhaps there will be some who will leave St. Paul's - none indicated that publicly last night. I do believe this whole situation has caused many people at St. Paul's to take more seriously their role as a community of believers and as a royal priesthood. God's will is that the Word of God continue to be preached in its truth and purity at St. Paul's. I know that this is also the desire of the Elders. One man at the meeting mention that what they were doing was not easy but it, too, was the Lord's work.

After the meeting I spoke with several individuals (from both points of view). Although there was not agreement on everything I do feel that the healing process for many had already begun and with God's continued grace it will continue. Please remember this congregation, Vacancy Pastor Nelson, Vicar Werre and myself in your prayers.

I realize I have bombarded you with a large amount of information, but I felt it was necessary for you to know what went on as soon as possible so if you hear rumors or people ask you questions you will be able to put them in the proper perspective. Be assured that whatever I said or did I tried with all my ability and a great amount of prayer to speak and act in love and compassion.

If you have any questions, please do address them to me. I would appreciate the opportunity to clear up an misunderstandings there may be.

Together in Christ's service,

*Tim*

- cc: File
- All Nebraska District Circuit Pastors
- District Officers