

THE RELEVANCE OF THE FORMULA OF CONCORD WITH ITS DOCTRINAL PRECISION  
TO THE CONFSSIONAL FORMULATIONS IN OUR YOUNG NATIONAL CHURCHES

It was my understanding from the Executive Secretary of our Board for World Missions that the emphasis at this third World Mission Seminary Conference was to be on discussion. The men to whom the various topics were assigned were to serve as discussion leaders rather than as essayists, offering theses rather than essay-type presentations. The topic assigned to me can obviously not be exhausted in the seventy minutes assigned for presentation and discussion. I hope, however, that the twelve points to which I have rather arbitrarily restricted myself may lead to some fruitful discussion during the allotted period.

I

The Formula of Concord is the keystone in the structural arch of our Lutheran Confessions. It is not new in content, but merely a more precise restatement of that which is already set forth in earlier confessional writings, particularly the Augsburg Confession. Thus C.F.W. Walther stressed (re free conferences of 1856-1859) that those who held staunchly to the Augsburg Confession and with a full knowledge of what its articles state would also find themselves in full agreement with the F.C. when they devoted thorough study to it. With this understanding we are also not advocating giving the F.C. a central place in theological training of our mission churches. The doctrinal precision of the F.C., however, commends it for earnest study also to the theological leaders of our mission churches and to those who may be enlisted in setting up their doctrinal formulations. Moreover, the forthcoming 400th anniversary of the drawing up of the F.C. in 1777 ought not to pass by unnoticed even in our Lutheran mission churches.

II

Like all our confessional writings, the F.C. came forth out of a historical situation to meet a very specific need. It was drawn up to settle seven major and two minor controversies which had greatly troubled and demoralized the Lutheran church after Luther's death (Amas F. Code). In studying the F.C. one is struck by the present relevance of its formulations and of the doctrinal points to which they speak. Yet this ought not to appear incidental. It is due to the fact that these controversies

were not a mere wrangling about words, but involved the cardinal truths of our Christian faith and life.

### III

It is noteworthy that in settling these controversies the F.C. did not attempt to draw up formulations which all parties to the controversies would have found acceptable and to which they would all have been willing to subscribe. That method had been tried in vain previously and had led to compromises, concessions, and a hiding of doctrinal differences, and thereby to increasing strife and disunity. The F.C. undertook to present the clear scriptural position in the matters under controversy and to reject the past and current false positions. This proved to be a sound basis for peace and unity in the Lutheran church of that day.

### IV

The doctrinal affirmations and condemnations of the F.C. were treasured in the past and are still treasured today by all those who on the basis of Scripture's own claim of clarity and of its stated purpose to make sinners wise unto salvation hold that it is possible to make doctrinal formulations of all the vital truths of Christian faith and life which are valid and binding for all times.

### V

The doctrinal precision of the F.C. and the continued value of its formulations are due to a considerable extent to the fact that in each article the doctrinal point or points in controversy are very precisely defined and pinpointed. Since the affirmations of scriptural doctrine and the rejections of error are then made with reference to these points of controversy, the formulations remain fully relevant when the same points are again under discussion.

This can be exemplified by Article II on free will, settling the synergistic error. The matter itself is very relevant. Not only is the synergistic error still endangering and disquieting the Lutheran church in a marked degree, but also most of the actively evangelistic and mission-minded evangelical Christianity outside of the Lutheran church is infected with synergism. The F.C. carefully distinguishes the four unlike states in

which the will of man is found: before the fall, since the fall, after regeneration, and after the resurrection. The synergistic error has to do only with the will of man during the second state, that of man's will after the fall and before his conversion. Involved is the question whether during that time man has any residual spiritual powers whatsoever, with which he can prepare himself for God's grace and assent to it, and thus contribute at least in a very slight way toward his conversion. The F.C. answers this question with a resounding no, pointing out from Scripture that after the fall and before their conversion all men are spiritually dead, spiritually blind, and at enmity with God, that man's conversion is therefore wholly a gracious work of God the Holy Ghost. Yet it is a work that He does not perform without means, but through the gospel. As pertinent errors it rejects determinism, Pelagianism, semi-Pelagianism, synergism, perfectionism, enthusiasm, as well as the extreme statements on both sides of the controversy.

