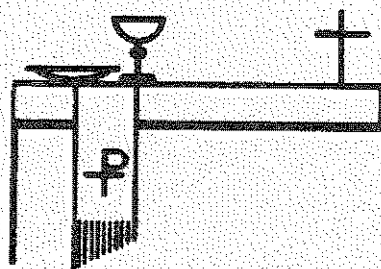


Affirmation and Appeal



concerning
**LUTHERAN ALTAR & PULPIT FELLOWSHIP
IN CANADA**

A STATEMENT OF CONSENSUS

... adopted December 10, 1970

Foreword

Leaders of the Lutheran Churches in Canada have met to discuss inter-church relationships at least once annually (except in 1967) for the past fifteen years. What began informally in 1955 as a free conference, or "exploratory conversation", developed into a series of official meetings of persons authorized by their churches to pursue the quest for Lutheran unity. When these representatives of the Lutheran Churches come together now, they are the Joint Commission on Inter-Lutheran Relationships (JCILR).

Representatives from three Church bodies constitute the JCILR: 1. The Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada (ELCC), now autonomous but until 1966 the Canada District of The American Lutheran Church. 2. Lutheran Church-Canada (LC-C), The Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod in Canada. 3. The Lutheran Church in America-Canada Section (LCA-CS). More than 99% of the baptized Lutherans having membership in Lutheran congregations in Canada belong to these three Churches.

When the JCILR met in May of 1970 the members present concluded that, as far as they personally were concerned, the discussions had progressed to the point where there seemed to be a consensus on the basis of which pulpit and altar fellowship could be declared and practised. Aware that not all in their churches had made this same discovery, it was decided that an attempt should be made to give expression to the consensus experienced and "to collate, enlarge upon and edit" the various documents which had contributed to the achievement of that consensus.

JCILR met again in Winnipeg, December 8-10, 1970. A committee representative of the three Churches, with staff assistance by the Rev. Louis Scholl, through the courtesy of the Lutheran Council in Canada, prepared materials which provided the major part of the agenda for the meeting. The "Review of Inter-Lutheran Discussions in Canada", which traces the commissioners' way to consensus, was considered first by the Joint Commission. Then the statement of consensus itself was examined and revised to the form in which it is here presented.

The vote on the statement of consensus, given the title "Affirmation and Appeal", was taken separately from the vote on the three specific recommendations attached to it. This vote was by delegations. The ELCC and LCA-CS delegations cast unanimous affirmative votes; the LC-C vote was seven affirmative and two negative. It seems pertinent to note that neither of the persons voting negatively had been present at the May meeting, and one of them had never previously attended a meeting of JCILR. Significantly, the vote on the three specific recommendations was unanimous.

By virtue of the adoption of recommendation three, this booklet is in your hands. The Commission hopes this will be a useful resource for discussion in inter-Lutheran groups as specified in recommendation two. Attainment of consensus in such groups will make possible the declaration of fellowship which is the object of the first recommendation. May it be done with joy and conviction! By God's grace it is possible!

OTTO A. OLSON, Jr., Chairman
Joint Commission on Inter-Lutheran Relationships

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Affirmation and Appeal

We, official representatives of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Canada, Lutheran Church in America-Canada Section, and Lutheran Church-Canada — persons to whom our churches have assigned responsibility for finding a way to Lutheran unity in our land — do hereby solemnly affirm that our study of the Scriptures, the Lutheran Confessions and the doctrinal articles in the constitutions of our churches convinces us that consensus sufficient for fellowship exists. We are therefore of the conviction that our churches should declare and practise altar and pulpit fellowship, delaying no longer than is required in order to follow orderly procedures in the churches.

In arriving at this consensus we have followed a course of discussions in which listening and understanding have been as important for us as speaking and explaining. In our encounters we have come to know one another and accept one another as brothers in Christ and in the Lutheran family. We have learned that mutual forgiveness is a greater power for unity than convincing arguments. We have found that we share the same heritage of faith and the same body of doctrine. We have come to recognize the legitimacy of varieties in the expression of our faith, both in theological formulation and in parish practice, while we steadfastly acknowledge the supreme authority of Holy Scripture and remain loyal to the Lutheran Confessions.

That which we have discovered and experienced, we desire for all in our churches. We have heard and discussed many papers. We have together formulated our own statements of some of our teachings. We have deliberately confronted each other with the alleged points of differences and causes of offence among us. We have listened to each other and tried to understand. The result has been a discovery of our essential unity, a recognition that we are one in Christian fellowship.

In the expectation that the course we have travelled may be instructive to others, we consider it essential that there be meetings of pastors and meetings of laity which bring together representatives of more than one church body, for we believe that such gatherings can and will provide the Spirit of God with an opportunity to enable many to discover and experience unity in Christ through the Holy Scriptures.

Therefore we appeal to our churches to charge their own membership — clergy and laity alike — with responsibility for personal and congregational discovery of unity with other Lutherans in Canada. Furthermore, we appeal to our churches that where it has not yet been done, fellowship be declared and practised on the basis of the existing unity.

Specifically we recommend:

1. That Lutheran Church — Canada report this resolution to the Commission on Theology and Church Relations of the Lutheran Church — Missouri Synod in accordance with instructions given at the Denver Convention; and that we urge Lutheran Church — Canada to strive for action toward the declaration of fellowship at the 1973 convention of the Lutheran Church — Missouri Synod.
2. That ELCC, LCA-CS and LC-C promote and encourage meetings of pastors and meetings of laity which will bring together wherever possible representatives of more than one church body, with a view toward discovering and expressing the unity that there is among Lutherans, and
3. That a history of the progress of discussions on the part of leaders of the Lutheran Churches in Canada which have led them to the discovery of unity be distributed to all pastors and as many laymen as participate in such meetings.

Adopted by the
Joint Commission on Inter-Lutheran Relationships
December 10, 1970

A Review of Inter-Lutheran Discussions in Canada

The Declaration of Consensus sufficient for altar and pulpit fellowship among Lutherans in Canada is a momentous event in the history of our churches. In declaring this consensus, we who have been privileged to serve on the Commission authorized to negotiate altar and pulpit fellowship herewith submit to our constituencies this review of our discussions in the earnest hope that its study may lead our people to affirm the consensus that exists and to practise the fellowship it implies.

A. THE WAY WE HAVE COME

The route followed in our quest for fellowship among Lutherans in Canada has been both deliberate and arduous. It encompasses fourteen consultations on a national level¹ supplemented by numerous interim meetings of sub-committees, steering committees, etc. Though not formally structured under the Joint Commission, not to be overlooked are the area discussions for pastors and laymen organized by Lutheran Council's Division of Theological Studies focussing on the same quest for consensus and unity among Lutherans in Canada.²

Attempts at a rapprochement between Lutherans in this country are now just short of a century old.³ It is therefore understandably difficult to determine where to begin retracing the steps that now culminate in this Declaration of Consensus. One might perhaps point to the 1944 Canada Lutheran Home Mission Conference held in Saskatoon since it was here that the impetus came for the organization of a Canadian Lutheran Council as a vehicle to facilitate closer relationships and cooperation among Lutherans in Canada.⁴ However, while the Missouri Synod did accept the invitation to participate in the subsequent planning meetings that were convened (1945-1947), delegates to the 1947 organizational meeting were unable to resolve disagreement over certain constitutional provisions so that when the Council was finally constituted in 1952, Missouri Synod was not represented.

¹With the exception of 1967, pan-Lutheran meetings at the national level were held annually from 1956 to 1970. Cf. Exhibit "A" for a listing of dates, places and subjects explored in these discussions.

²These twenty-nine areas have been meeting since 1968 with over 70% of the clergy in Canada participating in the discussions. Beginning with 1970 these discussions have been broadened to enlist lay participation as well.

³A series of free conferences in Ontario between representatives of the Canada Synod and the Missouri Synod date back to 1872. In anticipation of the third of these conferences in 1892, the Canada Synod's *Kirchenblatt* reported: "The differences in doctrine, as they are, are not of such a nature that they cannot be overcome by brotherly discussion" and added the proposal that joint pastoral conferences be held for doctrinal discussions, and that if unity were attained an independent synod would be organized to work in the interest of the Lutheran Church in Canada (Frank Malinsky, *Grace and Blessing, A History of the Ontario District of the Lutheran Church — Missouri Synod, 1954*, pp. 45ff.).

⁴Represented at this free conference were: The American Lutheran Church, Augustana Synod, Canada Synod (ULCA), Lutheran Free Church, Manitoba Synod (ULCA), Norwegian Lutheran Church, and United Danish Lutheran Church.

In settling on 1956 as our starting point, we do not discount in any way the significance of the numerous inter-Lutheran free conferences and consultations convened across Canada in the preceding decades. This date is chosen because it marks the beginning of a series of uninterrupted discussions whose momentum has yielded the mutual understanding, acceptance and confidence that issue in this Declaration.

