

What Just Happened?

The Wisconsin Synod's Communications with Laymen Leading up to and after the Break
with Missouri in 1961

CH3031 Lutheranism in America
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December 7, 2010

On August 17, 1961, many of the laity in the Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod were caught unawares by a seemingly cosmic shift: The Wisconsin Synod declared itself to no longer be in fellowship with the Lutheran Church--Missouri Synod in its national convention. In the view of many, the decision was sudden and came from no where. They had friends and relatives that belonged to the Missouri Synod. They had attended the other synod's churches, participated in the Lord's Supper at their altars, and served as sponsors for their children. Their children attended Missouri's schools. Their brothers were Missouri pastors. How could this happen? Why didn't anyone tell them?

The laymen had questions. Did this mean the Wisconsin Synod was condemning every person in the Missouri Synod? Were they really that bad? The newspapers said this was just over Boy Scouts and the military chaplaincy. Is that a big enough reason to suspend fellowship? The practical implications of the split were staggering, and the laity understood that. What would happen to the high school that Missouri and Wisconsin shared? What would happen to the overseas missions they both supported? What would happen when grandma came to visit and she could no longer commune with us? What would happen when Uncle Carl could no longer lead at prayer at the family gatherings?

The Wisconsin Synod had to respond to these questions and concerns. They had voted to break with Missouri not "just" for doctrinal reasons, but to give a clear testimony. Now they must endeavor to make that testimony clear not just to the pastors and professors of the Missouri Synod, but even to their own members. Wisconsin had to present the case for the dissolution of fellowship to people who were not trained to deal with theological matters. They had to make clear their actions and show their scripturalness.

This paper will outline the major efforts to educate the laity of the Wisconsin Synod, as well as spotlighting some of the behind the scenes synodical and pastoral discussions concerning how to explain to church members what was happening.

Historical Background

In 1872, the Synodical Conference was formed, announcing a unity of faith between the Wisconsin, Missouri, and Norwegian Synods. Soon the Slovak Synod would join as well. The Conference enjoyed pulpit, altar, and prayer fellowship. They declared themselves to be united in doctrine and practice. The synods involved freely shared pastors, schools, and missions.

In 1932, the Missouri Synod accepted the Brief Statement, which in concise language expressed their confession of faith. The Statement was approved by the other members of the Synodical Conference. It clearly proclaimed what the Bible said in both positive and negative terms; in other words, it explained both what the Bible said and what it did not say by denouncing many popular heresies.

However, soon after, some began to notice a drift in the practice and doctrine of the Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod.

In 1935, the United States government invited church bodies to offer men for a chaplaincy program. Within three years, pastors of the Missouri Synod had taken chaplaincy positions, though the church had not yet ruled on the proposition. No discipline was ever carried out. Subsequently, Missouri defended these men and furthered their chaplain program. Wisconsin investigated and found that the US chaplain program was an unhealthy mix of church and state and encouraged unionism.

In 1938, the American Lutheran Church (ALC) made fellowship overtures to the Missouri Synod. The American Lutheran Church was an amalgamation of several other Lutheran bodies, many of which had been distinctly out of fellowship with Missouri and Wisconsin. The invitation itself indicated that not all was well within the ALC: There is an “allowable and wholesome latitude of theological opinion.”¹ This made it clear that the ALC had no concept of doctrinal unity; they desired an outward fellowship, not a fellowship that truly expressed oneness in doctrine. Regardless, Missouri pursued meetings to establish fellowship.

While Missouri negotiated with the ALC, another matter surfaced. In 1944, the Missouri Synod elected to allow individual pastors and congregations to decide whether or not to allow a Boy Scout troop to function out of individual congregations. Prior to this, both Wisconsin and Missouri had at least seemed to agree in general that Scouting was a unionistic and anti-trinitarian body that had religious elements. Because Missouri had seemed to reverse course on a previously held shared statement of belief, there was much friction between Wisconsin and Missouri.

In 1945, Missouri was rocked by the *Statement of the Forty-Four*. Forty-four prominent men from within the synod sent their statement, which deplored the legalism of the Missouri Synod, to every called worker. Especially prominent was the desire to work closer with the ALC. In disciplining the men involved, Missouri elected to allow them to withdraw the statement, but they were never forced to retract it. In this allowance, Missouri was able to refrain from disciplining those involved.

In pursuit of fellowship, the ALC and the LC—MS released the “Common Confession” in two parts in 1950 and 1953. Both confessions were ambiguous and allowed multiple views of

¹ Quoted in *A Fraternal Word on the Questions in Controversy Between the Wisconsin Synod and the Missouri Synod*, (St. Louis: The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod, July 1954), 2. Hereafter cited as FW.

the same doctrines. Wisconsin pointed this out to Missouri, who seemed to be ignoring the problem. When confronted, Missouri vigorously defended the documents, despite Wisconsin's insistence that such a fellowship with the ALC would be unionism.

In 1952, citing the previously stated problems, Wisconsin declared itself to be *in statu confessionis* with the Missouri Synod. This was a state of vigorously protesting fellowship. While the ties of fellowship had not yet been severed, they were dangerously close to being cut. Wisconsin warned Missouri that it was walking down a doctrinally dangerous road. In the following years, it became clearer that Missouri was doctrinally sick. Professors at their schools began to publicly teach that God's Word was not true on every point. Discipline became more of an issue.

The Wisconsin Synod delayed as long as it might, but finally in August 1961, it declared that it was no longer in fellowship with the Missouri Synod. In 1963 the WELS withdrew from the Synodical Conference.

For those who were Wisconsin Synod members in the middle years of the twentieth century and lived through the long struggle to maintain the Synodical Conference on its historical confessional foundations, the loss of the battles and of the war will always remain the most significant and traumatic episode in their own personal version of their church body's history. The struggle was long, stretching over a quarter century. The losses in cherished fellowships were large, touching personally most pastors, teachers and lay families of the synod.²

Efforts Before "Continuing in His Word"

Starting in 1939, the Wisconsin Synod attempted to educate the laity as to what was happening among their brothers and sisters in the Missouri Synod. Both synods recognized the

² Edward C. Fredrich, The Wisconsin Synod Lutherans: A History of the Single Synod, Federation, and Merger (Milwaukee: Northwestern Publishing House, 1992), 198.

necessity of informing the laity of ongoing discussions. However, they laid some ground rules concerning what would be discussed in public forums.

The Synodical Conference had agreed to “refrain from hindering the work of [the union committees] by unwarranted public attacks.”³ Because of this agreement, the Wisconsin Synod refrained for some time before fully informing the laity how far some in Missouri had gone astray. Rather, at first it published “many articles and editorials which discussed fellowship and the church in a general, purely educational way.”⁴

Besides general doctrinal issues, the *Northwestern Lutheran* also published general news without detailed comment: “Although the *Northwestern Lutheran* may have refrained from making many comments and judgments about the Missouri-ALC situation, it certainly did not refrain from reporting the facts of the matter. Wisconsin’s close ties with Missouri required such thorough information.”⁵ Because Joseph M. Wright has published an excellent paper detailing the involvement of the *Northwestern Lutheran* concerning the troubles between Wisconsin and Missouri, this paper will not go into great detail with this matter. For more information, see his essay, “I have made you a watchman.”

In 1950, when the Missouri Synod published the *Common Confession*, Wisconsin talked about the document at conventions. There were many conference essays on the topic as well, but Wisconsin kept most such comments among called workers at this point. Wisconsin saw the document as a very weak and dangerous basis for establishing fellowship with the ALC, which was its purported purpose. Many called workers were quite forward with their response, letting

³ Arnold H. Grumm, Personal Letter to O. J. Naumann, February 11, 1957, Naumann Papers, Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary Archives, Mequon, Wisconsin.

⁴ Joseph M. Wright, “I have made you a watchman: how the *Northwestern Lutheran* prepared the Wisconsin Synod for the break in fellowship with the Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod” (Mequon: Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary Essay File, 1995), 2. For a full discussion on the role the *Northwestern Lutheran* played in informing the laity, see this essay. Hereafter cited as Wright.

⁵ Ibid 9

the brethren of Missouri know the dangerous path they walked. They warned that the document was written in such a way that a person could read two meanings out of the statement. In other words, while the Common Confession itself spoke nothing wrong, it allowed for heresy.

Missouri endeavored to defend itself. They published “A Fraternal Word” in 1953, which explained how they arrived at the Common Confession. “A Fraternal Word” in and of itself spends much time defending both the actions of the Missouri Synod in general as well as the Common Confession in particular. For instance, it states, “No evidence is offered to show that the arrangement regarding communion in the Armed Services, an arrangement designed to cover strictly exceptional cases which arise in the life of the military, is in fact unionistic in character or “in clear violation of the principle set forth in Missouri’s own resolution of Romans 16” (Wisconsin Proceedings, 1951, p. 141).”⁶

The pamphlet climaxes with a few observations:

Observation 1: Missouri and Wisconsin differ in this that

Wisconsin says: You must suspend negotiations with ALC until ALC has first settled the matter of “allowable and wholesome latitude of theological opinion, etc.” Wis. Syn. Proceedings, 1951. pp. 147-148.

Missouri says: How can a settlement be brought about when we refuse to study the Word of God with the ALC in this matter? We are convinced we must continue to “negotiate” and seek to settle any difference in this area also by joint study of God’s Word as long as ALC is ready to study God’s Word.

Can Wisconsin say for its approach: This is the commandment of the Lord? Can Wisconsin prove from God’s Word that Missouri’s approach in this matter is not according to God’s will? Has not the Lord blessed the approach that was made in the adoption of the aforementioned paragraph on fellowship?”

Observation 2: Missouri has never refused to hearken to the Word of God in all of its dealings in connection with the Common Confession, if that Word has been clearly applied. Missouri has shown itself willing at all times to listen to the sister

⁶ FW 24

synods in the Synodical Conference and to any one in its own midst. It is now ready to listen to every suggestion offered; and it is waiting three more years in order to give its own people and folks in sister synods opportunity for further study and suggestions.

Missouri, however, cannot be expected to have its conscience bound with regard to method and manner of dealing with a situation as long as it continues to use God's Word and is faithful to that Word. Method and manner are debatable and subject to human judgment; Wisconsin should not demand conformity there as something demanded by God Himself.

In conclusion: Can Wisconsin on the basis of this situation declare that God demands of it a severing of fellowship relations with Missouri?⁷

The plea is clear: We in the Missouri Synod are doing nothing wrong. Why are you attacking us? Why are you criticizing our attempts to bring Christians, and Lutherans at that, together into one fellowship?

While there was clearly public struggle between the Synods, behind the scenes there was ongoing discussion as to how public to make this discussion. Should the "Fraternal Word" be sent to everyone?