## VI

The formulations of the F.C., both in its scriptural affirmations and its condemnations, make one very conscious of the fact that all doctrinal error is a concession to human reason. The F.C. particularly exposes the concession to human reason that is made with reference to the crux theologorum, the question: Why, when the same gospel is preached to people, do some believe and come to salvation, while others do not believe and forfeit salvation? Not only in Article II on free will with reference to conversion, but also in Article III on justification and in Article XI on election, the F.C. stays fully with the answers of Scripture. It confesses that when people hear the gospel and believe, this is due wholly to God's grace; that when others who hear the same gospel do not believe this is wholly their own fault. Because Scripture itself does not harmonize these answers for our human reason, the F.C. also avoids every attempt to do so. It rejects as unwarranted concessions to human reason the "reasonable" solutions of Pelagianism, semi-Pelagianism, synergism, and Calvinism. It is certainly vital that in all doctrinal formulations the scriptural example of the F.C. is followed in this matter.

## VII

Relevant for confessional formulations in our young mission churches is also the all-pervading concern for preserving the gospel and the certainty of salvation manifest in the F.C. Without any difficulty it can be shown how this concern is at the very basis of the formulations of each individual article.

This concern is certainly there in Article V on the clear distinction between law and gospel, a scriptural insight stressed in genuine Lutheranism in line with the testimony of the F.C., but hard to find in most of Christianity outside of Lutheranism.

The gospel is set forth with wonderful clarity in Article III on justification. As C. H. Little says in Lutheran Confessional Theology:

Nowhere else in all confessional theology has the doctrine of the obedience of Christ been so clearly and thoroughly treated... It is not the indwelling of Christ in the believer, nor the righteousness of Christ according to His divine nature alone, or according to His human nature alone, that constitutes our righteousness; but the entire Christ in the obedience which He rendered to the Father in our stead, whereby He merited for us forgiveness of sins and eternal life, as is clearly stated in Romans 5:19, which reads: "For as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of One shall many be made righteous." This doctrine of justification by faith alone is declared to be the chief of all Christian doctrines. This doctrine St. Paul strongly emphasizes by applying to it the exclusive particles, "without Law," "without works," "out of grace," "freely" .... our righteousness before God accordingly is the imputed righteousness of Christ, the righteousness which He wrought out for us when He put Himself under the Law and fulfilled all its demands as our Substitute, and by which through His sufferings and death in our stead He paid the full penalty due to our sins.... It is one and the same thing therefore to say that we are justified by Christ or that we are justified by grace or that we are justified by faith, because faith justifies, not as being so valuable a virtue, but as laying hold of the promise of the gospel and accepting the merit of the Redeemer.

## VIII

Very relevant is the clear distinction which the F.C. makes between our justification and our sanctification, though in time they begin to-

gether. Outside of Lutheranism which still clings to the F.C. there is much confusion of justification and sanctification, of the Christ for us and the Christ in us.

In this connection especially also the two aspects of faith must be clearly distinguished as they come into consideration in our justification and our sanctification. The law demands faith, perfect trust in God; the gospel gives me this faith demanded by the law. Yet it does so by imputing Christ's faith, His perfect trust in God to me. Through the faith that the gospel awakens in my heart, I come to possess Christ's imputed faith, His perfect trust in God, as though I had rendered it myself. In this imputation, MY JUSTIFICATION, my God-given faith, however, functions only as a receiving hand. Romans 4:16: "Therefore it is of faith, that it might be by grace."

At the same time my God-given faith, wrought by the gospel, is new spiritual life, and as such an initial fulfillment of God's law on my part. Yet since my trust ever remains imperfect here on earth, remains marred by sinful imperfections, it is like every phase of MY SANCTIFICATION an imperfect fulfillment of the law on my part. Faith does not justify insofar as it is a partial restoration of God's image in us; faith justifies only inasmuch as it is the God-given hand with which we embrace Christ's imputed righteousness, including also His perfect trust in God as our substitute.

#### IX

To this day many in Christianity share the fear of George Major that with the scriptural doctrine of justification good works might be slighted. Thus without wanting to give up the doctrine of justification by grace alone, he did set up the thesis: Good works are necessary for salvation. With Scripture and with the F.C. we need to put the period after "necessary." We want to content ourselves with saying: Good works are necessary. In all our teaching and preaching we will want to keep works out of the article of justification, because the certainty of our salvation is at stake. In doing so, the good works which please God will not suffer. For as F.C. IV points out: They follow faith as inevitable fruits. They are necessary in the sense that they are not optional; God's immutable holy will is in effect also for His reborn children. At the same time they are free,

rendered by God's believing children in a voluntary spirit and not by the driving and coercion of the law.