1. Exploratory Conversations Looking Toward an Indigenous Lutheran Church in Canada (1956-1959)

These discussions arose out of a 1955 meeting in Saskatoon at which western representatives from member bodies of the Canadian Lutheran Council studied the possibility of forming a Western Canada Lutheran Church. Representatives from Missouri Synod joined the discussions in 1956 at a meeting in Kitchener, Ontario. At this meeting the vision became nationwide and all-inclusive, as indicated in the above designation for these conferences. Interest ran high. The 1958 Winnipeg meeting, for instance, was attended by fifty-five representatives and observers. The agendas for these annual conferences display a wide range of papers covering both doctrinal and practical considerations involved in the establishment of one Lutheran Church in Canada.⁵

2. Lutheran Doctrinal Discussions Looking Toward Theological Consensus and Altar and Pulpit Fellowship in Canada (1960-1970)

Beginning with 1960 the discussions took a different direction. Until the completion of two pending mergers (ALC, ELC, UELC to form The American Lutheran Church, 1960; AELC, Augustana, Suomi, and ULCA to form Lutheran Church in America, 1962), the quest for one Lutheran Church in Canada seemed unwieldy. Thus in the years that followed, these meetings were directed toward the goal of establishing altar and pulpit fellowship among Lutherans in Canada.

1960 From their very beginning, the discussions in this series of meetings have been shaped by Article VII of the Augsburg Confession:

to It is also taught among us that one holy Christian church will be
1963 and remain forever. This is the assembly of all believers among whom the Gospel is preached in its purity and the holy sacraments are administered according to the Gospel. For it is sufficient for the true unity of the Christian church that the Gospel be preached in conformity with a pure understanding of it and that the sacraments be administered in accordance with the divine Word⁶

Pursuant to Augsburg VII papers were presented and discussed on the Scriptures under the title, "The Gospel We Preach," as well as on the sacraments of Baptism and The Lord's Supper. Theses indicating agreement on the above were adopted. Presentations were also made on "The Church" and "The Ministry."

⁵Cf. Exhibit "A".

⁶Augsburg Confession, VII, 1-2 (Tappert, p. 32).

1964

In 1964 the basis and requirements for altar and pulpit fellowship among Lutherans in Canada were explored more vigorously.

Following a presentation and discussion on "The Doctrine of the Word" the representatives approved the establishment of a committee of six to identify the areas of doctrine and practice allegedly dividing Lutherans in Canada. On the basis of a questionnaire mailed to all pastors and church councils in Canada, the committee noted four areas of apparent difficulty: Scripture, The Lodge, Unionism, Church Ethics and Piety. To each of these a study committee was appointed representing each of the three Lutheran bodies: LCA-CS, TALC-Canada District, and LC-C (the 1959 federation of Missouri Synod's three Canadian Districts).

1965

At the 1965 meeting, following reports from each of the study committees noted above, a number of significant resolutions were adopted. It is evident from these resolutions that those serving on this Commission on Inter-Lutheran Theological Discussions now understood the requirements for pulpit and altar fellowship to be the same as for merger into one Lutheran Church in Canada. The resolutions, briefly summarized:

1. Record the Commission's hope for organic union "as soon as alleged differences in faith and practice can be resolved";
2. Instruct the four study committees to present position papers "intended to be preparatory to the organic union which is our recorded goal";
3. Request the three church bodies "to authorize this Commission to initiate merger negotiations";
4. Propose that when agreement sufficient for merger is achieved, pulpit and altar fellowship "be declared and practised while arrangements for organic union are being worked out."

Subsequent to this meeting, officials of the three church bodies directed a memorandum to all pastors in Canada citing the encouraging progress of these discussions and the growing consensus felt by those serving on the Commission.⁷

1966

Members of the Commission (now called the Joint Commission on Inter-Lutheran Relationships) convened again in April of 1966 to consider further reports submitted by the Committee on The Lodge and the Committee on Scripture. Rather than formulate a position paper, the Committee on The Lodge drew together pertinent sections from official statements issued by the three church bodies on this problem. The Committee on Scripture submitted a document entitled, "A Statement on the Form and Function of the Holy Scriptures," adopted in 1960 by the faculty of Concordia Seminary, St. Louis. To this the Committee appended a series of questions intended to probe the areas of apparent difficulty among Lutherans, *i.e.*, Revelation, Inspiration, and the Authority of Scripture. This statement and appended questions were subsequently mailed to all pastors for study and discussion by pastoral conferences and ministerial meetings across

⁷Cf. Exhibit "E".

Canada. More intensive follow-through came with the organization of Lutheran Council in Canada and its Division of Theological Studies. With the cooperation of the presidents of the churches, all pastors in Canada were related to the twenty-nine areas defined for inter-Lutheran discussions. Included in the resource manual for the 1968 discussions on "The Scriptures" were the above statement and appended questions recommended for study by the JCILR.

1968 The 1968 meeting of the Commission began with a review of recent and pending actions affecting relations between the churches in Canada. The Missouri Synod at its 1967 New York Convention had declared that the basis exists for fellowship with The ALC. At its June-July 1968 Convention, The Evangelical Lutheran Church of Canada (until 1966 the Canada District of The ALC) declared fellowship with both the LC-MS and the LCA.⁸ The LCA-CS responded by reiterating its stance of openness to fellowship with those who subscribe to the historic Lutheran Confessions.⁹ Its executive committee extended a specific invitation to LC-C to accept the offer of altar and pulpit fellowship agreeing, if necessary, to further discussions to achieve consensus on doctrine and practice.

This meeting more than any of the previous evidenced a new earnestness and urgency in the desire for greater unity among the Lutheran churches of Canada. Two formal pleas were entered for the immediate establishment of altar and pulpit fellowship.¹⁰ In addition, actions taken by three jurisdictional units of the churches and one student organization urged that negotiations begin toward formation of one Lutheran Church in Canada.¹¹ In a paper entitled, "The Scope of Lutheran Unity in Canada," Dr. O. A. Olson, Jr., observed: "In a way it is curious that we can either favour or oppose Lutheran unity in Canada without knowing how that unity will be expressed." In response to several suggestions in his presentation, the Commission established two committees, the one "to formulate a preliminary doctrinal statement which may serve as the basis of such doctrinal article(s) as will be desired for the constitution of one Lutheran Church in Canada," and the other to initiate a study of "the nature, purpose and objectives of a future Lutheran Church in Canada as a project of contingency planning."

⁸Ratified at the 1970 ELCC Convention in accord with constitutional provisions.

⁹"The Canada Section accepts the Unaltered Augsburg Confession and Luther's Small Catechism as true witnesses to the Gospel, and acknowledges as one with it in faith and doctrine all churches that likewise accept the teaching of their Symbols."

¹⁰In May of 1967, chaplains and contact pastors for college and university work met in Kitchener and drafted the so-called "Walper Statement" which states in part: "The declaration of trusting fellowship is the only such means (of eliminating the scandal of divided ministries in campus communities) short of organic union." Another communication received from the pastors of the Calgary area inter-Lutheran theological discussion group urges: "In view of the aforementioned discussions and the statements of consensus expressed... we feel compelled to urge those who are responsible for declaring pulpit and altar fellowship among the three Lutheran Synods to do so as quickly as possible."

¹¹Notification of the willingness and desire to negotiate towards formation of one Lutheran Church in Canada was received from the ELCC and from the Central and Western Canada Synods of the LCA-CS. The urgency of such negotiations was expressed via letter from the Lutheran Student Movement of Saskatchewan.

1969

At its December 2-4, 1969 meeting the Commission reviewed in detail the reports submitted by the two sub-committees noted above. A number of suggestions for revision were referred to the members of the Doctrinal Statement Committee and another report was requested for the next meeting of the Commission.¹²

The balance of the meeting evidenced a shift in emphasis to the quest for altar and pulpit fellowship among all Lutheran bodies in Canada. The July '69 Denver Convention of the LC-MS had declared fellowship with The ALC and The ELCC. On the Canadian scene this now means that The ELCC is in fellowship with both LC-C (LC-MS) and LCA-CS, but the latter two are not in fellowship with each other. LC-C reported that its Committee on Relations with Other Church Bodies was authorized by the LC-MS (Denver '69) to pursue in consultation with the latter's Commission on Theology and Church Relations the quest for unity with the LCA-CS.¹³

Representatives of these two church bodies on the Joint Commission again reiterated their desire not to establish separate bilateral negotiations, but rather to continue the pursuit for full fellowship and unity through the Commission. In a paper entitled, "Facilitating the Practice of Fellowship Established by Church Bodies," Dr. G. O. Evenson reminded the Commissioners that this pursuit will be accelerated by trusting Christ's promise to build His church. Since we believe that our several Lutheran churches with all their human imperfections are nonetheless a part of the church of Christ, we should also be confident that the Head of the church is at work in our midst as we strive for closer relations in the interest of His church's mission. Further, the pursuit of fellowship is dependent upon mutual trust. Such mutual trust requires a clearer understanding of the implications of fellowship, a spirit of charity toward each other, and integrity in our doctrine and practice.