This pamphlet was sent to every called worker in both the LC—MS and WELS. Though the pamphlet was sent only to called workers, Missouri made it clear that their intended audience included the laity: "We of the Missouri Synod wish to utilize the intervening period [between WELS national conventions] to make clear to *all members* of the Synodical Conference the position of the Missouri Synod on the issues involved. ... We shall endeavor to make our presentation in the spirit of fraternal candor and ask to be heard in the same spirit."⁸

In fact, the Synodical Conference president explicitly relates to the WELS President that the *Fraternal Word* was intended to reach every member of the WELS: "The Praesidium of the Missouri Synod is anxious that the information contained in the brochure reach every pastor in

⁷ Ibid 12

⁸ FW 2. Emphasis mine.

the Synodical Conference and through them their congregations and has approached me as president of the Synodical Conference to request your permission that said brochure be sent to the pastors of your Synod.”⁹

The pamphlet seems to have remained mostly in the hands of the clergy, though it was likely shared and discussed among church councils, and possibly in Bible studies. The pamphlet in and of itself refers back to many documents, such as the *Brief Statement* and proceedings from several conventions, but remains generally accessible to the lay reader.

A bit of a procedural snafu occurred dealing with the distribution of the pamphlet. Without securing the permission of the Praesidium of the Wisconsin Synod, Dr. Herman Harms, the first vice-president of the Missouri Synod distributed copies of “A Fraternal Word” to the New Ulm convention of the WELS.

The problem was compounded when the letter asking for permission to send the pamphlet to all called workers of the WELS was written and sent the same day of that distribution. This caused more than a little consternation for the Synod president. He wrote to Dr. Harms,

I cannot but consider it an unbrotherly invasion of our Synod. Timed as it was near the close of the sessions when you had to leave to catch a train, and presented to the entire convention, any objection on my part that this does not constitute proper procedure, would have been considered by some as being prompted by suspicion and distrust...

I recall that when a synod of the Synodical Conference asked permission to send its evaluation of and scriptural objections to the Scout movement to all pastors in the Synodical Conference for study, your Synod’s representatives promptly denied the sister synod the permission to do so. Yet you offered “A Fraternal Word” to pastors, teachers, lay-delegates, and visitors alike without first consulting the proper officials.

⁹ Walter A. Baepler, Personal Letter to O. J. Naumann, September 1, 1953, O. J. Naumann Collection, Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary Archives, Mequon, Wisconsin.

Are we now to conclude that you are granting us the right to circularize the membership of the Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod? I should very much appreciate your answer to this question...

The very fact that on the day of our convention at New Ulm Dr. Baepler wrote a letter asking permission to send, 'A Fraternal Word' to all our pastors, shows that your praesidium is familiar with proper procedure. I regret very much that this procedure was overlooked in the New Ulm incident."¹⁰

This initial breach of protocol resulted in some very careful exchanges concerning later pamphlets. What would be allowed? Both synods were now walking on eggshells to make sure they would still be allowed access to the pastorate on either side and, through them, the laity.

Despite the irregularity of the distribution in New Ulm, President Naumann did agree to pass on "A Fraternal Word" to the rest of the called workers after further study was done by a committee.¹¹ After studying the papers, Naumann further responded,

After considering seriously the request of the Praesidium of our Sister Synod of Missouri that we grant them the right to distribute the brochure "A Fraternal Word" to all our pastors, our Conference of Presidents wishes to reply with a counter proposal. ... Since our objection to the Common Confession are not clearly and fully quoted in the brochure which pretends to answer all these objections, we would deem it inadvisable to distribute the brochure without an accompanying word of caution.¹²

It is clear that the leaders of the Wisconsin Synod were wary of sending items that were not "clearly and fully quoted" to their own pastors. They acted as gatekeepers of information, and wanted to make sure any pamphlet that might come through them would be accurate or come with sufficient warnings. They wanted to make sure that any accusations the Missouri Synod made were already met within that same mailing.

¹⁰ O. J. Naumann, Personal Letter to Dr. Herman Harms, September 14, 1953, O. J. Naumann Collection, Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary Archives, Mequon, Wisconsin.

¹¹ Ibid

¹² O. J. Naumann, Personal Letter to Dr. Walter Baepler, October 29, 1953, O. J. Naumann Collection, Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary Archives, Mequon, Wisconsin.

Naumann pursues the issue of clear and full quotations in another letter less than a month

later:

We feel [the Fraternal Word] does not fairly represent our views, and that this failure is so serious that we feel that we have been misrepresented... If you will take our New Ulm Convention Report (1951) you will find that on pages 121 to 127 we gave our convention the full text of the Common Confession. I took special pains with the proof-reading in order to be sure that we did not let any mistake creep in that might disturb the sense. This was done in order to be perfectly fair, and to guard against any possible misrepresentation.¹³

“A Fraternal Word” was sent out to called workers in the Wisconsin Synod in 1954, including a “review”¹⁴ written by WELS Seminary Dean E. Reim and a forward by WELS President O. J. Naumann. The Wisconsin Synod did not simply accept Missouri sending “their side of the story” to Wisconsin pastors. They made sure to print full quotations as well as show how “A Fraternal Word” did not address their concerns except in a tangential way.

Response was swift to *A Fraternal Word Examined*. Arnold Grumm, the Second Vice-President of Missouri, wrote, “Brother, my contention still is that the more printing there is done, the more we will lose sight of the real issue and get lost in the loud complaints of ‘misrepresentations.’”¹⁵ Speaking of this concern, E. Reim wrote,

The last paragraph is interesting, particularly because the same idea was expressed prior to our printing of “‘The Fraternal Word’ Examined.” Having written and sent out the FW, Dr. Grumm proposes that we refrain from any further printing. In other words: let the FW stand as the final word. To this, I am sure, neither you nor I will submit.¹⁶

The pamphlets flew fast. Missouri defended itself in “Another Fraternal Endeavor.” The tract is full of underlining and references to previous pamphlets, resolutions, and statements.

¹³ O. J. Naumann, Personal Letter to A. H. Grumm, November 20, 1953, Naumann Collection, Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary Archives, Mequon, Wisconsin.

¹⁴ The “review” is better known as *A Fraternal Word Examined*. In correspondence of the time, that title had not yet been attached to the project.

¹⁵ Arnold H. Grumm, Personal Letter to O. J. Naumann, February 19, 1954, Naumann Collection, Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary Archives, Mequon, Wisconsin.

¹⁶ E. Reim, Personal Letter to O. J. Naumann, February 23, 1954, O. J. Naumann Collection, Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary Archives, Mequon, Wisconsin. Emphasis in the original.

What before was intended for laymen through their pastors now seemed to be aimed primarily at called workers who had been fully educated on the situation. The battle of pamphlets had turned professional. At least, it had turned professional until “Continuing in His Word” appeared.

Continuing in His Word

Wisconsin’s first major effort to inform the laity outside the *Northwestern Lutheran* came in 1954 in the form of a series of eleven tracts entitled “Continuing in His Word.” The series was designed to educate those who may not be familiar with the ins and outs of theology about the changes that had taken place within the Missouri Synod. It’s important to note that this tract series was published after Wisconsin’s declaration of *in statu confessionis*. The laity needed to be informed of what was happening and why their synod seemed to suddenly give a cold shoulder to Missouri.

The first tract says,

Now we of the Wisconsin Synod have again arrived at a critical point in our history. Our Lord is testing our loyalty to Him and His Word as we are faced with the possibility that ties which we have cherished since 1872 may have to be severed out of reverence and concern for the truth of Scripture. We are very conscious of the fact that this situation – unless God in His mercy heal the breach – can only cause heartache to our pastors, teachers, and members, many of whom are bound by ties of blood and friendship to those in the other synods. In order that we may be prepared to cope with the situation that confronts us, it is necessary that we know something of the historical background of the various Lutheran church bodies in the United States and especially of the position of our own Wisconsin Synod.¹⁷

These tracts, in general, served well as education for the laity. They were clearly written and showed what was at stake if Missouri continued to teach and act as it had done for at least

¹⁷ *Lutheran Bodies in the U.S.A.*, Continuing in His Word, Tract Number 1 (Milwaukee, WI: Conference of Presidents of the Evangelical Lutheran Joint Synod of Wisconsin and Other States, 1954), 1.

fifteen years now. For a called worker, the tracts would likely be a healthy review, but for many among the laity, it would have been an eye-opening experience to read them.

The first volume of “Continuing in His Word” was entitled *Lutheran Bodies in the U.S.A.* and gives a brief history lesson of amalgamation of Lutheran bodies, showing that most of them were unscriptural. The main focus lies in the theology of the ALC. The pamphlet explains very clearly why Wisconsin is concerned that Missouri would want to declare fellowship with such a church body.

The persistence of the Missouri Synod in dealing with a church body that negotiates in two directions at the same time has given our synod grave cause for concern in the past. Now our sister synod’s failure to share our concern, and her claim that all differences with the American Lutheran Church have been settled in the document called the *Common Confession* have compelled us to protest vigorously and to charge her with breaking the bond of unity that has united us in the Synodical Conference for so many years. ...

Our synod is doing all in its power to repair the breach in the prayerful hope that the Missouri Synod will give some indication of reversing this trend. We pray that the Holy Spirit may restore the unity which formerly characterized our fellowship. With God nothing is impossible. ... Pray for our synod, brethren, -- not that she may preserve this union at all costs, but that she may remain true to the Savior’s Word.¹⁸

Note that the tract explicitly asks for prayers for Missouri. Wisconsin made sure as much as possible to show that they were not trying to be petty in their actions, but to demonstrate love.

The second tract, *1938-1953*, showed that Wisconsin was not now suddenly starting to call foul on Missouri, though the laity may have been unaware of the full situation before that time. “This “Break” was not a sudden and abrupt one. It has been developing steadily for more

¹⁸ Ibid 6

than fifteen years.”¹⁹ To demonstrate the ongoing nature that the struggle had already taken, the last page of this tract listed “Important events and documents in recent intersynodical history.”²⁰

An important thing to note is that the first two tracts were entirely history; there was no discussion of doctrines except a passing mention, and no Bible verses were cited. The purpose of the first two tracts was to inform of what as happening and what had already happened in Missouri. Discussions concerning theology would come later.

The third tract, *Every Sinner Declared Righteous*, started chewing the theological issues involved in the declaration of protesting fellowship.²¹ The tract began by explaining what justification was and why it as so important to keep this doctrine pure. It is clear that the writer of this tract breathed deeply of the Gospel and wanted his readers to fully recognize how wondrous God’s grace truly is. The opening section quoted many Bible verses in full, as well as supplied healthy lists of additional verses for readers to investigate on their own.

Following that thorough introduction of justification, the tract outlined the position of the Ohio Synod, a church body that had joined the ALC. Ohio denied what Wisconsin called objective justification. Rather, they held that God justifies those who come to faith. This tract then explained how this causes doubt to enter into the picture: do I have enough faith to be forgiven?

Perhaps we should go to a courtroom for a moment to see how distorted this picture is. A group of prisoners stands before the bar of justice. Their debt is established. Their guilt is proved. A man walks in with the announcement that he has paid in full and pleads for the release of the prisoners. But what does the judge now do in this case? He recognizes the fact that payment has been secured and provided for all prisoners, but strangely enough he announces no verdict of acquittal. Instead, he invites all the prisoners before his bar of justice and tells

¹⁹ *1938-1953, Continuing in His Word, Tract Number 2 (Milwaukee, WI: Conference of Presidents of the Evangelical Lutheran Joint Synod of Wisconsin and Other States, 1954), 1.*

²⁰ *Ibid 8*

²¹ *Every Sinner Declared Righteous, Continuing in His Word, Tract Number 3 (Milwaukee, WI: Conference of Presidents of the Evangelical Lutheran Joint Synod of Wisconsin and Other States, 1954).*

them that he will acquit them only upon the condition that they first show their willingness to accept the verdict. He will do his part if they in good faith will show him the proper attitude and spirit of cooperation.²²

After this illustration, the tract examines the *Common Confession* and finds that it allows for this false theology to be preached. “The best that we can say for the Common Confession is that it gives us an unclear picture of God’s judicial act.”²³ Because the phrasing of the Common Confession is lacking, Wisconsin is justified in objecting to it, as well as to the overtures of fellowship between the ALC and the LCMS.