## X

Those who desire doctrinal latitude are prone to disparage the Formula of Concord as a piece of Lutheran scholasticism. They fail to understand the real purpose of the technical theological terms used at times by the F.C., fail to understand also the careful theological distinctions which it makes. It is a common fallacy to think that naming something explains it. The F.C., however, is not guilty of this fallacy. With its doctrinal terms it is not seeking to explain or prove any of the mysteries of faith. These terms get their meaning and content from the clear statements of Holy Scripture and serve the sole purpose of helping us hold on to the truths of Scripture and to refer to them readily. Also the fine doctrinal distinctions made by the F.C. all serve the sole purpose of noting just what Scripture does and does not say concerning the cardinal truths of our faith.

A good example to exemplify this is Article VII on the Lord's Supper. In this article the F.C. on the basis of Scripture asserts particularly the following four points to free the Lutheran church from the Reformed errors which had wormed their way into the Lutheran church with reference to the Lord's Supper:

- 1) The real and substantial presence of Christ's body and blood in the Lord's Supper.
- 2) The sacramental union of Christ's body and blood with the earthly elements of bread and wine.
- 3) The oral manducation of both elements by all communicants at the Lord's Supper.
- 4) That the real presence is brought about solely by the omnipotent power of Christ in accordance with the words of institution.

In these four points we still have a sound test for determining whether the scriptural, and hence Lutheran, doctrine of the Lord's Supper is being upheld in present-day Lutheran-Reformed discussions and joint statements like Marburg Revisited and Luenberg Agreement. Still, the terms

used in these four statements do not attempt to explain or define the mysteries involved, but merely assert them on the basis of Scripture.

It is very much the same with Article VIII on the person of Christ. In what appears to be a very complicated matter, the article, for example, points out how in the wonderful person of Christ the two natures, human and divine, are inseparably united, yet remain essentially distinct. In the personal union each nature retains its own essential properties and attributes. Yet each nature communicates its attributes to the other in the personal union so that the divine nature participates in attributes of the human nature, and the human nature in those of the divine nature. Yet with all this and much more the Formula of Concord is not seeking to explain or comprehend the wonderful person of our Savior, true God and true man, but is merely saying what is set forth in clear Scripture statements concerning His person.

#### XI

Article XI, dealing with God's eternal election of grace, gives us a good example of how the F.C. faithfully sets forth all that Scripture teaches, no less but also no more. We are reminded that God's election of grace is a most comforting doctrine for us Christians if we are content to stay with that which Scripture has to say concerning it and refrain from raising questions for which Scripture does not supply us with answers. It bids us to distinguish clearly between God's foreknowledge, which extends over the godly and the wicked alike, and God's eternal election of grace, which pertains only to the believers. It assures us believers that before the foundations of the world were laid God has already chosen us in Christ to be His own, that the saving faith in which we now stand and the salvation in which we now rejoice is but the result and execution of His eternal election of grace. From all eternity God's gracious heart was already set upon us as individuals for Jesus' sake, and He purposed and determined that in the course of time we should be brought to faith in His Son and be kept in such faith through His Word and Spirit. In the face of our own weakness and amidst all the temptations and afflictions that surround us, God therefore bids us to look confidently to His gospel in Word and sacrament for persevering faith, since He has determined from all eternity to keep us through these means unto eternal life.

## XII

Members of young national churches are likely to have a special interest in the worship rites and church ceremonies to which they were introduced as they were brought to Christian faith. They may even be inclined to lay undue importance on every detail and be very wary of any change. Thus the formulations of Article X may be very relevant. Pastor Edet Udo Eshiett, whom I had in my Formula of Concord course this school year, took a deep interest in the statements of Article X and wrote a very discerning term paper applying them to situations in Christ the King Lutheran Church in Nigeria.

The specific question, arising from the Augsburg and Leipzig Interims, which led to the formulations of Article X was this: Is it permissible to re-establish adiaphorous abrogated church ceremonies upon pressure and demand of enemies of the gospel with whom no doctrinal agreement has been reached?