In response to this presentation and a second paper pleading for greater lay involvement in the work of the Commission, representatives requested the Division of Theological Studies, LCIC, to assemble pertinent documents relating to the quest for pulpit and altar fellowship and to arrange for inter-Lutheran discussions on this subject among both clergy and laity across Canada in 1970. To preclude any misunderstanding of terminology, the Commission agreed to the definition of pulpit and altar fellowship set forth by the Commissioners of The ALC and LC-MS:

1. Congregations of the synods may hold joint worship services.

¹²The first draft as submitted to the 1969 meeting is appended as Exhibit "F".

¹³The full text of the resolution reads:

"RESOLVED, that the Synod authorize and encourage Lutheran Church — Canada through its Committee on Relations with Other Churches and in consultation with the Commission on Theology and Church Relations to pursue the quest for Lutheran unity with the Lutheran Church in America — Canada Section on the basis of Holy Scriptures and the Lutheran Confessions; and be it also
RESOLVED, that any requests for official synodical action which might result from these discussions be conveyed to the Synod at the appropriate time and according to appropriate synodical procedures."

2. Pastors of one synod may preach from the pulpits of congregations in the other synod.
3. Members in good standing in one synod may commune as guests at the altar of congregations in the other synod.
4. Members may transfer their membership from congregations of one synod to congregations of the other synod.
5. Congregations of one synod may call as their pastor those who are on the clergy roster of the other synod.
6. Students may prepare for the Holy Ministry in the seminaries of either synod.

Finally, to accelerate the work of the Commission, a special meeting was called for in May of 1970.

1970 The special May 5-6, 1970 meeting of the Commission tackled in earnest the previously elusive search for a viable and fruitful approach to the establishment of fellowship between the LCA-CS and LC-C. How to proceed was the question that repeatedly punctuated the discussion. Clues were sought in a review of the "Essays" (Sola Gratia, Sola Scriptura, and the Doctrine of the Church) that led to the consensus on the basis of which altar and pulpit fellowship was declared between The ALC and LC-MS. This was followed by a presentation retracing the steps that led to the declaration of fellowship between The ELCC and the LCA-CS.

Representatives were unanimously affirmative that in view of the greater understanding and mutual trust nurtured by fourteen years of intensive discussions, total fellowship and unity among Lutherans should be possible in Canada earlier than among the parent bodies in the U.S. This was demonstrated via an informal poll among the Commissioners in which all agreed that in the course of these discussions they have come to know one another sufficiently that they feel a consensus does indeed exist within the Commission, though it is doubtful that the same understanding and trust exists at all levels and in all areas of the church.

It was within this context that the Commission named a special committee to prepare and submit to the fall meeting a study document indicating consensus which has been achieved by the Commission as a basis for the declaration of altar and pulpit fellowship between the LCA-CS and LC-C.¹⁴ Notation was made that implementation of the proposed declaration will require approval at three levels: Lutheran Church-Canada in 1971; the three Districts of Lutheran Church-Canada in 1972; and Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod in 1973.

¹⁴The resolution as minuted provides "That a committee be appointed to collate, enlarge upon and edit the various documents that have been produced by the Commission, the earlier 'exploratory conversations', and the Lutheran Council in Canada, and prepare, on the basis of these documents, a statement of the consensus that seems to exist as a basis for altar and pulpit fellowship."

B. THE CONSENSUS ACHIEVED

Evident in the foregoing review is a steady progression in the experience of oneness, a gradual growing together to the point where those who have been a part of the discussions feel that a consensus sufficient for fellowship exists. What is outlined above is not to be misunderstood as merely a protracted exercise in interpersonal relationships. The harmony, cordiality, mutual respect and confidence that have developed in the course of these meetings have been undergirded by the happy discovery that underlying sometimes divergent terminologies we share common convictions and presuppositions. For the patience, gentleness, and readiness to listen in order to clarify, we acknowledge in the humility of faith the work of the Spirit in our midst.

That which follows is a brief analysis of the more significant subjects that have been probed in our quest for consensus and unity. The order in which they are treated is purely chronological and should not be misunderstood as reflecting in any way the degree of importance attached to the respective subjects by the Commission.

1. On the Significance of the Confessions of our Churches

Lutherans are such that the only infallible standard of faith and practice is the Bible, and that their Confessions are in harmony with the one pure Scriptural faith, preserving it in its purity. Lutheranism emphasizes its Confessions as does no other Christian group. It inherits from the early centuries the three ecumenical creeds: The Apostles', The Nicene and The Athanasian. In addition to the ecumenical creeds, Lutherans subscribe to a number of other specifically Lutheran Confessions. The most important of these is the Augsburg Confession of 1530. This creedal statement was formulated at the very beginning of the Reformation, but it is still the firmly held faith of the American Lutherans, because they believe it states accurately the teaching of the Bible.¹⁵ With this quotation Dr. C. C. Kleiner, representing the bodies uniting to form the LCA, began his presentation to the 1959 "Exploratory Conversations" to show, as he states:

That even among non-Lutherans the Lutheran Church is known as a confessional church which bases itself upon the Bible as the Word of God, and at the same time upon the ecumenical and specific Lutheran Confessions, because it believes them to be in full harmony with and a true interpretation of the Bible as the Word of God.

Questions concerning subscriptions to the Confessions in Lutheran circles have in the past revolved around two basic considerations; 1) The "quia/quatenus" issue, and 2) which symbols?

Both of these issues were explored at the Winnipeg Consultation in 1959.

¹⁵J. Paul Williams, *What Americans Believe and How They Worship* (1952), quoted by Dr. C. C. Kleiner in a paper entitled "The Significance of the Confessions in the Augustana Lutheran Church, the American Evangelical Lutheran Church, the Finnish Evangelical Lutheran Church, and the United Lutheran Church in America."

1. In respect to the former, Rev. Arne Kristo states:

The quality of our subscription to the symbols of the Lutheran Church can never be fully understood until we face up to the meaning of the "quia" as distinct from the "quatenus". A symbol can be a symbol only because it agrees with that which it is supposed to symbolize. If it does not agree, then we do not yet have a symbol, but must continue to look for one.

Reflecting the position of the LC-MS, he writes:

To put it simply, the Lutheran reformers confessed that the Holy Scriptures were the primary, infallible source of Christian truth. They also confessed that the ecumenical and Lutheran symbols were in agreement with the Holy Scriptures. Therefore, they subscribed to them because they were in agreement with the Scriptures and not merely to the extent to which they were in agreement with the Scriptures.

The position of The American Lutheran Church (and subsequently The ELCC) on the same issue is evident from a paper by Professor T. P. Solem tracing the basis of confessional subscription through the bodies antecedent to TALC. Noting "an exceedingly strict compliance with the Lutheran Confessions" in the Buffalo Synod, and the Lutheran Synod of Texas, he points to the "quia" subscription of the Joint Synod of Ohio (1848), the Iowa Synod (1854, reiterated in the Madison Theses of 1875), and later in the Minneapolis Theses (1925)¹⁶ which formed the basis for the cooperative American Lutheran Conference formed in 1930.¹⁷ The influence of the Minneapolis Theses is clearly evident in the constitution of TALC of 1960. Almost identical wording appears in the constitution of its Canadian jurisdiction which was autonomously incorporated in 1966 as The Evangelical Lutheran Church of Canada:

The Evangelical Lutheran Church of Canada accepts without reservation the symbolical books of the evangelical Lutheran Church, not insofar as but because they are the presentation and explanation of the pure doctrine of the Word of God and a summary of the faith of the evangelical Lutheran Church.

In examining the position of the predecessor bodies to the LCA (American Evangelical Danish Lutheran Church, Augustana Lutheran Church, Finnish Evangelical Lutheran Church, United Lutheran Church in America), Dr. Kleiner concludes: "We are justified in saying that the confessional basis of these four Lutheran Church bodies is a soundly Lutheran basis." That position he briefly states as follows:

¹⁶"These synods also, without reservation, accept the symbolical books of the Evangelical Lutheran Church, not insofar as, but because they are the presentation and explanation of the pure doctrine of the Word of God and a summary of the faith of the Lutheran Church, as this has found expression in response to the exigencies arising from time to time."

¹⁷Cooperating in this conference were: The American Lutheran Church (1930 merger of the Buffalo Synod, Iowa Synod, and Joint Synod of Ohio), Augustana Synod, Lutheran Free Church, Norwegian Lutheran Church, and the United Danish Evangelical Lutheran Church.