The fourth tract, *Not by My Reason or Strength*, focused on conversion. It also brought to light what was a running theme when Wisconsin evaluates the Common Confession: where before there was controversy, a document purporting to settle the argument must tackle the disagreement head on.

To settle the old controversy, the article must face the old error, rule it out, and not merely be silent about it. To illustrate: If the Lutherans and the Roman Catholics were to agree on a statement concerning the Hereafter, would it be adequate to make mention only of heaven and hell? Would the fact that no mention has been made of purgatory mean that it has been ruled out? Would it not much rather indicate that the Lutherans are not ready to condemn that teaching of the Roman Catholics, at least that the Lutherans are ready to tolerate it?²⁴

This tract, like the one before it, dealt with a matter that many would call theological hair-splitting, but was vital to the free justification of sinners: Why are some men saved, and not others? Some in the ALC claimed that some men were saved because they did not offer willful resistance. Because they offered less resistance to God’s grace, they were saved. This tract showed how dangerous such a seemingly insignificant belief can be:

²² Ibid 4. Note that while this illustration might not be effective today due to courtroom dramas of men denying any aid they might be given, in the 1950’s such a picture would have rung much more true.

²³ Ibid 6

²⁴ *Not by My Reason or Strength*, Continuing in His Word, Tract Number 4 (Milwaukee, WI: Conference of Presidents of the Evangelical Lutheran Joint Synod of Wisconsin and Other States, 1954), 5-6.

You will notice that according to this statement man is converted because he does not willfully resist (as though natural man were capable of any other kind of resistance), and because he lets God's work be done in him (as though natural man could thus dispose himself toward the work of the Holy Spirit). In the end, this makes man's conversion dependent upon his conduct.²⁵

Tract five, *If the Trumpet Give an Uncertain Sound*, focused on inspiration. It was one of the shortest tracts in the series. It studied the Common Confession's statement on inspiration and found it lacking. "True, this expression of the *Common Confession* can be correctly understood. But since it can also be seriously misunderstood, it does not recommend itself as an adequate statement in a document intended to be a clear-cut settlement of doctrinal differences."²⁶ Like the tract before it, "Trumpet" showed how the phrasing of the Common Confession could be misunderstood to allow for false doctrine.

The sixth tract, *Chosen by Grace from Eternity*, presented the doctrine of election. The introduction to the tract stated,

Perhaps the doctrine [of election] is not so well known nor appreciated in our church as it might be. The reason for this is not that the doctrine is unclearly taught by God in His Word, and not that it is easily misunderstood by the believing child of God, but that men by misusing their human reason have caused much confusion concerning it and have made it a source of controversy in the Church. As a result we have become reluctant to deal with it, as if it were a doctrine beyond the understanding of most Christians and reserved for consideration only by those especially trained in theology.²⁷

The tract explained in detail what the doctrine of election is and what it is not. It included a very healthy dose of Bible verses, with many more references provided for those who wanted to dig deeper.

²⁵ Ibid 2-3

²⁶ *If the Trumpet Give an Uncertain Sound*, Continuing in His Word, Tract Number 5 (Milwaukee, WI: Conference of Presidents of the Evangelical Lutheran Joint Synod of Wisconsin and Other States, 1954), 5.

²⁷ *Chosen by Grace from Eternity*, Continuing in His Word, Tract Number 6 (Milwaukee, WI: Conference of Presidents of the Evangelical Lutheran Joint Synod of Wisconsin and Other States, 1954), 1.

Following the format of previous tracts, “Chosen” then examined what had been openly taught within the ALC: “So they speak of man’s being converted because he acted differently over against the grace of God – the difference being “refraining from willful resistance.” In election this “refraining from willful resistance,” foreseen by God, becomes the reason why God chose some and not others. Thus they taught an election in view of persevering faith.”²⁸

If this sounds similar to the phrasing used in Tract 4, that is because it is. Conversion and election are closely related doctrines, and Wisconsin was not afraid to show when one confused one, the other was likely to follow.

Once again the *Common Confession* was shown to allow for false doctrine. Wisconsin made their stance clear:

Since [Election] has been in controversy for these many decades and since agreement is now claimed, the question always arises: “Who has changed, the A.L.C. or the Missouri Synod?” Surely one group must have changed if there is true agreement now. Yet neither synod will admit that it has changed its position in the least. If such an acknowledgement were forthcoming from the A.L.C., the misgivings would disappear.²⁹

Tract 7 finally targeted what the press seemed to focus on as they reported the reasons for the break between Wisconsin and Missouri: Boy Scouts. *Our Position on Scouting* explains the doctrinal reasons the Wisconsin Synod stood against allowing Scouts into their schools and congregations. It also was frank in the discussion: “We realize also that we will be unpopular in the eyes of those who heartily approve of everything in Scouting, and we know that we will be misunderstood by those who regard only the outward activities of Scouting and disregard its religious elements.”³⁰ The writer of the tract also seemed to recognize that understanding of the issues within Wisconsin was not always clear: “But we are not doing justice to the subject if we

²⁸ Ibid 5

²⁹ Ibid 8

³⁰ *Our Position Against Scouting*, Continuing in His Word, Tract Number 7 (Milwaukee, WI: Conference of Presidents of the Evangelical Lutheran Joint Synod of Wisconsin and Other States, 1954), 1-2.

are satisfied to say, “My boy isn’t a Boy Scout because my pastor, my congregation, my synod doesn’t approve of Scouting.” Disapproval of Scouting must stem from conviction based on God’s Word.”³¹

The tract quotes the Scoutmaster’s Handbook as well as other pertinent primary documents from the Scouts, showing that the organization was indeed religious and promoted works righteousness.

A weakness in this tract was the lack of Bible verses cited. The author assumed the reader knew that works righteousness is a bad thing. Granted, if one had read the previous tracts in the series, there would be no doubt or lack of knowledge. However, because of the “hot topic” status of Scouting, more clarity would have been desirable.

The eighth tract discussed *Cooperation in Externals*. The Missouri Synod had insisted that in several cases where Wisconsin had pointed out unionistic practices, they were merely cooperating in externals. In other words, where Wisconsin feared their actions were leading to an establishment of fellowship without doctrinal unity, Missouri stated actions did not establish fellowship, for they were not engaging in joint worship.

The tract was fairly well written, advocating what would become known as the unit concept of fellowship. However, in showing the downward trend in Missouri, the writer exposed his own flaws in thinking:

Those fears were realized, despite the blithe and complacent assurance of advocates of practical cooperation that “a sound doctrinal position is so well anchored in the Bible that it does not need to fear being undermined by cooperation in externals with those who differ with us.” At the very first “All-Lutheran Youth Conference,” held at Valparaiso, Ind., in 1948, delegates of the Walther League and of assorted Luther Leagues did not confine their fellowship to “externals.” They worshiped and prayed together as if they were doctrinally and confessionally one. In the State of Washington, Lutherans of all kinds (with the single exception of our Wisconsin Synod congregations) took part in the

³¹ Ibid 2

formation of the organization called “Associated Lutheran Welfare.” Soon “retreats” with spiritual programs in which the pastors of all synods were to take part were arranged.³²

Notice that the writer claimed that Wisconsin was the only Lutheran group not involved. He either neglected or chose not to mention the Norwegian Synod, who was also not involved. While this paragraph accused Missouri of pride that had caused a fall, the writer seemed blind to what may be pride leaning the other way. Perhaps the tract was written to try and bolster pride in the Wisconsin Synod, but this is not the proper way to go about that.

The tract listed other cooperation in external examples. It also explained the danger of cooperating in externals with an illustration:

No one had to be a prophet or the son of a prophet to predict the sorry outcome of these ventures in practical cooperation. When Lutherans of various stripes are encouraged to associate with each other and increasingly closer contacts are being cultivated among them, it comes as no surprise if they begin to fellowship on a more intimate spiritual level. To trust that it will be otherwise is to be as blissfully unaware of reality as a ‘Lutheran congregation that arranges to have its young people attend roller-skating parties with the local Catholic Youth Organization and then dismisses all fears that such camaraderie will lead to closer attachments between some of those young people despite the barriers of conflicting faiths. Mixed marriages often result when young people allow friendships to ripen into affection and love. In the same way church bodies can be drawn together without settling religious differences first, especially when they feel that they have spiritual values in common.³³

Most of the tracts in *Continuing in His Word* were well written and stand the test of time. They would make good reading today and explain Wisconsin’s positions well, with just an update to the Bible translation used. This tract has not aged well, though. It is also clear that the writer did not seem familiar with life outside places where the Wisconsin Synod had much representation. He seemed to fearmonger a bit with the absolute heresy that a good WELS girl might be led astray and date outside of the WELS! On the fringes of the WELS, if one wished to

³² *Cooperation in Externals*, *Continuing in His Word*, Tract Number 8 (Milwaukee, WI: Conference of Presidents of the Evangelical Lutheran Joint Synod of Wisconsin and Other States, 1954), 5.

³³ *Ibid* 6

be married, it was normally the case that they must look outside their own church body. To use such a “horror story” was not effective in such cases. Of course, mixed marriages are difficult. Of course, caution needs to be urged. Of course, when at all possible, instruction of the person outside of Lutheranism should occur before marriage and if possible even before engagement. However, to use this example seems to simply stir the emotions of those who fear what might be outside the WELS.

Another weakness of this tract was the thick quoting of the Confessions, but very scant quoting of the Bible. If the purpose of the series, as the title indicates, was to “continue in His Word,” then in a tract focusing on a doctrinal issue (as opposed to the historical background presented in the first two tracts), should there not be a more strictly biblical basis for the arguments?

The next tract, *Antichrist*, presented the doctrine of the Antichrist. “With Luther and the Church of the Reformation the Synodical Conference has always taught that the Pope is the great Antichrist, in whom all the prophecies of Scripture concerning this archenemy of our Savior have been fulfilled; and it has confessed this truth as an article of faith.”³⁴ The pamphlet, after giving a list of where to find the main passages dealing with the doctrine, stated, “Since the space of our tract will not allow a complete analysis, we shall restrict ourselves to only one whorl of those distinguishing marks, the one on which Luther based his conviction.”³⁵ Unfortunately, the bulk of the explanation of the doctrine then focused on Luther and his struggles, rather than directly explaining Scripture.

³⁴ *Antichrist*, Continuing in His Word, Tract Number 9 (Milwaukee, WI: Conference of Presidents of the Evangelical Lutheran Joint Synod of Wisconsin and Other States, 1954), 1.