Concerning ceremonies which are adiaphora, Article X offers the following helpful scriptural instruction: Such ceremonies are in themselves no divine worship. The congregation of God has power of decision concerning such ceremonies, as to which and how many are useful. Frivolity and offense to the weak are to be avoided in exercising this power. Nothing is an adiaphoron when confession is called for or when offense is involved. When an adiaphoron is demanded, Christian liberty must be preserved. When a unity of faith is simulated that does not exist, unionism must be rejected. When false doctrine is condoned, the truth of the gospel must be upheld. When the weak are confused, offense must be avoided. We ought to be willing to confess and suffer what God permits His enemies to inflict. Do not condemn others for disparity in ceremonies if there is agreement in doctrine.

Conclusion

As a final thought, let us all learn to make our doctrinal formulations with the attitude manifest in the Formula of Concord, when its writers begin the individual affirmations with the words: "We believe, teach, and confess...."



## THE TRUE MISSION OF THE CHURCH

(Theses for indoctrination of seminary students with reference to the doctrine of the two kingdoms)

### Introduction

1. Ever since man fell into sin and brought God's temporal and eternal wrath upon himself, life here on earth is not an end in itself, but a means to an end. The end is God's saving activity in behalf of the gathering of His church through the gospel for eternal fellowship with Him. Ever since man fell into sin his life span here on earth is to serve him primarily as a time of grace.
2. During this time of grace we need to distinguish between the church and human society as a whole for which the divine institutions of marriage, the family, and civil authority are in effect; between that which God offers to sinful mankind through the church, and that which He purposes to maintain for mankind through human authority; between God's gift of justification and sanctification in Christ, and His gift of civic righteousness. Making these distinctions on the basis of Holy Scripture means upholding the doctrine of the two kingdoms.

### The Church and Salvation

3. The church is the spiritual body of all those whom the Holy Spirit through the gospel has brought to faith in Christ as their Savior. The marks by which the presence of the church is recognized are the means of grace, the gospel in Word and sacraments. In a wider sense the designation of church is therefore applied to those who profess Christian faith by being gathered about the gospel Word and the holy sacraments.
4. The only task or mission specifically entrusted to the church is that of proclaiming the gospel, the whole counsel of God in Christ, to men for their salvation. To the unregenerate the church is to proclaim the gospel, the whole counsel of God in Christ, in order to make disciples of them, i.e., that through its testimony the Holy Spirit may bring more and more sinners to saving faith in Christ (mission work). To those who have already come to faith, the church is to continue to proclaim the gospel, the whole counsel of God in Christ, that they may be built up in Christian faith, joy, comfort, understanding, hope, and a sanctified life (Christian education). Fostering

Christian sanctification with the gospel also includes fostering Christian welfare work. In Christian liberty the church may set up the machinery to administer welfare work and thus assist its members in carrying out this responsibility. When the church administers welfare work, it will, wherever possible, bring this into a close relationship with its prime responsibility of preaching the gospel to sinners for their justification and sanctification.

5. The means with which the church is to carry out its one entrusted task, or mission, of bringing sinners to salvation for time and eternity is the gospel, and together with it the entire Word of God, the Holy Scriptures. In proclaiming any part of God's Word to men the church is to keep it in close relation to the central message of pardon and salvation in Christ. Only in this way will the testimony of the church remain a part of the one task or mission specifically assigned to it.
6. The message of the gospel is basically the message of the forgiveness of sins. All other spiritual blessings flow from Christ's blood-bought forgiveness, and are an unfolding of its riches, such as peace with God, the comfort of God's fatherly love for time and eternity, the privilege of prayer and the assurance of being heard, the strength of thankful love for godliness. Where there is forgiveness of sins there is life and salvation.
7. The gospel message is offered in the Word of God, which is the power of God unto salvation. The sacraments are the same gospel message with a seal attached to it (the visible Word). Forgiveness of sins is also the fundamental gift of the sacraments. All other blessings also of the Lord Supper are transmitted in and through this fundamental gift of forgiveness apprehended in faith and sealed by the real presence.
8. The church's proclamation of the law of God also stands in the service of its mission to preach the gospel. As far as the unregenerate are concerned, the only express purpose for which the church is to proclaim the law is that of bringing them to the knowledge of their sins and of thus preparing them for the comforting proclamation

of the gospel. Yet the church cannot control the effect of its law preaching in those who are directly or indirectly exposed to its testimony. Though in some it may effect mere outward reform and civic righteousness, this is a by-product and not a part of the church's mission.