Although we defend the quia subscription to our Lutheran Confessions, this quia subscription must be limited to the substance of the Confessions, the word of God, and is not to be extended to the *letter* of the Confessions.

While the author does not elaborate on the distinction, he is clearly reflecting the position of "The Savannah Declaration"¹⁸ when he writes:

The confessions are historical documents that must be read in the light of history, that is in terms of by whom, for whom, and against whom they were written. Each had a specific purpose, and its statements must be seen in that light.

While the statement that the symbols must be interpreted "historically" has been suspect in some circles, the author declares himself in essential agreement with the Minneapolis Theses which state:

Adherence to our confessions pertains only to their doctrinal content (i.e., the doctrines declared to be the divine truths and the rejection of the opposite doctrines), but to these without exception or limitation in all articles and parts, no matter whether a doctrine is specifically cited as a confession or incidentally introduced for the purpose of elucidating or proving some other doctrine. All that pertains to the form of presentation (historical comments, questions purely exegetical, etc.) is not binding.¹⁹

2. The second issue related to the question of confessional subscription among Lutheran bodies can be more briefly assessed. This issue concerns the number of symbols to which subscription is necessary. All bodies accept the three ecumenical creeds (Apostles', Nicene, and Athanasian) as true statements and expositions of the Word of God. However, while LC-MS requires subscription to the entire Book of Concord without differentiation,²⁰ both The ELCC²¹ and the LCA²² list the Unaltered Augsburg Confession and Luther's Small Catechism separately from the rest.

These differing formulations are simply a matter of historical development

¹⁸This statement adopted by the ULCA in 1934 reads: "We believe that these Confessions are to be interpreted in their historical context, not as a law or as a system of theology, but as a 'witness and declaration of faith as to how the Holy Scriptures were understood and explained on the matters in controversy within the Church of God by those who then lived'."

¹⁹Compare "Why Are the Symbolical Books... to be Signed Unconditionally?," an essay presented by Dr. C. F. W. Walther to the Western District Convention of the LC-MS. Walther writes: "Since the Symbols were never intended to be anything else but confessions of faith and doctrine, the confessional pledge does not cover things which do not pertain to doctrine." Included in this category by Walther are matters related to human sciences (e.g., history), interpretation of individual scriptural passages, form, method and process of argumentation, etc.

²⁰"Synod, and every member of Synod, accepts without reservation... all the Symbolical Books of the Evangelical Lutheran Church as a true and unadulterated statement and exposition of the Word of God, to wit, the three Ecumenical Creeds (The Apostles' Creed, The Nicene Creed, The Athanasian Creed), the Unaltered Augsburg Confession, the Apology of the Augsburg Confession, the Smalcald Articles, (over)

as explained by Dr. Kleiner in reference to the bodies which merged to form the LCA:

Among the Lutheran Confessions, the Augsburg Confession has from the beginning held the foremost place. In fact, most of the other Confessions were written in large part as explanations of the Augsburg Confession in the light of later misunderstandings and errors. This fact explains why some of the Scandinavian Lutheran Churches have formally accepted, not the entire Book of Concord, but only the Augsburg Confession and Luther's Small Catechism.

The same notation is made parenthetically by Section 2 of the Minneapolis Theses:

The Norwegian Lutheran Church of America, in agreement with the position of the Lutheran Church of Norway and Denmark, has officially accepted only the three Ecumenical Creeds, the Unaltered Augsburg Confession and Luther's Small Catechism. This position does not imply that the Norwegian Lutheran Church of America in any way whatsoever rejects the remaining symbolical books of the Lutheran Church, as the constant reference to them in her theological literature testifies, but since the other symbolical books are not known to her constituency generally, it has not been deemed necessary to require formal subscription to the entire Book of Concord.

2. On the Doctrine of the Church

Twice the Commission explored the doctrine of the Church to determine whether or not there were differing concepts requiring clarification.

The first presentation by Dr. U. S. Leupold in 1959 attempted a fresh approach by deliberately avoiding traditional terminology in order to highlight more fully the Biblical concepts commonly telescoped in the language of systematics. The second presentation by Rev. F. A. Schole in 1963 followed the more formal systematic approach. It consisted of an analysis of the

the Large Catechism of Luther, the Small Catechism of Luther, and the Formula of Concord."

²¹"SECTION 2. As brief and true statements of the doctrines of the Word of God, the Church accepts and confesses the following confessional statements or Symbols, subscription to which shall be required of all its members, both congregations and individuals:

(1) The ancient Ecumenical Creeds: The Apostolic, The Nicene, and The Athanasian.
(2) The Unaltered Augsburg Confession and Luther's Small Catechism.

SECTION 3. As further elaboration of and in accord with these Lutheran Symbols, the Church also receives the other documents in the Book of Concord of 1580: the Apology, Luther's Large Catechism, the Smalcald Articles, and the Formula of Concord; and recognizes them as normative for its theology."

²²"SECTION 5. This church accepts the Unaltered Augsburg Confession and Luther's Small Catechism as true witnesses to the Gospel, and acknowledges as one with it in faith and doctrine all churches that likewise accept the teachings of these symbols.

SECTION 6. This church accepts the other symbolical books of the evangelical Lutheran church, the Apology of the Augsburg Confession, the Smalcald Articles, Luther's Large Catechism, and the Formula of Concord as further valid interpretations of the confessions of the Church."

"Theses on the Church" from *Theses of Agreement* prepared and adopted by the two Lutheran bodies that united in 1966 to form the Lutheran Church of Australia.

The results of these discussions can be briefly stated. While no consensus statement was prepared, neither of the consultations on this subject pointed up impediments to fellowship among Lutherans in Canada.

3. On the Gospel We Preach

Using Article VII of the Augsburg Confession as a springboard, three presentations were devoted to this subject at the 1960 meeting. Each paper addressed itself to four sub-topics: Content, Purpose and Results, Relevancy, and Source.

Careful reading of all three presentations reveals virtual unanimity throughout. Professor Floreen defines the Gospel in its broader sense as the total message proclaimed from the church's pulpits. This message must be Christocentric, for central to the Gospel's proclamation is the doctrine of Justification by Grace through faith in Jesus Christ. Faithful proclamation, he writes, allows for both Law and Gospel to play their distinctive roles.

This inclusive understanding of "Gospel" is likewise maintained in the presentation by Rev. G. Rode. Noting that in the Augsburg Confession the Gospel is contrasted not with other doctrines but with human traditions, he states:

This suggests that to the true unity of the Church it is necessary to agree on all clearly revealed doctrines of the Bible, and that disagreement and departure from such doctrine is not only a departure from the apostles' doctrine, but is a threat to the heart of the Gospel itself.

"It is obvious that as long as man is a sinner, the Gospel will be relevant," says Professor Solem. G. Rode elaborates further:

The relevancy of the Gospel flows out of the universal, human, predicament of sin . . . the exclusiveness of God's remedy for man's predicament . . . the directive of the Lord Jesus Christ . . . (and) is apparent from the problem at hand — the unity of the church.

The Gospel is proclaimed that man, convicted of his own unrighteousness under the Law, might in repentance turn to Christ for forgiveness, joy, peace, and the hope of eternal glory.

All three writers agree that the result of true Gospel preaching is a fulfilment of its purpose. Thus the preaching of the Gospel does not merely announce God's grace; it conveys it. It gives forgiveness, produces faith, conveys freedom, generates fruitful lives, and builds the church.

Finally there is no disputing its source. The Gospel originates with a God of love, grace, goodness, compassion, mercy and long-suffering who communicates Himself to us through a unique revelation, i.e., "the Holy Scriptures through which the Holy Spirit of God bears witness to Christ as the Word incarnate."

It should be noted that although under the last section on "Source" one of the authors appended an addendum on the nature of the Holy Scriptures, thorough consideration of this matter came at subsequent meetings of the Commission and will be treated later. Significant at this point is the agreement reached by the Commissioners on "The Gospel We Preach". Their consensus was declared in seven thetical statements which are appended as Exhibit "B".

4. On the Sacraments of Holy Baptism and The Lord's Supper

Following the discussion of "The Gospel We Preach" the Commissioners in 1961 and 1962 proceeded in accord with Augsburg VII to consideration of the Sacraments and their administration.

It should not be surprising that Lutherans should find agreement among them on the nature and meaning of the Sacraments (cf. "Theses on the Sacrament of Holy Baptism," Exhibit "C"; and "Theses on the Sacrament of the Altar," Exhibit "D", adopted in 1962). While the Commission took note of a number of differing practices in the administration of the Sacraments, its opinion that these should not be divisive is evident from a resolution adopted at the close of the 1962 meeting:

RESOLVED that this meeting record its consensus that the exploratory conversations and doctrinal discussions on the part of representatives of the Lutheran Churches in Canada during the past several years have led us to find that normally we are in such substantial agreement that where there is difference of opinion it is as likely to be found between representatives of the same church body as between representatives of two different church bodies.