³⁵ Ibid

A tract explaining Antichrist was certainly viewed as necessary, since the *Common Confession* stated that all signs point to the Pope being Antichrist.³⁶ The phrasing allowed for doubt in the mind of the reader, which also allowed for multiple readings. Once again, Wisconsin called for clarity on the part of Missouri in its dealings with the ALC.

Tract 10 tackled *Prayer Fellowship*. The issue is stated very clearly: “Not only is joint worship impossible, but where there is no common confession of faith, there can be no common prayer, for prayer is a vital exercise of our faith. Before we can agree in prayer, we must agree in the faith which turns our hearts to prayer.”³⁷ It went on to explain how Missouri had violated this principle. However, in a section entitled “Circumstances Vary, Principles Don’t,” in explaining the application of prayer fellowship, the author introduced some confusion:

Now we know that there are devout children of God in all synods who unfortunately are not yet informed regarding the matters in controversy and are not aware of their involvement in error through membership in a heterodox synod. I may have an A.L.C. grandmother who has always manifested a simple, childlike faith in her Lord and Savior, but who nevertheless is unaware of the intersynodical differences and their implications. When I visit her in the privacy of her home, it might be a grave mistake were I to assert the principle of separation by refusing to pray with her under such circumstances. What would the Lord have me do? Should I trouble her simple faith with these matters which are apparently beyond her grasp? Or is it not my plain duty to support and build up her faith by praying with her or otherwise expressing my own faith?³⁸

So, was a layperson expressing fellowship with grandma in this situation? The tract never clearly answered. It did explain that in public situations, it was best to refrain from prayer when it was known that others are outside fellowship, but about private situations it was not as clear. Despite that difficulty, the tract was very clear in explaining what prayer fellowship is and why it is important, both in the Christian’s life, and in the struggle with Missouri. This was one

³⁶ See E. Reim, ed., *The Common Confession and Other Pertinent Documents* (Milwaukee, WI: Northwestern Publishing House, 1951), 48.

³⁷ *Prayer Fellowship*, Continuing in His Word, Tract Number 10 (Milwaukee, WI: Conference of Presidents of the Evangelical Lutheran Joint Synod of Wisconsin and Other States, 1954), 2.

³⁸ *Ibid* 7

of the tracts that could easily be updated and handed out even today to explain the Wisconsin stance on prayer fellowship.

The final tract identified *The Chaplaincy Question*. This was the only tract with footnotes in the entire collection. In feel it was much more scholarly, as if it was an address from a professor to a class, as opposed to the brotherly tone of the previous tracts. For instance, “In this brief study we shall present information and evidence that make clear why our Wisconsin Synod has not entered upon the Government’s military chaplaincy program. Much of the evidence will be given in direct quotations form the Government’s own statements on the military chaplaincy.”³⁹ Despite its more formal tone, the tract did present the issues of unionism and mixture of church and state that the US Chaplaincy program insists upon.

Overall, the tract series was successful in what it intended to do: it informed the laymen of the Wisconsin Synod what was happening in their sister synod. It educated them concerning the doctrines involved. In fact, it did this so well that Wisconsin sent the entire series of tracts to anyone asking information even after the formal split with Missouri in 1961.⁴⁰

While Continuing in His Word certainly reached the congregations of the Wisconsin Synod, reaching those in the Missouri Synod was another matter. Discussing the matter of distributing information across the synodical line was a touchy subject, made so by the botched procedure used to hand out “A Fraternal Word” just a few years earlier.

President Naumann was sure to make it clear that he was keeping protocol when he first broached the topic with Missouri:

In a letter dated November 11, 1953, which I handed you in person on November 12th, the first day of our Inter-Synodical Relations Committee Sessions, I inquired whether you and your Synod would accept copies of a series of tracts which we

³⁹ *The Chaplaincy Question*, Continuing in His Word, Tract Number 11 (Milwaukee, WI: Conference of Presidents of the Evangelical Lutheran Joint Synod of Wisconsin and Other States, 1954), 1.

⁴⁰ For further discussion, see below.

are publishing in keeping with Point 5 of our Milwaukee Resolution. The title of this series of tracts is “Continuing in His Word”. The first two of this series of tracts will be printed shortly and we offer them to you and your Synod in unlimited quantities if you care to receive them for study or distribution. Kindly send me your reply as soon as possible so that I may inform the printer concerning the number of tracts to be prepared.⁴¹

Dr. Behnken replied, “After discussing the matter with some of our Vice-Presidents I would say that we have no objection whatever if you wish to mail these tracts to our clergy.”⁴²

Once the tracts were in their hands, there was much confusion within Missouri, to the point that their Praesidium sent out a letter saying, “A number of our men have asked us for information concerning the following points. To help our pastors keep the record clear, we list the questions and our answers.”⁴³ Among the issues raised was how “Continuing in His Word” made the Missouri Synod appear:

On page 6 of Tract number 2, sent by the Wisconsin Synod to all our pastors, the statement is repeated that Missouri Synod representatives co-operated or co-operate with National Lutheran Council members “in matters admittedly (our emphasis) no longer in the field of externals.” This statement makes it appear as though the Missouri Synod admitted that the matters in which it con-operated with the National Lutheran Council were no longer in externals. This is not a fact. Reference is being made here to a statement which appeared in the “American Lutheran.” The statement is the writer’s own personal statement and by no means the statement of the Missouri Synod; and the “American Lutheran” is not an official voice of the Missouri Synod.⁴⁴

Despite this difficulty, Missouri did in fact distribute Continuing in His Word to all their pastors. However, Missouri then used this as leverage to reply to “A Fraternal Word Examined:” “You will recall that, when you asked for permission to mail tracts into the homes of our pastors

⁴¹ O. J. Naumann, Personal Letter to Dr. John W. Behnken, January 18, 1954, O. J. Naumann Collection, Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary Archives, Mequon, Wisconsin.

⁴² John W. Behnken, Personal Letter to O. J. Naumann, February 5, 1954, O. J. Naumann Collection, Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary Archives, Mequon, Wisconsin.

⁴³ Praesidium of the Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod, public letter to the clergy of the Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod, April 15, 1954, O. J. Naumann Collection, Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary Archives, Mequon, Wisconsin, 1.

⁴⁴ Ibid 5

at one of our meetings in Milwaukee, we readily granted it. I am sure that you will recall also that at the recent meeting in Milwaukee I said: “We shall look for the same consideration.”⁴⁵

After some back and forth letters affirming the permission to send each other’s pastors material, Nuamann gave final permission: “You may send your “Fraternal Reply” to our pastors and teachers, if you wish. I understand that this “Fraternal Reply” is an answer to our series of tracts entitled “Continuing in His Word.” I trust that all who receive them will make a diligent study and comparison of both publications.”⁴⁶

It should be noted that while Continuing in His Word was intended to be read by every layman in the Wisconsin Synod, only called workers were sent the “Fraternal Reply,” once again moving the discussion out of the sight of the laity, unless their pastors chose to share the information with them. At this point, the main sources of information for the laity of the Wisconsin Synod were the *Northwestern Lutheran* and Continuing in His Word, plus whatever information their individual pastors might pass along.⁴⁷

Information on the CLC

Not all Wisconsin members were content with the choice of the Synod to declare *in statu confessionis*. “Upon request of the Redwood Falls Delegate Conference, I was asked to request to you as president an explanation to the expression ‘vigorously protesting fellowship.’”⁴⁸

Naumann’s response is somewhat disconcerting: “Since this is the request of the Conference I

⁴⁵ John Behnken, Personal Letter to O. J. Naumann, May 31, 1954, O. J. Naumann Collection, Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary Archives, Mequon, Wisconsin.

⁴⁶ O. J. Naumann, Personal Letter to John Behnken, July 22, 1954, O. J. Naumann Collection, Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary Archives, Mequon, Wisconsin.

⁴⁷ See discussion below for more information on the efforts of individual ministers.

⁴⁸ L. O. Huebner, Personal Letter to O. J. Naumann, November 25, 1957, O. J. Naumann Collection, Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary Archives, Mequon, Wisconsin.

shall take the liberty of asking that our Union Committee formulate an answer at its meeting next week.”⁴⁹

Though Wisconsin had declared *in statu confessionis* in 1952, in five years it was still not clear on the presidential level what that meant. If pastors requesting information did not receive a clear answer, how could they inform their church councils or other members of their congregations where Wisconsin was in regard to Missouri?

Those who believed Wisconsin should have severed ties with Missouri instead of declaring *in statu confessionis* began severing ties with Wisconsin. These congregations would eventually form the Confessional Lutheran Conference, or the CLC. As congregations began the process of stepping away, laymembers wanted more information. However, even when requests for information were made about why this or that congregation was leaving the WELS, they did not always receive satisfactory answers: “I can share your concern, but want to assure you that the matter is being dealt with.”⁵⁰

Sometimes more information was forthcoming. When asked why a certain pastor had not been listed in the *Northwestern Lutheran* as leaving the synod, President Naumann responded,

The reason the notice was delayed is simply this: President Siegler has been attending many extra meetings with Professor Lawrenz and me in an effort to convince pastors and congregations of the scripturalness of our position. We had hoped to persuade some to reconsider, others to hold off any withdrawal action. President Siegler has also been extremely busy with many duties.

No, the Synod has not withheld publishing the names because of a feeling of shame. You can clear the minds of those who suggest this quite promptly. We regret that so many have left and that so many gifted, trained, and experienced

⁴⁹ O. J. Naumann, Personal Letter to L. O. Huebner, December 9, 1957, O. J. Naumann Collection, Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary Archives, Mequon, Wisconsin.

⁵⁰ O. E. Sohn, Personal Letter to “Mrs. Martin,” February 24, 1960, O. J. Naumann Collection, Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary Archives, Mequon, Wisconsin.

pastors and teachers are no longer active in the Gospel ministry, especially in the face of the present shortage of workers.⁵¹

However, as time went on, Synodical officials began to be more open with information.

At times they were forced to correct misinformation they felt was being spread by those who had left Wisconsin. One man asked,

About one month ago, I had the privilege of reading a 27 page pamphlet from St. Paul's Evangelical Lutheran Church in Austin, Minnesota, entitled "A Statement of our Reasons for Separating Ourselves from the Wisconsin Synod and the Synodical Conference." After reading this, I can see why 40 pastors, 4 professors, 4 teachers and 8 congregations have left Wisconsin since September 28, 1958, and I have reason to believe all of them have not been mentioned in our Northwestern Lutheran [sic].⁵²

In response, Naumann wrote,

Not only the Austin pamphlet "A Statement of our Reasons..." but other similar papers have distorted [sic] my report to the 1955 Saginaw convention. If you tear sentences out of context, you can make a group of such disjointed quotations prove whatever you will. I would advise you to secure a copy of the 1955 Proceedings and to read the entire report. Then you will be in a position to see how unfair has been the use of only a portion of the report.⁵³

Others pleaded for simple information: "If you are privileged to tell me why the Rev.