9. To those who have already come to faith in Christ the church is to preach the law as a mirror, curb, and guide, yet only in the interest of the edification of the believers in Christian faith and life. The preaching of the law cannot, of course, effect anything positive, supply any motivation, but is necessary because of the Christian's Old Adam.

#### Human Authority and Civic Righteousness

10. To serve in the gathering of the church of believers among sinful, depraved mankind during this time of grace the Lord has made provision through human authority which He has ordained that a measure of outward decency, peace, and order be established and maintained. God's ordinances of marriage and the family established at creation, the natural affections and emotions bound up with them, and the inscribed law pertaining to them, contribute to civic righteousness. Establishing and maintaining such outward peace and order (civic righteousness) is the specific task, or function, of civil authority beyond the home. Civic righteousness is God's gift. Man's goodness does not account for it. It is not a denial of the total depravity of natural man. God interposes with His sovereign judgments when man's natural endowments which should effect civic righteousness are dulled and not put to use.
11. The state, as designating all human governmental structure and authority beyond the home, is a divine institution. No specific kind of government is prescribed by God, nor any specific manner of establishing it. We owe obedience to the government that is actually in control over us and whose benefits we are enjoying. With threats of punishment the state, or government, is to check and restrain the evil desires of the wicked, so as to prevent crime and violence. On the other hand, government is to protect the law-

abiding, that they may be benefited. To that end it is also empowered to make the regulations in purely earthly and secular affairs which it deems necessary and beneficial.

12. The means which God has given to human government for carrying out its specific function of maintaining civic righteousness are summed up by our Lutheran Confessions as "human reason." This embraces the full scope of the abilities and endowments which according to Scripture belong to natural man and which are sufficient for maintaining a measure of civic righteousness.
13. "Human reason" includes the inscribed law, conscience, and also the natural knowledge of God gained from the things created. When government, therefore, enlists these forces as means for promoting and maintaining civic righteousness in its legislative, executive, judicial, and educational functions, it is still within its realm and using its God-entrusted means.
14. In carrying out its specific function of promoting civic righteousness government is to judge these outward deeds and the motives behind them as to their effectiveness in bringing about the peace, order, justice, and welfare that it is to maintain and in restraining other deeds which hinder it. It is not to judge these acts or the motives that effected them as to their spiritual value before God. Deeds arising out of pride, fear, hope of reward, meet the demands of civil authority and civic righteousness as well as similar deeds flowing out of faith-born love for the Savior.
15. In the faithful discharge of its real and specific task the church promotes civic righteousness among those who are exposed to its testimony. The church fosters civic righteousness among those whom it brings to Christ and whom it thus enables to render their civic righteousness as a part of their life of sanctification. The Christian will want to carry out all of his duties to society with distinctively Christian motivation and with the benefit of his richer scriptural insights. With its fervent prayers the church will affect and influence the outward conduct even of those whom it is not successful in winning for Christ and His salvation. With its

testimony and its life it will sharpen their conscience, and activate their consciousness of God and of His holy law. In doing its own assigned task faithfully the Christian church changed social patterns in the apostolic age, undermined slavery and the bondage of women, and stimulated charity and regard for human life. This is, however, a by-product of the church's faithfulness in its assigned mission, not an additional mission of the church.

#### Church and State Relations

16. A confusion of state and church takes place when either state or church presume to perform any part of the function which God has assigned to the other.
17. Church and state are also confused when the church seeks to do its work and perform its function through the means of the state; or when the state directly undertakes to do its work through the means which the Lord has assigned to the church.
18. The individual Christian has been placed both in the realm of the church and of the state. In carrying out his responsibility in either realm he will do so in accordance with its distinctive functions and means. As he participates in the functions of the state he will, however, do so with Christian motivation and with his additional scriptural insights concerning God's holy will.
19. A confusion of state and church does not necessarily take place when both participate in one and the same endeavor only in the sphere of its own function and restricts itself to its own means.
20. Actions and decisions in those church and state contacts and relations which are adiaphora in themselves, nevertheless, call for very cautious and discerning judgment in order that in the handling of these adiaphora the interests neither of the church nor the state may actually or eventually suffer.

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## BRIEF COMMENTS ON THE MISSION AFFIRMATIONS

### General

An affirmation lays claim to being the definitive statement on any matter, particularly where doctrine is concerned. It requires that terms are carefully defined and that their definition is carried through consistently in the use of the terms. The Mission Affirmations fail signally in this respect. Test it out on the term "mission" in the various headings of the six sets of Affirmations.