5. On the Holy Scriptures

Of all the issues considered in the course of inter-Lutheran discussions in Canada, this no doubt has been the most problematic.

The first report of the sub-committee on the Scriptures appointed by the Commission was reviewed at the 1965 meeting. While there appears to be general agreement on the authority of the Scriptures and on principles of Biblical interpretation (hermeneutics) stemming from the Lutheran Reformation, the committee noted some divergence in concepts and terminology relating to the inspiration of Scripture.

Central to these difficulties is the question of how precise one can be on the basis of Scriptural evidence in defining the nature of inspiration. At the heart of this discussion is the concept most commonly ascribed to LC-MS, *verbal* inspiration, which teaches that by a unique activity of the Holy Spirit in and through the sacred writers, all the words of Scripture as originally recorded are God-given, God-inspired, so that all of Scripture in whole and in all its parts is the Word of God and is therefore without error.

As the discussions of the Commission in 1965 and 1966 as well as those subsequently sponsored among the clergy by LCIC's Division of Theological Studies (1968) have revealed, part of the difficulty lies in a misunderstanding of this position. Verbal inspiration is often taken to mean a static, mechanical

theory according to which the authors' personalities were violated while serving as penmen (*amanuenses*) for the Holy Spirit. Any such dictation theory, of course, flies in the face of unique thought patterns, stylistic features and differing vocabularies that are characteristic of the various sacred writers.

While clarification is always helpful, it does not in this case entirely resolve the issue. And the issue, let it be remembered, cannot be neatly categorized according to church bodies but cuts with varying degrees across synodical lines.²³ Those who do not accept this concept question the validity of insisting upon a "theory" based on manuscripts that are no longer available and whether, in fact, this is saying more than the Scriptures claim for themselves. Let it be clear that this in no way infers a depreciation of the Scriptures on the part of those who take this position. That they are the inspired, authoritative Word of God and therefore normative for the faith and life of the church is vigorously upheld. This should be evident from the following paragraph taken from the addendum appended by Professor Floreen to his presentation on "The Gospel We Preach":

Discussions arranged in order to explore possibilities for pulpit and altar fellowship find a particular barrier in differences pertaining to the doctrine of the Word. The ULCA and Augustana believe to be adequate the position of the Lutheran confessions which declares in substance that the Old and New Testament Scriptures are the inspired Word of God and are the only infallible rule and standard of faith and practice, according to which all doctrines and teachers are to be judged. In the interpretation of the Scriptures, they accept the principles of hermeneutics and exegesis which have come down from the Reformation, and they are in harmony especially with the historic emphasis upon the analogy of Scripture and of faith. The demand for a theory of inspiration in addition to the confessional position has been rejected as unnecessary, including the type of verbal inspiration theory which makes an article of faith out of the hypothesis that possession of the original manuscripts would resolve all apparent discrepancies and contradictions in the text, however minor. It should be noted that the so-called plenary theory of inspiration has been espoused in some areas in the two churches, but that this is not a theory alongside of other theories. It simply says that the Scriptures are fully inspired, but does not presume to explain in any way the *modus operandi* of revelation.

Following extended explication of this position, the author concludes:

²³The problem lies not in the official statements of the three churches. Discussions have revealed that these are generally mutually acceptable, depending on the interpretation given certain terminology. Does, for instance, inerrancy refer to factual precision or does it mean that the Scriptures will not lead astray? Does it apply to all parts of the Scriptures or only to the central function of the Scriptures, i.e., to lead to a saving knowledge of Jesus Christ? If the latter, does this leave room for "errors of fact" in the Scriptures, or are divergent accounts of the same event to be regarded as "apparent discrepancies" for which plausible explanations must be given? What determines the literary genre of Scriptures, i.e., what is historical, legendary, parabolic, etc.? Is there an implied distinction in referring to the Scriptures as the record of and witness to God's redemptive acts rather than identifying them as the revealed Word of God?

The two bodies . . . have two protests to make in connection with the controversy. First, they object to the inference that, if they do not accept the theory in question, they are thereby assumed to be in the camp of a theological liberalism. Second, they call to the attention of their brethren that the theory is not a part of the confessions and has not been accepted by even a majority of Lutherans as an addition or amendment to the confessions. To make this issue the basis for rejecting Lutheran fellowship thus cannot honestly be defended.

6. On the Lodge

The committee appointed to study the lodge question submitted a report to the 1965 meeting of the Commission noting basic agreement on the principle of opposition to un-Christian and anti-Christian lodges and societies, but also pointing out the differences in approach by the three church bodies.

Briefly stated, the LCA in its constitution²⁴ prohibits its pastors from membership in anti-Christian societies, but makes no such official requirement of the laity. The ELCC in Article V of its constitution reaffirms as its "Principles for Congregational Practice" the provisions of the Minneapolis Theses prohibiting membership by its pastors in any anti-Christian society and urging both pastors and congregations to persuade members who may have connection with such organizations to sever them.²⁵ Most stringent is the position of the LC-MS which denies membership to any person, pastor or lay, who has any connections with an anti-Christian society. Those known to hold membership in a lodge are not to be communed. If after due instruction and admonition such persons refuse to sever these connections, they are subject to discipline.²⁶

While the committee points out the above differences in approach, it also admits to a variety of practices within each of the church bodies. So do the authors of "Toward Fellowship" published by LC-MS in anticipation of fellowship with The American Lutheran Church. While pointing out that the

²⁴"Article VII, Section 4: After the organization of the Lutheran Church in America no person, who belongs to any organization which claims to possess in its teachings and ceremonies that which the Lord has given solely to His Church, shall be ordained or otherwise received into the ministry of this church, nor shall any person so ordained or received by this church be retained in its ministry if he subsequently joins such an organization. Violation of this rule shall make such ministers subject to discipline."

²⁵"Minneapolis Theses, Article V, 'The Lodge Question':

1. These synods agree that all organizations or societies, secret or open, as are either avowedly religious or practice the forms of religion without confessing as a matter of principle the Triune God or Jesus Christ as the Son of God, come into the flesh, and our Saviour from sin, or teach instead of the Gospel, salvation by human works or morality, are anti-Christian and destructive of the best interests of the church and the individual soul and that, therefore, the Church of Christ and its congregations can have no fellowship with them.
2. They agree that a Lutheran synod should not tolerate pastors who have affiliated themselves with any anti-Christian society. And they admonish their pastors and congregations to testify against the sin of lodgery and to put forth earnest efforts publicly and privately to enlighten and persuade persons who are members of anti-Christian societies, to sever their connection with such organizations."

²⁶Cf. Bylaws, Article 14.07, "The Synod's Position Concerning Lodges."

position of The ALC may allow for a greater degree of laxity in pastoral concern, the inconsistencies in the practice of Missouri's position are also recognized:

We must recognize that our practice is not uniformly consistent and that some congregations of our Synod do not always conform to this recommended procedure. In some instances the objectives of the Synod have been frustrated by a legalistic use of its recommended procedure. In other instances apparently both the objectives and the recommended procedure have been ignored.²⁷

Relationships in our broader Canadian context would be well served by their plea:

Both church bodies must work together in resolving this problem on the basis of the Gospel and in loving concern for those who are involved in the problem. We need to ask the gracious guidance of the Holy Spirit that He may lead our two churches to deal with this problem in an evangelical, consistent, and also effective way. It would be extremely helpful for the future if the ideal solution could be found in one strong evangelical method of handling this persistent problem. It would become a challenge for all to help one another practise this policy consistently for the love of Jesus. That problem cannot be ignored, nor can it be resolved overnight. This matter will test the Christian practice and the evangelical commitment of officials and members of both churches as they seek a God-pleasing solution.²⁸

7. On Unionism

The 1965 meeting of the Commission also heard a report from its sub-committee on Unionism and Fellowship. "Unionism," says the committee,

is when an outward expression of fellowship runs ahead of the unity which exists. Conversely, any time real unity does exist but is not allowed to express itself in fellowship, we have sectarianism. Any practice of fellowship which constitutes a denial of trust, this is unionism.

The comparative report submitted by the committee is based on an examination of official documents adopted by the respective churches.²⁹ Difficulties in this area arise in defining the boundaries of pulpit and altar fellowship. Shall Lutheran altars be open to non-Lutheran communicants, or should they be restricted (close communion) perhaps even to the membership of the respective Lutheran bodies? Shall Lutheran pulpits be open to

²⁷"Toward Fellowship," p. 20.

²⁸Ibid.

²⁹ALC: Part II, Section V, of "The United Testimony on Faith and Life"; Section III of "The Minneapolis Theses".

LCA: Cf. Statement on Communion Practices and Statement on "Standards of Acceptance Into and Continuance In the Ministry of the Lutheran Church in America," adopted in 1964.