Paul Nolting, Sleepy Eye, severed his connection with the Wisconsin Synod I would appreciate it very much and keep it in strictest confidence. If you please – and thank you!"⁵⁴

Naumann was much more forthcoming in this letter:

To answer your question very briefly, I would say that Pastor Nolting charged our Synod with disobedience to the Word of God, especially Romans 16:17-18, for not having terminated our fellowship with the Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod. He felt that he would become guilty of the same sin if he continued in fellowship with us. We, on the other hand, were convinced that we had a piece of

⁵¹ O. J. Naumann, Personal Letter to Mrs. Sylvester Huck, July 6, 1960, O. J. Naumann Collection, Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary Archives, Mequon, Wisconsin.

⁵² Albert L. Althoff, Personal Letter to O. J. Naumann, May 4, 1961, O. J. Naumann Collection, Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary Archives, Mequon, Wisconsin.

⁵³ O. J. Naumann, Personal Letter to Albert Althoff, May 10, 1961, O. J. Naumann Collection, Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary Archives, Mequon, Wisconsin.

⁵⁴ Armin G. Mueller, Personal Letter to O. J. Naumann, May 5, 1961, O. J. Naumann Collection, Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary Archives, Mequon, Wisconsin.

admonitory testimony to bring to an orderly conclusion. In other words, we still had a debt of love to pay.⁵⁵

During these years, though, Wisconsin never released any official information concerning those who left outside of the *Northwestern Lutheran*, and most of that was simply the report that Pastor X was leaving the synod for doctrinal reasons.

A representative of the Evangelical Lutheran Synod sent a letter asking, “It would be interesting and helpful to look into the answers which the Wisconsin Synod has given to the charges of the CLC. Is there some pertinent material on this matter available?”⁵⁶

President Naumann responded, “We did not draw up a formal evaluation of the CLC’s position on Fellowship.”⁵⁷

This became more and more a theme as the years continued: The Wisconsin Synod ceased publishing formal materials outside the *Northwestern Lutheran* addressing the concerns of the laity when it came to Missouri and related matters. Rather, Wisconsin would rely on older material without updating information within it to address current concerns. That time had not yet fully come, though. Wisconsin braced for the 1961 Convention, which would decide the matter of fellowship with Missouri, by releasing more pamphlets for the laity.

⁵⁵ O. J. Naumann, Personal Letter to Emil Block, May 11, 1961, O. J. Naumann Collection, Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary Archives, Mequon, Wisconsin.

⁵⁶ T. Aaberg, Personal Letter to O. J. Naumann, January 17, 1962, O. J. Naumann Collection, Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary Archives, Mequon, Wisconsin.

⁵⁷ O. J. Naumann, Personal Letter to T. Aaberg, February 2, 1962, O. J. Naumann Collection, Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary Archives, Mequon, Wisconsin.

Preparing for and Following 1961

Following the release of *Continuing in His Word*, the *Northwestern Lutheran* remained the chief outlet for information from the Synod to the laity. A series of articles kept people informed.

“The voice of the C.U.C.”⁵⁸ wanted to prepare the readers of the *Northwestern Lutheran* as much as possible for the action of the 1956 convention, and it did so by presenting a wide variety of information related to the issue at hand. The series made clear to the reader that the differences and problems were in fact real and serious, serious enough to break doctrinal unity and thus church fellowship. By examining the problems with the new Missouri Synod positions on Scouting, prayer fellowship, chaplaincy and other issues, “The Voice of the C.U.C.” showed its readers exactly why such serious action was necessary.⁵⁹

If a laymember had been a faithful reader of the *Northwestern Lutheran*, there would be little they would not know at that point. “The *Northwestern Lutheran* presented so much information on union and fellowship issues between the 1955 and 1956 conventions that the faithful reader certainly would have been thoroughly informed and prepared if the 1956 convention decided to uphold the termination of fellowship resolved in 1955.”⁶⁰ Not every lay member who would be affected read the *Northwestern Lutheran*, though.

The 1955 and 1956 conventions came and went, and Wisconsin decided to delay severing ties with Missouri, hoping that Missouri would heed Wisconsin’s warning and cease their unionistic activities. Therefore, as the 1961 convention approached, leaders of the Wisconsin Synod knew they would have to present more information to the laity. They would have to aid pastors in speaking to their congregations about the issues. To that end, a new series of pamphlets was produced.

⁵⁸ The C.U. C. was the Church Union Committee. “The Voice of the C.U.C.” was a series of articles published in the *Northwestern Lutheran*.

⁵⁹ Wright 44-5

⁶⁰ Ibid 46

The first pamphlet was entitled *Church Fellowship* and served as a presentation of purely doctrinal matters. The book began with an outline presentation of the doctrine of fellowship.

The opening line could hardly be clearer: “Church fellowship is every joint expression, manifestation, and demonstration of the common faith in which Christians on the basis of their confession find themselves to be united with one another.”⁶¹

The booklet attempts to explain the unit concept of fellowship to lay readers.

From all this we see that in the matter of the outward expression of Christian fellowship, the exercise of church fellowship, particularly two Christian principles need to direct us, the great debt of love which the Lord would have us pay to the weak brother, and His clear injunction (also flowing out of love) to avoid those who adhere to false doctrine and practice and all who make themselves partakers of their evil deeds.⁶²

For this first part, no Scripture verses were quoted, but many were referenced in lists following each point. The entire presentation was very scholarly and assumed a good deal of previous knowledge. After four pages of this format, the pamphlet switched to a prose presentation, commenting on the previous outline and explaining it. Though this section was certainly more readable, long paragraphs, scholarly language, and few illustrations still made for dense reading. Though the booklet was meant for use among the laity, it felt more like a reference work.

The booklet does address some common concerns the laity had and still have to this day. If a person refuses to pray with another Christian, doesn't that judge the other person's faith? Not so, as explained by the pamphlet:

It would be presumptuous on our part to try to recognize Christians on the basis of the personal faith in their hearts. “Man looketh on the outward appearance, but the Lord looketh on the heart” (I Sam. 16:7). Since we cannot probe the heart, God would have us deal with men on the basis of the confession that they make

⁶¹ Wisconsin Synod Commission on Doctrinal Matters, *Church Fellowship* (Milwaukee, WI: Northwestern Publishing House, 1960), 3.

⁶² Ibid 5

concerning the attitude of the heart. Paul says: Rom. 10:10: "For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation." We are to accept every confession of faith as a sincere expression of the real attitude of the heart.⁶³

The pamphlet is also frank when discussing the Missouri Synod.

When the study of our Wisconsin Synod presentation was finished in the April 1959 meeting of the Joint Doctrinal Unity Committees, members of the Missouri Synod committee admitted that if all the points of our presentation stood as being fully Scriptural, they would have to change their practice on various points. We therefore asked the Missouri Synod Doctrinal Unity Committee to give us the points, if any, in writing on which they disagreed with our presentation and the Scriptural basis for such disagreement. In the May 1960 meeting of the Joint Doctrinal Unity committees such a Missouri Synod presentation, setting forth the points on which the convictions of its Doctrinal Unity Committee are at variance with those set forth in our own Synod's presentation, was at hand and could be discussed. As a result of this discussion our Commission on Doctrinal Matters felt constrained to declare that an impasse exists between the two synods in the matter of fellowship principles.⁶⁴

Thus the pamphlet showed not only the scriptural basis for Wisconsin's stance concerning fellowship, but also accused Missouri of ignoring Scripture; in fact, of being persistent errorists. Those laymen who could wade past the first few pages of technical language to the prose explanations would learn much. However, those who were not reading the *Northwestern Lutheran* would find much of the text of this pamphlet difficult to read. Something more would have to be released to the public.

In 1961, before the Wisconsin Synod convention that would determine to make a formal declaration of dissolution of fellowship, Wisconsin released another pamphlet that would make the case against Missouri. *Fellowship Then and Now* addressed the doctrine of fellowship yet again, but unlike the previous booklet, *Church Fellowship*, this booklet was broken up into easy to read, conversational articles. These articles were reprints from the *Northwestern Lutheran*.

⁶³ Ibid 19

⁶⁴ Ibid 7, 8

The purpose of this series of articles is to state very concisely, first of all, the two conflicting positions on church fellowship involved in the present impasse, and then to show at length that in its position on fellowship our Wisconsin Synod Commission on Doctrinal Matters is merely restating the historical Scriptural principles of church fellowship which have been jointly held in our Lutheran synods both before and since the founding of the Synodical Conference.⁶⁵

The series of articles outlined not only the foundations for the doctrine of fellowship, but presented evidence that Missouri was the synod who had changed their position, not Wisconsin. “In view of the fact that for many decades there was complete agreement on fellowship within the Synodical Conference and so also between us and the Missouri Synod, it is obvious that somewhere a change has taken place. Otherwise we should still be agreed.”⁶⁶

The booklet repeated many of the points from “Church Fellowship,” but in a much more conversational tone: “Bear with, instruct the weak; avoid the persistent errorist—these were the *only* principles of fellowship our fathers in the Synodical Conference had learned from the Scriptures, principles applicable to *all* expressions of fellowship.”⁶⁷ Once again, though, love was stressed. “Even to enemies you owe *charity* and *peace*. But *Christian fellowship* could not be accorded.”⁶⁸

Between *Fellowship Then and Now* and *Church Fellowship* no interested person in the Wisconsin Synod would have the excuse of not knowing the issues. One booklet was conversational and broken into short chunks; for those interested in digging deeper, the other was available. Wisconsin did its best to present the material.

⁶⁵ Gerald Hoenecke, John P. Meyer, and Armin W. Schuetze, *Fellowship Then and Now* (Milwaukee: Northwestern Publishing House, 1960), 4. Emphasis in the original.

⁶⁶ Ibid 6

⁶⁷ Ibid 16

⁶⁸ Ibid 29

After the break in fellowship, Wisconsin continued to produce two more pamphlets that would explain why the break occurred.

Entrenched Unionistic Practices presented reprints of material from the *Northwestern Lutheran*. Wisconsin wanted to highlight these articles, which outlined many of the ways in which Missouri leaders had set aside sound doctrinal practice in the effort to join with others who were not in their fellowship. The preface to the pamphlet reads,

This series of articles is designed to meet a need. It is meant for all individuals and groups who desire more information as to what led the Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod to sever fellowship relations with The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod.

There are two reasons—closely related reasons—why such additional information is desirable and necessary. In 1956, the Synodical Conference asked for the creation of a joint intersynodical committee to discuss doctrinal matters. Our Wisconsin Synod agreed to this step, in another effort to remove the differences which threatened our fellowship with The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod. The same Synodical Conference convention also asked the member bodies of the Synodical Conference to exercise restraint in their churchpapers as to publishing material that would point out and expose objectionable trends and practices in a member body. The thought was that the exercise of such restraint would create a better atmosphere for the discussions in the committee meetings. Willing to do everything toward the success of these discussions, our Commission on Doctrinal matters complied with this request. It was also agreed to set aside sufficient time at each meeting for a consideration of incidents and developments which were troubling the fellowship waters. As a result, our churchpapers did not carry as much information on these matters as they would have normally.

Now the second, related reason. In the resolution terminating fellowship with the Missouri Synod it was impossible to mention many details. The points at issue had to be stated very concisely. Therefore these articles, which have appeared serially in *The Northwestern Lutheran*, were written to acquaint any interested person or group more fully regarding the unionistic, un-Scriptural practice with which we charged The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod. For that reason, too, it was decided to make the articles available in booklet form.