### I

The mission assigned by Christ to the church, the ministry of the keys, is not spelled out. Is the church God's mission even aside from the office of the keys? The third whereas: "The Son...laid aside His glory, became a man..." is hardly scriptural christology. It equated the incarnation and the humiliation.

### II

It presents the mission of the church to the whole world as being in its loving approach and understanding attitude rather than in its message. It implies a false universalism by stressing the commonality of the Christian with all men in connection with the church as Christ's mission, but without affirming the need of all men to repent and to trust in Christ as their Savior. It does not affirm "the need for preaching repentance and remissions of sins to the world." The Affirmations never distinguish between the visible and the invisible church. As a result they also ignore all the Scripture passages which speak of the outward confession of the church as being something that can separate and make it impossible for us to work together with many who claim to be believers but whose doctrine does not agree with the Scriptures.

What is meant by: "The church...will approach men of other faiths in humility and love"? The context forces us to look upon these other faiths as non-Christian. How can we approach them in humility, as though we were seeking to learn some truths from them? Surely, we dare not evidence a boasting attitude; but actually, humility and pride have nothing to do with this situation. It is a matter of saving truth.

The fact that "God is active in the lives of all men through His continued creative and providential concern, through the law written in their hearts,

and through God's revelation of Himself in creation and nature" has absolutely nothing to do with God's saving action, with the saving faith. "We rejoice over all faithful Christian efforts to witness Christ to all the world." Does this mean that we approve of the false doctrine promulgated or make common cause with such as promulgate it? Surely, we cannot be everywhere, and so, as Paul did, we likewise rejoice when men are brought to faith through the preaching of others; but we are limited by Scripture as to how we may express that joy when errorists are involved.

"In other circumstances": does this give them permission to set aside God's Word and its restrictions in the matter of church fellowship?

### III

It is stated that the Confessions are not intended to be a "kind of Berlin wall to stop communication" and thereby it is disregarded that the confessions were designed to distinguish true Lutherans from spurious Lutherans and other false believers and to serve as a safeguard against false teaching. "Both to witness and to listen to all Christians..." This contradicts the injunctions of our Lord: 1 Timothy 6:3-5: "from such withdraw thyself." Romans 16:17: "Mark and avoid."

### IV

This set of Affirmations thoroughly confuses the doctrine of the two kingdoms. It does not distinguish between the specific mission of Christians as members of Christ's church and their duties as citizens under civic authority, which they will render as a part of their life of sanctification.

### V

This fifth set of Affirmations again fails to distinguish between the actual mission of the church and the tasks and obligations of the Christian in human society for which the church supplies the proper Christian motivation.

### VI

This set of Affirmations deplores the "desecration of Christianity by the multiplication of sects," but it says nothing of the real offense, namely, false doctrine and practice. It implies that there can be no such thing as pure doctrine in a true visible church because of the imperfect understanding and sanctification of the Christian.



## THE MISSION AFFIRMATIONS

(Adopted at the 46th Convention of the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod,  
June - 1965)

### I

#### THE CHURCH IS GOD'S MISSION

WHEREAS, The Father sent forth His Word to create and preserve the world;  
and

WHEREAS, Upon man's revolt the Father sent His Son into the world to  
redeem the world; and

WHEREAS, The Son in obedience to His Father's commission laid aside His  
glory, became a man to serve men, and died on the cross to reconcile all things  
unto God; and

WHEREAS, The risen and victorious Lord sent forth His church on His mission  
when He appeared to His disciples on the day of resurrection, declaring: "Peace  
be unto you; as My Father hath sent Me, even so send I you"; and

WHEREAS, The Father and the Son together sent the Holy Spirit into the  
world as the great Missionary until our Lord's return; therefore be it

Resolved, That we affirm in faith, humility, and joy that the mission is  
the Lord's; He is the great Doer and Sender; and be it further

Resolved, That we affirm that the mission is not an optional activity in  
the church, but the church is caught up in the manifold and dynamic mission of  
God; and be it further

Resolved, That we thank the Lord of the church for all the ways in which  
He has graciously used us and our church body in His mission, blessing us and  
making us a blessing unto many; and be it further

Resolved, That we repent of our individual and corporate self-centeredness  
and disobedience, whenever it has caused us to regard our local congregations  
or our Synod as ends in themselves and moved us to give self-preservation  
priority over God's mission; and be it finally

Resolved, That we affirm that the church is God's mission. The church's  
ministries of worship, service, fellowship, and nurture all have a missionary  
dimension. We rejoice that for Christ's sake God forgives us our sins of  
self-centered disobedience, and we place ourselves, our congregations, and  
our Synod into His loving hand as willing instruments of His great mission to  
the world.