LC-MS: Constitution, Article VI, "Conditions of Membership".

non-Lutheran pastors and conversely are Lutheran pastors free to occupy non-Lutheran pulpits or otherwise participate in ecumenical services?

Debate on these issues has punctuated unity discussions throughout the history of American Lutheranism. The most specific pronouncement originates with the General Council in its so-called "Galesburg Rule" adopted in 1875:

The rule, which accords with the word of God and with the confessions of our Church, is "Lutheran Pulpits for Lutheran ministers only — Lutheran altars for Lutheran communicants only."³⁰

While reference to the Galesburg Rule is to be found only in the official documents of The American Lutheran Church,³¹ all three churches have at least to some extent followed the spirit of this principle, though there is not unanimity even within the respective churches on the nature of the exceptions suggested by the original framer of the principle.³²

At the risk of over-generalization, strictest application of the principle is reflected in the position of the LC-MS which normally reserves its altars and pulpits for those with whom fellowship has been officially established. The LCA relies more heavily on the judgment of its pastors in determining whether they can in good conscience participate in services in an ecumenical setting and in some instances allows non-Lutherans to receive The Lord's Supper at their altar after a positive statement of the Lutheran understanding of the Sacrament is made.

In assessing these differences, as well as questions concerning participation in various inter-church agencies, the evangelical stance of "Toward Fellowship" will stand us in good stead:

In this area of divergence we must also operate with the Gospel and the standards which this Gospel sets for us. In other words, whenever such inter-church involvement constitutes a denial or a contradiction of the Gospel, then it is wrong and must be avoided. Again our resources of Christian love will enable us to understand one another and to put the best construction on everything as we seek to develop . . . a uniform practice in this area of common Christian life.³³

³⁰Cf. R. C. Wolf, *Documents of Lutheran Unity in America* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1966), p. 171.

³¹Cf. Minneapolis Theses, Article III on "Church Fellowship," Section 2.

³²The Galesburg Rule has its origin in three statements submitted at the request of the General Council in 1870 by its president, Dr. C. P. Krauth:

I. THE RULE is: Lutheran pulpits are for Lutheran ministers only. Lutheran altars are for Lutheran communicants only.
II. The exceptions to the rule belong to the sphere of *privilege*, not of *right*.
III. The Determination of the exceptions is to be made in consonance with these principles, by the conscientious judgment of pastors, as the cases arise.

Cf. Wolf, *op. cit.*, p. 170.

³³"Toward Fellowship," p. 21.

**INDEX OF COMMISSION PAPERS AND DOCUMENTS
1956-1970**

**I. EXPLORATORY CONVERSATIONS LOOKING TOWARD ONE
INDIGENOUS LUTHERAN CHURCH IN CANADA**

1956, Dec. 2, Kitchener

No formal presentations; declaration of intent recorded; planning committee appointed.

1957, Nov. 29, 30, Regina

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|---|-----------------|
| 1. My Conception of an Indigenous Lutheran Church in Canada | L. W. Koehler |
| 2. Trends Which Indicate Progress Toward an Indigenous Lutheran Church in Canada | O. K. Storaasli |
| 3. Our Capacity to be an Indigenous Church | W. E. Riekert |
| 4. How Can the Lutheran Churches in Canada Further Their Common Interests in a Practical Way? | A. G. Jacobi |

1958, Sept. 9-10, Winnipeg

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|--|------------------|
| 1. An Indigenous Lutheran Church — Reports of Meetings and Pertinent Resolutions and Memorials | G. Evenson |
| 2. An Indigenous Lutheran Church — An Approach Toward the Establishment of a Doctrinal Basis | W. O. Rathke |
| 3. An Indigenous Lutheran Church — The Financial Picture | E. Krempin |
| 4. An Indigenous Lutheran Church — Training the Pastor | O. K. Storaasli |
| 5. An Indigenous Lutheran Church — Organizational Pattern | O. A. Olson, Jr. |

1959, Sept. 2-3, Winnipeg

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| 1. Procedures Necessary to Establish Official Discussions Toward Merger | M. Leeseberg
L. Koss
A. Schwermann
U. S. Leupold |
| 2. The Doctrine of the Church | |
| 3. Small Group Discussion on the Nature and Authority of the Holy Scriptures | |
| 4. The Financial Feasibility of One Lutheran Church in Canada | C. L. Monk |

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| 5. The Significance of the Confessions | |
| a) In the ALC-ELC-UELC | T. P. Solem |
| b) In the AELC-ULCA-Finnish Ev. L.C. | C. C. Kleiner |
| c) In the LC-MS | A. Kristo |

II. LUTHERAN DOCTRINAL DISCUSSIONS LOOKING TOWARD THEOLOGICAL CONSENSUS AND ALTAR AND PULPIT FELLOWSHIP IN CANADA

1960, Sept. 6-7, Winnipeg

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| 1. The Gospel We Preach
(3 papers on same subject) | T. P. Solem
G. Rode
H. Floreen |
| 2. Theses Adopted on "The Gospel We Preach" | |

1961, Sept. 6-7, Winnipeg

- | | |
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| 1. The Sacrament of Holy Baptism | W. K. Rath |
| 2. The Lord's Supper, Its Theological Implications and Attendant Practical Problems | U. S. Leupold
C. H. Neuhaus |
| 3. The Law — Schoolmaster to Christ | |
| 4. Theses Drafted on the Sacraments | |

1962, Sept. 4-5, Winnipeg

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| 1. Theses Adopted on The Sacrament of Holy Baptism | |
| 2. Problems in the Administration of the Sacraments | H. Bickel |
| 3. Theses Adopted on The Sacrament of the Altar | |

1963, Nov. 26-27, Saskatoon

- | | |
|---------------------------------|---------------|
| 1. The Doctrine of the Church | F. A. Scholer |
| 2. The Doctrine of the Ministry | K. Holfeld |

1964, Sept. 9-10, Winnipeg

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|---|---|
| 1. Definition of "Pulpit and Altar Fellowship" (3 statements) | O. A. Olson, Jr.
W. K. Rath
L. W. Koehler |
| 2. Present Day Basis for Agreement in Doctrine and Practice Sufficient for Pulpit and Altar Fellowship (3 statements) | R. Frantz
J. M. Zimmerman
A. N. Morck |
| 3. Procedure to be Followed by Each Church upon Agreement by Representatives Here Present (3 statements) | H. Erdman
A. W. Lotz
K. Holfeld |

4. Approval of Questionnaire to Identify Areas of Difficulty Among Lutherans in Canada
5. The Doctrine of the Word (Discussion Arising from Extracts from Confessional Articles in Constitutions of Respective Churches)

T. P. Solem

1965, Aug. 31-Sept. 1, Winnipeg

Reports of Sub-Committees Appointed to Probe Areas of Apparent Difficulty Identified by Questionnaire

1. The Holy Scriptures
2. Unionism and Church Fellowship
3. The Lodge
4. Church Ethics and Piety

H. Floreen
R. Humann
T. P. Solem
A. Hagen
G. Rode
J. M. Zimmerman
D. Glebe
D. Johnson
A. Stanfel
L. W. Koehler
C. L. Monk
W. K. Rath

1966, Apr. 19-20, Winnipeg

1. Report of the Committee on the Lodge
2. Report of the Committee on the Scriptures ("A Statement on the Form and Function of the Holy Scriptures" plus appended questions proposed for study and discussions throughout the churches)

1968, Nov. 18-20, Saskatoon

1. Review of Developments Affecting Fellowship Relations
2. The Scope of Lutheran Unity in Canada
3. Establishment of Doctrinal Statement Committee
4. Establishment of Contingency Planning Committee

O. A. Olson, Jr.

1969, Dec. 2-4, Kitchener

1. Report of Doctrinal Statement Committee (1st Draft, Proposed Confession of Faith)

G. O. Evenson
A. N. Morck
H. Floreen
A. W. Lotz
H. Merklinger
W. Ritter

2. Facilitating the Practice of Fellowship Established by Church Bodies
3. Ways and Means of Involving the Laity in the Work of this Commission
4. Report of Committee on Contingency Planning

G. O. Evenson

M. Anderson
W. Hordern
S. T. Jacobson
A. J. Siirala
W. Welton
P. Fiess
G. Rode

1970, May 5-6, Winnipeg

1. Review of "Essays" ("Sola Gratia," "Sola Scriptura," Doctrine of the Church) adopted by ALC and LC-MS Commissioners as a Basis for Altar and Pulpit Fellowship
2. Discussion of Pulpit and Altar Fellowship as Described in Negotiations Between ALC — LC-MS
3. Steps Leading to LCA — Canada Section ELCC Fellowship
4. Establishment of Committee to Collate, Enlarge Upon, and Edit Commission Papers and Documents and Prepare Statement of Consensus that Seems to Exist as Basis for Altar and Pulpit Fellowship