In offering these articles to you, we ask you to read them in the spirit of the following resolution adopted by the convention of our Synod: “We are not passing judgment on the personal faith of any individual member of The Lutheran

Church—Missouri Synod, but ... we are addressing a stern admonition required by love to The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod as a corporate body” [Proceedings 1961, p. 199, Resolved, c)]⁶⁹

Many had accused Wisconsin of pride and partisanship when the troubles with Missouri were made public. The articles collected in this booklet made it clear that there was no animosity intended, and a great deal of humility involved in Wisconsin’s call to Missouri to repent.

The Missouri Synod with which we were in closest fellowship so many years and which includes so many friends and relatives near and dear to us, has fallen upon evil days. With its new position on church fellowship the Missouri Synod will not be able to withstand the tide of indifference and false doctrine that is bound to follow. How it behooves us to pray for the membership of this synod which once spoke so clearly against false doctrine and for the truth! And how urgently we too are in need of God’s grace and mercy, lest we likewise lose the heritage once delivered to us by the fathers!⁷⁰

The booklet steps through many of Missouri’s unionistic practices, from participating in the National Lutheran Educational Conference,⁷¹ to meeting with the National Lutheran Council,⁷² to cooperation in the training of future pastors,⁷³ to tolerating unionistic activity by individuals.⁷⁴ After the presentation of the evidence, the booklet concludes by saying,

The action of our Synod in suspending the practice of fellowship with The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod did not come like a bolt out of the blue and break up the relation between two bodies who were completely one in doctrine, but only established a fact that had been becoming increasingly evident: that we were no longer united in the doctrine of church fellowship as once we were, but that the Missouri Synod had left what had once been common ground and that, therefore, we had no right to continue to practice fellowship.⁷⁵

⁶⁹ Commission on Doctrinal Matters, *Entrenched Unionistic Practices* (Milwaukee, WI: Northwestern Publishing House, 1961), 2.

⁷⁰ Ibid 7

⁷¹ Ibid 3

⁷² Ibid 5

⁷³ Ibid 14

⁷⁴ Ibid 20

⁷⁵ Ibid 24

Even after understanding the doctrines involved, though, many lay people (and pastors!) had practical questions. Now that Missouri and Wisconsin were no longer in fellowship, what were the implications? In 1962, Wisconsin released a pamphlet entitled *Timely Topics* collecting articles by Armin Schuetze that had been published in the *Northwestern Lutheran*.

The booklet answered five questions:

1. May we pray at table with people not of the Wisconsin Synod?
2. What is meant by “serve their own belly” in Romans 16:18?
3. Is the Synod resolution binding on all congregations?
4. Is the “avoid them” of Romans 16:17 the same as excommunication?
5. Does Matthew 7:1 prohibit all judging?

The articles are written in a conversational tone and communicate a down-to-earth love and concern for the average layman. For instance, when answering whether or not a Wisconsin Synod member could pray with a Missouri Synod member, Schuetze answered, “There is no reason for a Christian to abandon prayer and family devotion when others of another faith are present with him at his table. It is his home, and he will proceed with prayer and devotion as he does when no guests are present.”⁷⁶

Schuetze also explains fully and in a practical way the various fellowship issues involved. Where previous Wisconsin publications may have left a fog in the layman’s eyes, these statements were clear with plenty of examples.

We see then that Scripture does not give an absolute *yes* or an absolute *no* as the answer to our question. And it does not set up a detailed set of rules that tells you exactly what you must do under every circumstance. But it does give the principles that are to guide you; it does say that you are to take note of the confession of those who come to you and want to be acknowledged as fellow Christians. If that confession shows them to be persistent errorists, you are to avoid joint expressions of faith with them. If that confession shows them to be brethren, in some cases still weak brethren (and in private relations a personal confession may reveal him to be that in spite of doubtful church connections), you may engage in joint expressions of faith for your mutual encouragement.⁷⁷

⁷⁶ Armin Schuetze, *Timely Topics*, (Northwestern Publishing House: 1961), 5.

⁷⁷ *Ibid* 7

In the break, many laymen were worried. They may have strongly disagreed with Wisconsin. They may have said that perhaps there were some errorists in Missouri, but the people they knew were good and faithful Christians. Couldn't they object to Wisconsin's declaration of dissolved fellowship and stay in fellowship with both groups? Shuetze answers:

If I am in disagreement with a brother, I need to discuss that disagreement with him. If a congregation is in disagreement with any action the Synod takes, and that is all the more true of an action which the Synod says it must take in applying the Word of God, then they shall need to discuss this with their brethren. They should ask themselves Did my brethren who acted at the convention have information that I have not received, that I perhaps did not take note of, which led them to the decision they made [sic]? Our Synod has recognized that there may be those who seek such added information. For that reason several years ago it established a Study Committee, which is willing to discuss these matters with any individual or congregation. Arrangements to meet with this committee may be made through the District president. Only if a congregation, after having received full information, is convinced that the action of the Synod is sinful, may it declare its refusal to follow the resolution.⁷⁸

Schuetze also gives comfort to those who fear that by declaring Missouri to no longer be in fellowship with Wisconsin, the WELS was condemning them as unbelievers.

How then are we to look upon Lutherans that are not members of a synod with whom we are in fellowship? We do not pass judgment upon their personal faith. We do not deny the presence of many sincere Christians in these bodies. But the errors in the bodies with which they are associated do not permit us to practice religious fellowship with them. Although we will rejoice over whatever Gospel preaching is done and heard in their midst, their errors do not permit us, according to Scripture, to join in worship and church work with them as Christian brethren. But we look forward with longing to the day when Christ will gather all His own from everywhere to the perfect fellowship that shall be enjoyed with Him and with all the fellow redeemed in heaven, throughout eternity.⁷⁹

So doctrine and practice is to be judged. Error is to be rejected and condemned. The errorist is to be avoided. That is the will of God. But let it all proceed from a spirit of love for the truth and for the salvation of souls. Let it proceed from a humble spirit that recognizes its own weaknesses yet finds strength from the Word of God to resist error.⁸⁰

⁷⁸ Ibid 11

⁷⁹ Ibid 14

⁸⁰ Ibid 15

These last four pamphlets were the final synod-wide word from Wisconsin about the break for many years. Outside a few scant articles in the *Northwestern Lutheran*, the synod was silent. Questions, though, continued for many years. The press had stirred up the people, even beyond what they may have been otherwise.

What Shall be Made Public?

From the very beginning, the synods were in discussion about how much of their ongoing problems should be made public. In 1953, the Chicago Study Club sent a letter to the synods' presidents concerning a meeting of officials from both synods to discuss the issues. They requested, "The group resolved to request that the meeting be open to interested members of the synods as auditors... We believe the reason for our request is apparent. In the present situation which so seriously affects our fellowship we are very much concerned to have first-hand information on the nature and progress of discussions."⁸¹

Missouri President Behnken declined the request: "We are of the opinion that this meeting should not be open to visitors. The [original plan] which was made and accepted to get together an equal number of officials and discuss the differences in this smaller group. This will enable the men to speak more freely."⁸²

⁸¹ F. E. Bartling, Personal Letter to John Behnken, December 10, 1953, O. J. Naumann Collection, Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary Archives, Mequon, Wisconsin.

⁸² John Behnken, Personal Letter to O. J. Naumann, January 5, 1954, O. J. Naumann Collection, Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary Archives, Mequon, Wisconsin.

Conferring with Behnken, Wisconsin President Naumann agreed, with the caveat that in the future it might be advisable to have such open meetings.⁸³

Both synods struggled with what would be considered a vicious attack or what would simply be a plain telling of the truth. When *The Northwestern Lutheran* published an article that quoted Missouri Synod father August Pieper as being opposed to the military chaplaincy, which Missouri had been promoting in the 1950's, some questioned if this would count as an unwarranted public attack.

In a letter to WELS President Naumann, LCMS First Vice-President Arnold Grumm reminded him of a previous agreement among the Synodical Conference to “refrain from hindering the work of the [union committees] by unwarranted public attacks.”⁸⁴ He then suggests, “It would seem to me to be the proper thing to do to call the attention of our editors to this directive and ask them to cooperate.”⁸⁵

In response, Naumann replied that he did not understand what in the article could be classified as an unwarranted public attack. “We require of our editors that they speak the truth in love and as Christian gentlemen, but we can certainly not forbid them to speak the truth. Where would our witnessing for Christ remain, if we were to maintain strict silence on all these controversial matters?”⁸⁶ He then predicts what Grumm might then object to next: that Wisconsin would dare to publicly decry the chaplaincy is offensive to Missouri Synod members, and thus could be considered an unwarranted public attack. “Your publications supporting and glorifying the military chaplaincy are offensive to our members. You would certainly be

⁸³ O. J. Naumann, Personal Letter to John Behnken, January 8, 1954, O. J. Naumann Collection, Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary Archives, Mequon, Wisconsin.

⁸⁴ Arnold Grumm, Personal Letter to O. J. Naumann, February 11, 1957, O. J. Naumann Collection, Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary Archives, Mequon, Wisconsin.

⁸⁵ Ibid

⁸⁶ O. J. Naumann, Personal Letter to Arnold Grumm, February 28, 1957, O. J. Naumann Collection, Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary Archives, Mequon, Wisconsin.

required to cease publishing such articles ‘pro’ if you require that we maintain silence ‘con’. Are you willing to suspend publication of ‘The Chaplain’?”⁸⁷

Grumm answered that he did not intend to call the article in question a bristling attack. “What I was seeking to do was to emphasize the need to comply with the resolutions of the Synodical Conference and avoid possible bristling attacks. I know that if one synod sets up an article on the Chaplaincy and the other synod answers, we could soon have bristling attacks and would be doing what the Synodical Conference urged us not to do at this time.”⁸⁸ In this letter, Grumm did not answer Naumann’s assertion that the regularly published paper from Missouri, *The Chaplain*, was offensive to Wisconsin members.

In a later letter, Grumm offered what he believed to be a suitable compromise:

If we could have a friendly answer to [the article] appear in your paper and in the Sentinel, I believe we could definitely say that the Synodical Conference resolution was not being ignored but that in this case at least an endeavor was being made to “create an atmosphere amenable to the spirit of harmony.” At least our people would not find that we had made an “unwarranted public attack” in our church papers on our sister synods at this time.”⁸⁹

Naumann responded, “I do not think... that it will solve the problem to open the pages of our respective church papers for rebuttal after we have given testimony to what we are convinced is the truth. We would in this fashion not be teaching and edifying our members... but would be confusing them.”⁹⁰

After meeting with the Standing Committee on Matters of Church Union, Naumann sent another letter affirming his previous stance. He also reported that this committee did not find the article in question to be an unwarranted public attack. Of course, he had consulted Wisconsin

⁸⁷ Ibid

⁸⁸ Arnold Grumm, Personal Letter to O. J. Naumann, March 5, 1957, O. J. Naumann Collection, Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary Archives, Mequon, Wisconsin.

⁸⁹ Arnold Grumm, Personal Letter to O. J. Naumann, March 19, 1957, O. J. Naumann Collection, Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary Archives, Mequon, Wisconsin.