II Corinthians 5:16-21; Exodus 19:5-6 and I Peter 2:9-10; John 20:21-23;  
Matthew 5:13-16; II Corinthians 8 and 9

### II

#### THE CHURCH IS CHRIST'S MISSION TO THE WHOLE WORLD

WHEREAS, God so loved the world that He gave His only-begotten Son that  
whosoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life; and

WHEREAS, Christ has sent His disciples out into all the world, saying: "Go ye and make disciples of all nations"; therefore be it

Resolved, That we affirm that the church is Christ's mission to the whole world. Christians will approach men of other faiths in humility and love. They joyfully acknowledge that God is active in the lives of all men through His continued creative and providential concern, through the Law written in their hearts, and through God's revelation of Himself in creation and nature. Christians affirm a common humanity with all men. They confess a common sinfulness. They rejoice over a universal redemption won for all in Jesus Christ; and be it further

Resolved, That we reconsecrate ourselves with everything we are and have to the task of witnessing Christ in deed and word to all the world, thankfully making full use also of the communication tools which God is offering to the church through science and technology for this age of the population explosion; and be it further

Resolved, That in the face of the great unfinished task we rejoice over all faithful Christian efforts to witness Christ to all the world; and be it finally

Resolved, That we recognize that our sister mission churches in other lands have been placed by God into other circumstances and are subservient not to us but to the Lord, who makes His church His mission to the whole world.

Ephesians 1:11-23; Matthew 28:18-20; Romans 10:8-17; Colossians 1:3-29; Philippians 1:12-19

### III

#### THE CHURCH IS CHRIST'S MISSION TO THE CHURCH

WHEREAS, Every Christian by virtue of the saving faith which the Holy Spirit creates in his heart is bound to His Lord and enters into a real and living unity with every other member of Christ's holy body, the church; and

WHEREAS, The same Word of Christ that bids Christians to go and teach all nations also instructs them to teach their fellow Christians all things whatsoever Christ has commanded them; therefore be it

Resolved, That we affirm that the church is Christ's mission to the church. In obedience to the church's Head and in sanctified loyalty to his congregation and his church body, a Christian will be ready with good conscience both to witness and to listen to all Christians. Like the Bereans, the Christian will search the Scriptures to test the truth of what he hears and what he says; and be it further

Resolved, That we affirm as Lutheran Christians that the Evangelical Lutheran Church is chiefly a confessional movement within the total body of Christ rather than a denomination emphasizing insitutional barriers of separation. The Lutheran Christian uses the Lutheran Confessions for the primary purpose for which they were framed: to confess Christ and His Gospel boldly and lovingly to all Christians. While the Confessions seek to repel all attacks against the Gospel, they are not intended to be a kind of Berlin wall to stop communication with other Christians; and be it further

Resolved, That we affirm that by virtue of our unity with other Christians in the body of Christ, we should work together when it will edify Christ's body and advance His mission, refusing cooperation, however, on such occasions when it would deny God's Word; and be it finally

Resolved, That we affirm that because the church is Christ's mission to the church, Christians should speak the Word of God to one another as they nurture, edify, and educate one another for Christian faith and life. Therefore as a Synod we value our strong tradition of Christian education and seek to extend it throughout life, for laity and clergy. Far from employing agencies of Christian education primarily in our own institutional self-interest, we will endeavor to make them ever more effective tools in equipping God's people for His mission.