Theo. Nickel

G. Rode

K. Holfeld

THE GOSPEL WE PREACH

1. The Gospel is the good news of God's promises and their fulfilment in Christ, Who by His perfect obedience, suffering, death and resurrection has redeemed man from the Fall and its consequences.
2. The Gospel is the central message of God's unchangeable Word through which God offers, conveys and affirms the forgiveness of sins, thus imparting life and salvation to those who believe it.
3. The Gospel is the true, divine, saving means of grace. It gives to the sacraments, Holy Baptism and The Lord's Supper, their saving power. It creates faith to accept what it offers.
4. The Gospel is God's unconditionally free offer of salvation to all men; its rejection seals man's condemnation.
5. The Gospel is the means whereby God gives, together with faith in Christ as Saviour, the desire and the ability to do His will by giving us both victory through Christ in the struggle with our sinful nature and grace to grow in the virtues which characterize the new life in Christ.
6. The preaching of the Gospel is the proclamation of the Christ of the Scriptures: God incarnate, Who died for our trespasses, rose for our justification and lives and reigns with the Father and the Holy Spirit, Who together with the Father sends the Holy Spirit; He is the Head of the Church, which is His body, and He will return to judge the living and the dead.
7. The Lord, Who builds His Church through the preaching of the Gospel, has expressly commanded that they who believe the Gospel must bear witness to it: "Go into all the world and preach the gospel to the whole creation." (Mark 16:15).

(Above is given the text of a statement of the doctrine of the Gospel upon which agreement was reached by representatives of all major Lutheran Churches in Canada at a meeting in Winnipeg, September 6-7, 1960.)

THESES ON THE SACRAMENT OF HOLY BAPTISM

1. The Sacrament of Holy Baptism was instructed by our Lord Jesus Christ when He said, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptising them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, to the close of the age." (Matthew 28:18-20 RSV.)

2. Baptism is the application of water to a human being in the name of the Triune God in obedience to Christ's command. The mode of application and the amount of water used are not prescribed in Scripture. The scope of His command is universal, including all and excluding none.

3. We explicitly affirm that infants are to be baptized. They are conceived and born in sin and need God's grace. Through baptism Christ receives infants as well as adults into the Kingdom of God.

4. Through baptism God graciously offers the forgiveness of sins, life and salvation. To those who believe, He conveys and certifies His gifts. Faith is always given by God, and to infants faith is given through baptism. "He who believes and is baptized will be saved; but he who does not believe will be condemned." (Mark 16:16, RSV.)

5. In baptism, "the washing of regeneration and renewal in the Holy Spirit" (Titus 3:5, RSV), God effects a new birth in man and brings him into a new relationship with Himself by virtue of which he is enabled to walk in newness of life.

6. Although baptism is primarily a means whereby God graciously bestows His favour upon men, it is also an act whereby adults who are baptized, and parents and guardians who bring children to be baptized, make public confession of their Christian faith.

7. The fact of our baptism, kept in daily remembrance:

Assures us that in Christ our sins are forgiven and that we are children of God;

Prompts us to put off our old nature by daily contrition and repentance and to put on the new nature, "created after the likeness of God in true righteousness and holiness" (Ephesians 4:22-24, RSV);

Establishes us in a fellowship with all who are baptized, "for by one Spirit we were all baptized into one Body." (I Corinthians 12:13, RSV.)

THESES ON THE SACRAMENT OF THE ALTAR

1. The Sacrament of the Altar was instituted by our Lord Jesus Christ on the night He was betrayed to be crucified, significantly just after the observance of the Passover, which foreshadowed His redemptive death.

2. This Sacrament was given to the Church by our Lord Jesus, as St. Paul says, "the Lord Jesus on the night when he was betrayed took bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it, and said, 'This is my body which is for you. Do this in remembrance of me.' In the same way also the cup, after supper, saying, 'This cup is the new covenant in my blood. Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me.'" (I Corinthians 11:23b-25, RSV.)

3. In this Sacrament we receive, by eating and drinking, the true body and blood of Christ united with bread and wine by virtue of the Word of God in a manner understood by God alone.

4. The Sacrament is a means of grace through which God offers, conveys and certifies to the communicants the blessings of Christ's redemption: forgiveness of sins, life and salvation — blessings which are grasped by faith alone.

5. In obedience to her Lord, the Church continues to administer the Sacrament also as a feast of remembrance (The Last Supper), as an expression of thanksgiving (The Holy Eucharist), as a festival of fellowship (Holy Communion) and as an opportunity for witness to and proclamation of the Gospel.

6. As God through Holy Baptism creates the new life of faith in Christ, so He works through the Lord's Supper to preserve, strengthen and make fruitful that same life of faith in Christ.

7. The communicant is prepared to receive the Sacrament when he recognizes his need of forgiveness, confesses and repents of his sins, discerns his Lord's real presence in the Sacrament and trusts in Christ as his Saviour. Those who despite faithful pastoral care and admonition, remain manifestly impenitent and unbelieving are to be excluded from the Lord's Supper, lest they eat and drink judgment upon themselves. (I Corinthians 11: 27, 29.)

8. Because of the comforting, life-sustaining and strengthening properties of the Lord's Supper, the Sacrament should be offered regularly and with sufficient frequency to meet the needs of the people.

**MEMORANDUM TO THE PASTORS OF
THE LUTHERAN CHURCHES IN CANADA:**

From: Dr. Karl Holfeld, President of The Evangelical Lutheran Church of Canada
The Rev. Fred Schole, President of the Lutheran Church-Canada
Dr. Otto A. Olson, Jr., Secretary of the LCA-Canada Section
(Members of the Steering Committee for the Commission on Canadian Lutheran Theological Discussions)

September 10, 1965

We have just completed two days of significant meetings in Winnipeg and feel constrained to bring you greetings and a brief first-hand report.

Representatives from our three churches came to grips these days with problems in the four areas of greatest tension which seem to exist among us, as revealed by the information provided in the questionnaires which many of you completed and returned late last year. A brief tabulation of the materials brought to light by those questionnaires accompanies this memorandum. We want to make a brief statement concerning the four major concerns to which we gave our attention last week.

1. *The Holy Scriptures* — Though we have not adopted any statement expressing it, there is actually remarkable agreement among us in our respective positions with regard to the doctrine of the Scriptures. We shall engage in further discussions on this important doctrine. We have come to believe that our differences are not insurmountable by any means, and are convinced that the Holy Spirit will guide us in our further deliberations.

2. *The Lodge* — All of us found it gratifying to realize that no Lutheran minister in Canada is a member of a secret society and that any one who would enter into such membership would immediately be subject to discipline. Representatives from all of our church bodies expressed concern about lodge membership on the part of the laity. We all agree that lodge membership is not compatible with membership in the Christian church, but that we must have redemptive concern for all men, including lodge members.

3. *Unionism and Church Fellowship* — We have found that all of us recognize that not all Christians are Lutherans. At the same time we agree that great care must be exercised in all ecumenical relationships, so that our doctrinal position as Lutherans is not compromised.

4. *Church Ethics and Piety* — We have learned that much of our practice has arisen not out of theological insights, but at least partly from sociological factors. In these realms we are convinced that the differences within our church bodies in Canada are just as great as the differences between the church bodies.

In April of next year the commission plans to meet again to approve statements in the four areas to which reference is made above, in the hope that these statements may be ready soon afterward for general distribution and discussion and evaluation in local inter-Lutheran Ministerial Conferences.

In view of the measure of agreement and understanding which has been achieved thus far, the commission adopted resolutions looking toward closer fellowship. These resolutions are addressed to our church bodies in Canada and will be brought to your attention in due course through proper channels.

We request that you join us in prayer to the Lord of the Church that we may follow the guidance of His Holy Spirit as we seek to find the way of complete understanding and harmony in faith and practice.

PROPOSED CONFESSION OF FAITH*

Section 1. This church confesses Father, Son, and Holy Spirit as the one true God. It proclaims Jesus Christ as Lord of the Church. The Holy Spirit creates and sustains the Church through the Gospel and thereby unites believers with their Lord and with one another in the fellowship of faith.

Section 2. This church holds that the Gospel is the revelation of God's sovereign will and saving grace in Jesus Christ. In Him, the Word Incarnate, God imparts Himself to men.

Section 3. This church acknowledges the canonical Scriptures of the Old and New Testament to be the written word of God, and the infallible authority for the faith and life of the Church. These Holy Scriptures are the divinely inspired record of God's redemptive act in Christ, for which the Old Testament prepared the way and which the New Testament proclaims. In the continuation of this proclamation in the Church, God still speaks through the Holy Scriptures and realizes His redemptive purpose.