⁹⁰ O. J. Naumann, Personal Letter to Arnold Grumm, March 24, 1957, O. J. Naumann Collection, Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary Archives, Mequon, Wisconsin.

men and not Missouri men. He concludes his letter by stating, “If we have spoken falsehood or been unbrotherly and loveless in our statements, we stand ready upon conviction from God’s Word to publish our own retraction.”⁹¹

Grumm sent a final letter on the issue.

It seems to me that much testimony has been given on both sides through our official publication concerning the chaplaincy, Boy Scouts, etc. In both Synods our people should be rather well informed on the issues. Let’s make an earnest effort, led by the Spirit of God, to resolve these issues. That, according to my conviction, was what was decided at our last Synodical Conference meeting in the fear of God. To that end, somewhere along the line, perhaps at the meeting of our joint committees, we could come to a clearer understanding of what constitutes “unwarranted public attacks” as referred to by the Synodical Conference.⁹²

This seems to be a close to the immediate issue, but both synods struggled with what to make public. What constituted an “unwarranted public attack?” What might be a simple statement of truth to Wisconsin may be a vicious attack to Missouri, and vice versa. Trying to find a way to both inform the respective church bodies of what was happening and do it in a way that did not attack the sister synod was a delicate balancing act.

The matter of unwarranted public attacks flared up again in late 1958. Naumann explains in a letter to LCMS Seminary President Arnold Grumm:

You are well aware of the article in the November 1957 issue of the Lutheran Chaplain, in which Dr. Martin Scharlemann in his column, entitled “Vapor Trails,” ridicules our Wisconsin Synod convictions regarding the military chaplaincy as now constituted. Since this article appeared in public print in an official publication of a department of your Synod, we considered it entirely proper that we ask you as President of the Synod to deal in the matter and to institute corrective actions. I recall distinctly how incensed the members of the Joint Union Committees became when this article was brought to their attention.⁹³

⁹¹ O. J. Naumann, Personal Letter to Arnold Grumm, March 30, 1957, O. J. Naumann Collection, Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary Archives, Mequon, Wisconsin.

⁹² Arnold Grumm, Personal Letter to O. J. Naumann, April 4, 1957, O. J. Naumann Collection, Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary Archives, Mequon, Wisconsin.

⁹³ O. J. Naumann, Personal Letter to John Behnken, December 1, 1958, O. J. Naumann Collection, Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary Archives, Mequon, Wisconsin. This entire exchange may be read in Appendix 1.

Remember, the purpose of curtailing anything that might be considered a public attack was to aid the union committees in bringing the synods back together again. Because the article in question truly did rile them, this was a case where a line had been crossed. The fact that laymen could read the article in question in a public magazine only made the matter worse.

Scharlemann, the offending article writer and LCMS Seminary professor, sent a letter to Naumann. This initial letter did not help matters any further. “At first I thought of returning [Naumann’s letter] as being unworthy of a Lutheran pastor. However, I am keeping it as an exhibit to show people what kind of mentality we have to work with in our dealings with your Synod.”⁹⁴

Scharlemann soon sent another letter after authorities in Missouri spoke privately with him. “I am writing this, therefore, to offer my apologies for both the tone and content of my letter. Furthermore, I finally discovered why my remarks in *The Lutheran Chaplain* regarding your Synod’s view of the chaplaincy would cause such difficulties for you and others who are working seriously at a somewhat better understanding between Wisconsin and Missouri.”⁹⁵

President Naumann accepted Scharlemann’s apology but followed up with a warning: “I wish, also, again to state that it is never in place to joke or poke fun about anyone’s religious convictions and principles.”⁹⁶

Scharlemann spoke once more to this point: “This, of course, works both ways. This principle would also apply to your church which has not only poked fun but actually maligned

⁹⁴ Martin Scharlemann, Personal Letter to O. J. Naumann, December 10, 1958, O. J. Naumann Collection, Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary Archives, Mequon, Wisconsin. It is worth noting that Scharlemann was a professor at Concordia Seminary in St. Louis and would soon be causing further trouble when he began to teach that the Bible, though God’s Word, had errors in it.

⁹⁵ Martin Scharlemann, Personal Letter to O. J. Naumann, December 20, 1958, O. J. Naumann Collection, Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary Archives, Mequon, Wisconsin.

⁹⁶ O. J. Naumann, Personal Letter to Martin Scharlemann, January 12, 1959, O. J. Naumann Collection, Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary Archives, Mequon, Wisconsin.

those of us who have been in the chaplaincy. This to my mind is a much more serious matter than poking fun. If this point has been made, I shall be very happy.”⁹⁷

The entire exchange shows with what seriousness both synods took what was viewed publicly by the laity. The surface concern, a mocking article by a single professor, was triggered by a deeper issue: the fact that this professor felt maligned by every article Wisconsin published that condemned the Missouri chaplaincy. He did not want to see such articles printed, so he resorted to mockery to show what he thought of Wisconsin’s position.

Discussions behind closed doors concerning the synodical publications were contentious. Problems also surfaced when the secular press wanted to find out more about the issues that were now dividing Wisconsin and Missouri.

Some reporters wanted information about the background of the issues. Wisconsin endeavored to deliver accurate information to such reporters. On at least one occasion Naumann sent the entire “Continuing in His Word” tract series to a reporter.⁹⁸ At other times, because of the fickleness of the mail and Naumann’s absences from his office due to visiting various parts of the world, reporters went without source material.⁹⁹

The laity noticed that the press did not generally paint a flattering picture of Wisconsin.

And finally, our convention failed a bit in Public Relations... President Eisenhower has a press secretary, who gives for publication only authorized materials... I was under the impression that we had the same, and that this was the intent of the resolution on press releases... A few days ago I met a former member of my parish, now living in Florida. He told me that he had read in the papers there “how Wisconsin was attacking Missouri”.... The AP report had the entire matter garbled.... Our local Sturgis paper also picked up some whopping

⁹⁷ Martin Scharlemann, Personal Letter to O. J. Naumann, February 10, 1959, O. J. Naumann Collection, Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary Archives, Mequon, Wisconsin.

⁹⁸ O. J. Naumann, Personal Letter to Harold Entwistle, June 18, 1954, O. J. Naumann Collection, Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary Archives, Mequon, Wisconsin.

⁹⁹ O. J. Naumann, Personal Letter to Geroge Cornell, August 4, 1955, O. J. Naumann Collection, Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary Archives, Mequon, Wisconsin.

inaccuracies from the Saginaw wire service.....[sic] So I do wish you would discuss with the Praesidium the matter of press releases and public relations.¹⁰⁰

Naumann responded by saying that the Press Committee would be writing official press releases from now on, but that would not likely help matters.

Bar reporters [sic] and you are really inviting a hostile attitude of the press. Sad to say “freedom of speech” brings with it a measure of unaccountability. The press fears neither God nor the devil. We must realize that we cannot believe all that we read in the papers. But you can rest assured that we will do what we can to give out factual and constructive releases.¹⁰¹

The press in general did not help Wisconsin synod members understand what was happening. They reported the *what* of events, but when they reported the *why* they often failed to present matters well. A Wisconsin synod member opening the Milwaukee Journal after the split might have been shocked by what he read and turned to his pastor to explain. Did the synod give any help to pastors to speak to their congregations about this monumental task?

What Do I Tell Them?

From the moment the Wisconsin Synod started dealing publicly with Missouri, pastors knew they had to inform their people what was happening. It would not be loving for the synod to take action without the knowledge of the laypeople whom it served. Many pastors requested information from the Synod that they could share with their members.

President Naumann’s nephew, Bertran Naumann, made a note that at that time there appeared to be no one in the “driver’s seat” at the synodical level to disseminate information in an orderly way: “I am very conscious of both my youth and name when my people ask me about

¹⁰⁰ H. Walther, Personal Letter to O. J. Naumann, September 15, 1959, O. J. Naumann Collection, Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary Archives, Mequon, Wisconsin.

¹⁰¹ O. J. Naumann, Personal Letter to H. Walther, July 21, 1961, O. J. Naumann Collection, Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary Archives, Mequon, Wisconsin.

negotiations between the synods. ... For the present, there seems to be no voice of leadership for our laymen or our young pastors to follow or consider amidst the confusion.”¹⁰²

Wisconsin did offer information in the form of Visitors. Informed pastors would visit churches that requested their presence to speak to the congregation, explaining what was happening in Missouri. President Naumann himself offered to visit congregations and often did.¹⁰³

Despite Wisconsin’s various publication and visitation efforts, pastors wanted more information to give to their congregations, particularly after the official split in 1961. One pastor wrote:

I was not able to remain until the end of the last day’s session. For that reason, I do not know whether or not Synod decided on some way in which to notify the congregations of the action taken by Synod in regard to the Missouri Synod. Will the matter of procedure as far as presenting what has taken place at our convention be left up to the individual pastors or will the Commission on Doctrinal matters [sic] or some other agency in Synod suggest to the pastors of Synod how this matter might be presented to individual congregations. [sic]¹⁰⁴

Pastor Naumann responded:

We have not prepared an official agenda or format for the pastors to use in informing their members of Synod’s action. It would be well that they study the resolutions carefully in light of all that was furnished in the Book of Reports and Memorials and then present the matter calmly and carefully.

Let us also emphasize that we are not questioning the personal faith or the Christianity of any member of the Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod. We are taking issue with official doctrinal positions and officially supported practice.¹⁰⁵

¹⁰² Bertram Naumann, Personal Letter to O. J. Naumann, July 24, 1957, O. J. Naumann Collection, Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary Archives, Mequon, Wisconsin.

¹⁰³ For example, see Adolph C. Buenger, Personal Letter to O. J. Naumann, July 28, 1960, and G. P. Kionka, Personal Letter to O. J. Naumann, October 23, 1961, both in the O. J. Naumann Collection, Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary Archives, Mequon, Wisconsin.

¹⁰⁴ E. Biebert, Personal Letter to O. J. Naumann, August 20, 1961, O. J. Naumann Collection, Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary Archives, Mequon, Wisconsin.

¹⁰⁵ O. J. Naumann, Personal Letter to E. Biebert, August 22, 1961, O. J. Naumann Collection, Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary Archives, Mequon, Wisconsin.

Synod never produced a single document for pastors to help their congregations. Instead, Wisconsin suggested that pastors study the official resolutions. In this way, Wisconsin left individual pastors the task of gathering and disseminating their own information. However, every male called worker did receive copies of the official resolutions: “In a few days you will be receiving an official copy of the resolutions on Church Union Matters adopted at our convention last week. They are being mailed to all pastors, male teachers, and to the emeriti in our Synod.”¹⁰⁶

Some pastors did note that the lack of further communications from the synodical level had some dire consequences. Even President Naumann noted that at least some of the congregations who reacted to the separation from Missouri by leaving Wisconsin were likely doing so due to a lack of information.

I am sorry that I must report that three congregations have withdrawn from us because of the stand we have taken. I fear, however, that these congregations were not given a complete picture of the situation as was our convention this summer. In none of the three cases did the pastor to my knowledge invite his district officials or a member of our Commission on doctrinal matters to meet with his people.¹⁰⁷

While some acted without knowledge, other pastors cried out for more official publications, preferably ones that would wrap up the whole matter under one cover. They wanted help from synodical officials in speaking to their members. Even when pastors were well informed, they wanted a “final word” from Synod.