John 17:1-26; Ephesians 4:1-16; I Corinthians 12:1-31; I John 4:1-21;  
I Peter 4:7-11

#### IV

#### THE CHURCH IS CHRIST'S MISSION TO THE WHOLE SOCIETY

WHEREAS, Jesus Christ is Lord of all the world and in every area of life; and

WHEREAS, The Christian recognizes no area of life that may be termed "secular" in the sense that it is removed from the lordship of Jesus Christ, though it may not be under the control of the institutional church; and

WHEREAS, The Christian does God's work in the world through various vocations in the home, church, and state as distinguished by Dr. Martin Luther; therefore be it

Resolved, That we affirm that the church is Christ's mission to the whole society; and be it further

Resolved, That we recognize the difficulty of understanding in every instance whether God desires Christians to act corporately or individually or both in His mission to the whole society; they will, however, seek His will through prayer and mutual study; and be it further

Resolved, That Christians be exhorted to serve God in every honest occupation, recognizing that all of life is the arena of a Christian's ministry to God and man; and be it further

Resolved, That Christians be encouraged to seek the peace of the city, as God commands, working together with their fellow citizens of the nation and of the world, whatever their race, class, or belief; and be it finally

Resolved, That Christians be encouraged as they attempt, under the judgment and forgiveness of God, to discover and further His good purposes in every area of life, to extend justice, social acceptance, and a full share in God's bounty to all people who are discriminated against and oppressed by reason of race, class, creed, or other unwarranted distinctions. Christians recognize that all their fellowmen come from the Father's creating hand and that His Son's nail-pierced hands reach out in love to all of them.

James 2:1-17; Colossians 3:8-17; I Peter 2:11-17; Romans 15:1-13; 12:1-21

V

THE CHURCH IS CHRIST'S MISSION TO THE WHOLE MAN

WHEREAS, The Scriptures teach us that God's love reaches out to the whole man, for God the Father lovingly creates and preserves man; the Son redeemed him in body, soul, and mind; the Holy Spirit brings him to faith and moves him to use body, soul, and mind in God's great mission; and

WHEREAS, Our Lord became a man and ministered to the needs of the whole man, forgiving sins, healing the sick, feeding the hungry, and even providing wine for a marriage feast; and

WHEREAS, Our Lord at His return will solemnly report whether or not we fed, clothed, and visited Him in the least of His hungry, naked, and forsaken brethren; therefore be it

Resolved, That we affirm that the church is God's mission to the whole man. Wherever a Christian as God's witness encounters the man to whom God sends him, he meets someone whose body, soul, and mind are related in one totality. Therefore Christians, individually and corporately, prayerfully seek to serve the needs of the total man. Christians bring the Good News of the living Christ to dying men. They bring men instruction in all useful knowledge. They help and befriend their neighbor on our small planet in every bodily need. They help their neighbor to improve and protect his property and business by bringing him economic help and enabling him to earn his daily bread in dignity and self-respect. Christians minister to the needs of the whole man, not because they have forgotten the witness of the Gospel but because they remember it. They know that the demonstration of their faith in Christ adds power to its proclamation.

Matthew 8:1-17; 25:31-46; Luke 16:19-31; Hebrews 13:1-21; I Corinthians 13:1-13.

VI

THE WHOLE CHURCH IS CHRIST'S MISSION

WHEREAS, Every Christian is commissioned a missionary through baptism, for through the selfsame water and Word the Holy Spirit makes us both God's children and His witnesses to the world when He says: "Go ye and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost, teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you"; and

WHEREAS, All who are baptized into Christ are baptized into His death and resurrection, into His mission, and into His body; therefore be it

Resolved, That we affirm that the whole church is Christ's mission. Therefore we deplore anything that seeks to divide what God has joined together. We deplore the clericalism that views a congregation primarily as God's instrument to sustain the ordained ministry, thus smothering the diverse gifts of the Holy Spirit to His people. Equally we deplore the laicism that chafes under the shepherding by which a loving God seeks to equip His children for His mission. We deplore the racism which refuses to repent of its sin and denies the unity of all Christians in Christ and His mission. We deplore the desecration of Christianity by the

multiplication of sects as though the Gospel were a religion of human design instead of God's outreach after men in the giving of Himself. The divisions in the institutional church are as real as the unity in Christ's body which joins all Christians together. We deplore the wars and political struggles that set Christians and other people in one nation against those in another. We recognize that the Christian lives in the tension between his own imperfect understanding of God's truth and his knowledge that in spite of errors and divisions he is joined together in Christ's body with all who truly believe in its Head. The Christian lives in the tension between Christ's lordship, which is perfect, and his own discipleship, which is not. The Christian rejoices over the existence of every fellow believer in Christ his Savior, because thereby Christ is preached and His mission is implemented, for the whole church is Christ's mission.

I Corinthians 1:10-31; Hebrews 11:1-39; James 3:1-18; Ephesians 2:1-22;  
Romans 14:1-23