Section 4. This church accepts and acknowledges as true witnesses to the Gospel and as correct interpretations of the Scriptures, and normative for its theology, the Book of Concord of 1580 (comprising the Apostolic, Nicene, and Athanasian creeds; the Unaltered Augsburg Confession and the Apology; the Smalcald Articles; Luther's Small and Large Catechisms; and the Formula of Concord). This church regards these creeds and confessions as having been written and as remaining always subject to the Scriptures themselves, to be understood in the light of their historical context in which they bore faithful testimony to Jesus Christ as living Lord.

*These articles submitted by the Doctrinal Statement Committee to the 1969 meeting of the Commission represent a first draft only and do not reflect several revisions which the Commission referred back for incorporation into subsequent reports by the committee.

**ARTICLES OF CONFESSION ACCORDING TO THE
CONSTITUTIONS OF THE ELCC, LCA-CS, AND LC-MS**

A. The Evangelical Lutheran Church of Canada

**Article IV
CONFESSIO OF FAITH**

SECTION 1. The Evangelical Lutheran Church of Canada accepts all the canonical books of the Old and New Testaments as a whole and in all their parts as the divinely inspired, revealed, and inerrant Word of God, and submits to this as the only infallible authority in all matters of faith and life.

SECTION 2. As brief and true statements of the doctrines of the Word of God, the Church accepts the following confessional statements or Symbols, subscription to which shall be required of all its members, both congregations and individuals:

- (1) The ancient ecumenical Creeds: The Apostolic, the Nicene, and the Athanasian.
- (2) The unaltered Augsburg Confession and Luther's Small Catechism.

SECTION 3. As further elaboration of and in accord with these Lutheran Symbols, the Church also receives the other documents in the Book of Concord of 1580: the Apology, Luther's Large Catechism, the Smalcald Articles, and the Formula of Concord; and recognizes them as normative for its theology.

SECTION 4. The Evangelical Lutheran Church of Canada accepts without reservation the symbolical books of the evangelical Lutheran Church, not insofar as but because they are the presentation and explanation of the pure doctrine of the Word of God and a summary of the faith of the evangelical Lutheran Church.

B. The Lutheran Church in America — Canada Section

Section III — Confession of Faith

1. The Canada Section confesses Jesus Christ as Lord of the Church. The Holy Spirit creates and sustains the Church through the Gospel and thereby unites believers with their Lord and with one another in the fellowship of faith.
2. The Canada Section holds that the Gospel is the revelation of God's sovereign will and saving grace in Jesus Christ. In Him, the Word Incarnate, God imparts Himself to men.
3. The Canada Section acknowledges the Holy Scriptures as the norm for the faith and life of the Church. The Holy Scriptures are the

divinely inspired record of God's redemptive act in Christ, for which the Old Testament prepared the way and which the New Testament proclaims. In the continuation of this proclamation in the Church, God still speaks through the Holy Scripture and realizes His redemptive purpose generation after generation.

4. The Canada Section accepts the Apostles, the Nicene and the Athanasian Creeds as true declaration of the faith of the Church.
5. The Canada Section accepts the Unaltered Augsburg Confession and Luther's Small Catechism as true witnesses to the Gospel, and acknowledges as one with it in faith and doctrine all churches that likewise accept the teachings of these symbols.
6. The Canada Section accepts the other symbolical books of the evangelical Lutheran Church, the Apology of the Augsburg Confession, the Smalcald Articles, Luther's Large Catechism, and the Formula of Concord as further valid interpretations of the confession of the Church.
7. The Canada Section affirms that the Gospel transmitted by the Holy Scriptures to which the creeds and confessions bear witness, is the true treasure of the Church, the substance of its proclamation, and the basis of its unity and continuity. The Holy Spirit uses the proclamation of the Gospel and the administration of the Sacraments to create and sustain Christian faith and fellowship. As this occurs, the Church fulfills its divine mission and purpose.

C. The Lutheran Church — Missouri Synod*

Article II — Confession

Synod, and every member of Synod, accepts without reservation:

1. The Scriptures of the Old and the New Testament as the written Word of God and the only rule and norm of faith and of practice;
2. All the Symbolical Books of the Evangelical Lutheran Church as a true and unadulterated statement and exposition of the Word of God, to wit: the three Ecumenical Creeds (the Apostles' Creed, the Nicene Creed, the Athanasian Creed), the Unaltered Augsburg Confession, the Apology of the Augsburg Confession, the Smalcald Articles, the Large Catechism of Luther, the Small Catechism of Luther, and the Formula of Concord.

*Lutheran Church—Canada's articles of Confession are essentially identical with those of the LC-MS.

DEFINITION OF TERMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

- ELCC** — The Evangelical Lutheran Church of Canada, which became an autonomous church on January 1, 1967. Prior to that date it was the Canada District of The American Lutheran Church.
- LCA-CS** — Lutheran Church in America—Canada Section, a federation of the Eastern Canada Synod, the Central Canada Synod, and the Western Canada Synod of the Lutheran Church in America, organized in 1963.
- LC-C** — Lutheran Church—Canada, a federation of the Ontario District, the Manitoba—Saskatchewan District, and the Alberta—British Columbia District of the Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod, formed in 1958.
- JCILR** — The Joint Commission on Inter-Lutheran Relationships, composed of official representatives of ELCC, LCA-CS, and LC-C, a commission whose purpose is to promote unity among Lutherans in Canada. Its immediate concern is the establishment of pulpit and altar fellowship among all Lutheran churches in Canada.
- LCIC** — The Lutheran Council in Canada, an agency of ELCC, LCA-CS and LC-C, for doing on behalf of these churches tasks delegated to it by them, constituted in 1966.
- ALC** — The American Lutheran Church, with headquarters at Minneapolis, Minnesota. ELCC affiliated with it.
- LCA** — The Lutheran Church in America, with headquarters at New York. The synods named previously as comprising LCA-CS are Canadian synods of LCA.
- LC-MS** — The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod, with headquarters at St. Louis, Missouri. The districts that comprise LC-C are Canadian districts of LC-MS.
- Autonomy* — means self-governing. The only Lutheran Church in Canada that is completely autonomous at the present is The Evangelical Lutheran Church of Canada.
- Lutheran Unity* — is not to be confused with union or merger. It signifies a common underlying oneness (consensus) in articles of the Christian faith and in their application which permits total cooperation in all phases of planning and activity and is sufficient for union, if desirable. Unity among Lutherans is sought on the basis of their commitment to the Scriptures and the Lutheran Confessions.

Altar and Pulpit Fellowship — has not always been understood in the same way. For many it simply meant the exchange of pulpits and the communing of members across synodical lines. In the six-point definition agreed upon by the LC-MS and The ALC, however, the requirements for fellowship are the same as for total merger. These six points have subsequently been accepted as a working definition for the discussions in Canada:

1. Congregations of the synods may hold joint worship services.
 2. Pastors of one synod may preach from the pulpits of congregations in the other synod.
 3. Members in good standing in one synod may commune as guests at the altar of congregations in the other synod.
 4. Members may transfer their membership from congregations of one synod to congregations of the other synod.
 - *5. Congregations of one synod may call as their pastors those who are on the clergy roster of the other synod.
 - *6. Students may prepare for the holy ministry in the seminaries of either synod.
- * Points 5 and 6 have not been fully implemented by The ALC and LC-MS. Special guidelines have been prepared setting forth accepted procedure in both instances.

Lutheran Union — presupposes unity and implies dissolution of the Lutheran bodies as presently constituted to form a totally new united Lutheran Church in Canada.

THE JOINT COMMISSION ON INTER-LUTHERAN RELATIONSHIPS

December 8-10, 1970 Meeting

Representing The Evangelical Lutheran Church of Canada:

Mr. Morris Anderson
Dr. George O. Evenson
Dr. William E. Hordern
Dr. S. Theodore Jacobson
The Rev. Archie N. Morck
Mr. Dan A. Skaret
The Rev. Walter T. Weind

Representing Lutheran Church in America—Canada Section:

The Rev. Alvin Baetz
The Rev. Norman A. Berner
Mrs. Herbert Bowes
The Rev. Harold Floreen
Dr. Otto A. Olson, Jr.
Dr. Otto F. Reble
Mr. A. Riegert
Dr. Eduard Riegert (for Dr. Aarne Siirala)
Dr. Earl J. Treusch (for The Rev. Walter Freitag)
Dr. John M. Zimmerman

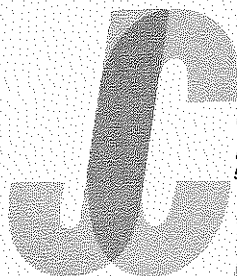
Representing Lutheran Church—Canada:

The Rev. Horace H. Erdman
The Rev. Philip Fry
Mr. Harry Klann
The Rev. G. E. Knoernschild (for Mr. Carl Wagner)
The Rev. Roy Knoll
Dr. L. W. Koehler
Dr. Harold A. Merklinger
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The Rev. Fred A. Schole
The Rev. Albin Stanfel

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