The laymen are becoming more confused than ever and I want to be ready to give a true and full answer to nay [sic] who may question me about this matter. May I, therefore, ask you to give me your considered opinion as to 1) What led to the break, and, 2) What was the final straw? While I may and do know the answers

¹⁰⁶ O. J. Naumann, Personal Letter to A. Bartz, August 22, 1961, O. J. Naumann Collection, Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary Archives, Mequon, Wisconsin.

¹⁰⁷ O. J. Naumann, Personal Letter to Gottfried Naumann, November 8, 1961, O. J. Naumann Collection, Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary Archives, Mequon, Wisconsin.

in part, I want to be sure. Since I have asked the questions, do not hesitate to answer in any way you deem adequate.¹⁰⁸

Another pastor wrote with similar considerations:

We feel this matter must be brought to a definite conclusion because of the offense involved, and we would appreciate receiving some “counsel and guidance” from the Study Committee. This matter may seem to be so clear that no guidance should be needed, but perhaps the Study Committee can at least give some information as to what is being done in other areas of the Synod in similar situations. It is also an offense if there is inconsistency in practice on the part of the various Wisconsin Synod congregations.¹⁰⁹

President Naumann offered much in the way of advice and answers in personal letters, but all too often the answer would come: deal with matters and educate your congregation in the manner in which you see fit. If you want more help, contact your district pastor. The Wisconsin Synod will not deal with this in a top-down manner. “We feel that each congregation and pastor must deal in the matter according to their best judgment on the basis of their knowledge of the facts of the case. Your circuit visitor and district president are, of course, also ready to consider the matter with you.”¹¹⁰

Two years later a pall of ignorance still hung over many Wisconsin congregations. At least for WELS officials, the blame lay at the feet of the local minister:

I wish other pastors would inform their congregations on the issues and give them the needed instruction in the Word to see that these actions were taken in the fear of God and in accordance with His will as revealed to us in Scripture. This would also help the members to confess their faith and their convictions before men. I fear that some pastors leave their members in the position where they cannot do much more than shrug their shoulders when asked and say “I don’t know. It’s the position of our Synod!”

¹⁰⁸ Walter Halls, Personal Letter to O. J. Naumann, October 28, 1961, O. J. Naumann Collection, Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary Archives, Mequon, Wisconsin.

¹⁰⁹ William Krueger, Personal Letter to O. J. Naumann, September 5, 1962, O. J. Naumann Collection, Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary Archives, Mequon, Wisconsin.

¹¹⁰ O. J. Naumann, Personal Letter to William Krueger, September 21, 1962, O. J. Naumann Collection, Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary Archives, Mequon, Wisconsin.

What can readily be done was demonstrated by another congregation, also. A young pastor, a recent candidate has been serving them only a short time, but the congregation now knows where they stand. Under their previous pastor, who has now accepted a call to Missouri, they protested our 1961 Resolutions. Under their new pastor, they have withdrawn that protest and support our position with conviction. I fear that their protest had been based upon ignorance of the facts.¹¹¹

Despite these cries, Wisconsin officials did not designate any more official documents or papers outside the *Northwestern Lutheran* to help pastors educate their pastors. Rather, they continued to offer the same documents and official statements as had been used previous to and immediately after the 1961 convention. However, this soon caused problems: not enough copies of every needed document were printed.

Among these was my last and personal copy of our Synod's 1951 Convention Proceedings. Because these proceedings contained an evaluation of the Common Confession, they were much in demand and were soon all gone. I would be grateful to you if you were to return the copy of the 1951 Proceedings as I had requested, because it is out of print and no longer to be had. Without it my files are incomplete in this department.¹¹²

Some Wisconsin pastors suggested that WELS should also send information to Missouri laymen. "[Members of my congregation] suggest that somehow the entire number of Missouri congregations be circularized with our resolutions, also going into some detail regarding their toleration of false teachers and the errors they are defending."¹¹³

That suggestion did not get very far. "I hesitate to circularize the Missouri congregations. The tables could be turned in retaliation: what could they not send to ours!"¹¹⁴

While Wisconsin released much information to congregations and pastors prior to their momentous decision in 1961, following that the synod seemed to leave the bulk of the burden of

¹¹¹ O. J. Naumann, Personal Letter to Daniel Sabrowsky, October 29, 1963, O. J. Naumann Collection, Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary Archives, Mequon, Wisconsin.

¹¹² O. J. Naumann, Personal Letter to Warren H. Schave, August 3, 1964, O. J. Naumann Collection, Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary Archives, Mequon, Wisconsin.

¹¹³ George W. Boldt, Personal Letter to O. J. Naumann, August 26, 1961, O. J. Naumann Collection, Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary Archives, Mequon, Wisconsin.

¹¹⁴ O. J. Naumann, Personal Letter to George W. Boldt, August 28, 1961, O. J. Naumann Collection, Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary Archives, Mequon, Wisconsin.

dissemination of information to local ministers. Though pastors asked for additional resources, none would be forthcoming outside the *Northwestern Lutheran*. Pastors were not the only people crying out for more information, though.

What just happened?

Both before and after the split, confusion was the norm among the laity. Before the split, some laymen felt they were very well informed and wondered why more people did not take advantage of the resources Wisconsin offered. “I read your article in the latest edition of the *Northwestern Lutheran*, and it’s very unfortunate that more of our people do not subscribe to this periodical.”¹¹⁵ Others made a point to thank the synod for certain pamphlets. “[*Entrenched Unionistic Practices*] have done much good to strengthen our weaker bretheren [sic] to realize the necessity of our Synod’s action in severing relations with the Missouri Synod.”¹¹⁶

In fact, some took measures to educate their brothers and sisters in their congregations, passing out materials that they received. However, sometimes that meant they used information that was not directly from the synod. “I am, like many other people, loaning my copies of the *Confessional Lutheran* to people not yet acquainted with this wonderful and God pleasing paper, for we certainly don’t receive this information in the *Northwestern Lutheran*.”¹¹⁷

¹¹⁵ Norman Gurath, Personal Letter to O. J. Naumann, February 27, 1954, O. J. Naumann Collection, Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary Archives, Mequon, Wisconsin.

¹¹⁶ Jess Stenske, Personal Letter to O. J. Naumann, April 16, 1961, O. J. Naumann Collection, Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary Archives, Mequon, Wisconsin.

¹¹⁷ Albert Althoff, Personal Letter to O. J. Naumann, May 1, 1960, O. J. Naumann Collection, Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary Archives, Mequon, Wisconsin.

Many, though, deplored the *Northwestern Lutheran's* perceived lack of coverage of the false doctrine in Missouri. "Why doesn't our *Northwestern Lutheran* expose Missouri's tolerance of false teachers?"¹¹⁸

President Naumann defended the synod publication.

You ask why we do not inform our laymen concerning these matters, and you charge us with trying to keep it from our members. Your charge is unjust. Our church papers are not published for the purpose of hanging dirty linen on the line. Would it strengthen the faith of our members, would it edify them if we constantly taught them to point the finger at others?

Turn the tables about. Suppose one of our pastors or professors needed to be disciplined, and while we are carrying on such action our sister synods spread the story over the pages of their church papers! What good purpose would this serve?¹¹⁹

However, within a few months, after discussion with other members of the Praesidium, Naumann sent another reply letter, stating that the policies that had governed what was published in the *Northwestern Lutheran* would be changing. "I do want to inform you, however, that we are now going to reply to various articles and statements that have appeared in Missouri periodicals and others. Dr. Behnken's statement, for example, that we are agreed in the doctrine of fellowship, that all differences are in application only, will be answered in a letter to him which we will not keep private."¹²⁰

Why the change? Up until this point, the Synodical Conference had instituted a policy that kept out vicious attacks, as has been stated previously in this paper. This policy was put into effect so that the Union Committees of both synods might be able to work together without additional pressure from either side that would be created by such publications. However, by

¹¹⁸ Albert Althoff, Personal Letter to O. J. Naumann, August 25, 1960, O. J. Naumann Collection, Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary Archives, Mequon, Wisconsin.

¹¹⁹ O. J. Naumann, Personal Letter to Albert Althoff, September 14, 1960, O. J. Naumann Collection, Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary Archives, Mequon, Wisconsin.

¹²⁰ O. J. Naumann, Personal Letter to Albert Althoff, December 2, 1960, O. J. Naumann Collection, Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary Archives, Mequon, Wisconsin.

December of 1960, it was clear that such restoration of previous fellowship would be highly unlikely. It was no longer time to hold back, but time to fully inform the laity of what was happening. From that point on, the *Northwestern Lutheran* would publish full information on the fellowship issues.

Though by August of 1961, the month of the official break, the Wisconsin Synod had released a great deal of information through its church paper as well as in special booklets such as *Church Fellowship*, some felt that laymembers were still largely uninformed of the issues involved with Missouri.

A large majority of the members of our synod have not been instructed or thoroughly informed of the reasons we are considering this course of action except through the public press. This fact could cause unnecessary hard feelings and loss of members. I believe each congregation should be given thorough instruction in our point of view. After this has been completed, a representative of the Missouri Synod should be asked to present his synod's view. Bible passages and interpretations of passages could be discussed and explained.

...I believe that uninstructed delegates, having little or no knowledge concerning the opinions of the congregations they represent, do not have a right to decide such an important question as this. In my opinion, this question should be decided only after delegates have been carefully instructed, and informed of the opinions of those they represent. Only if this was done could they be absolutely sure they were truly representing all of us.¹²¹

Naumann responded to these charges.

Materials have been supplied and will continue to be supplied by which each pastor is enabled to discuss the doctrine and practice of fellowship with his members. I refer to the essay "Church Fellowship", the elaboration of our theses, "Fellowship Then and Now" which appeared in the *Northwestern Lutheran* and was subsequently printed in pamphlet form.

All pastors were notified of the completed printing of these materials and were asked to order them for their congregations.

We will continue to notify pastors of further materials as we prepare them for distribution.

¹²¹ Charles Westcott, Personal Letter to O. J. Naumann, August 17, 1961, O. J. Naumann Collection, Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary Archives, Mequon, Wisconsin. Emphasis in original.

Our delegates may have come uninstructed by the congregations whom the represented, but they knew that they were coming as delegates to this important convention. They had months to prepare, in most cases. Most have been studying this entire issue for years ...

We will continue, as you suggest, to carry on “a carefully planned and sensible program of instruction.” For this we must enlist the whole-hearted cooperation of all pastors and Church council members.¹²²

While some laymen deplored what they saw as a lack of information coming from Wisconsin, others merely asked for help in understanding the circumstances. They wanted to know what had happened to shatter what had once been a harmonious relationship between Wisconsin and Missouri. Synod officials often answered such requests in some combination of three ways: They would write a personal letter in response, explaining any information they had been asked to explain, they would send various tracts the WELS had prepared, or they would refer the layman to their own minister or some other local synod representative.

Many people were explicit when they asked for more information. “Misinformation is dangerous, but lack of information is just as dangerous and just as demoralizing. ... Please give me information on this latest maneuver and our official reaction.”¹²³ “I am quite sure what your reasons were, but I want to be able to back up my statements.”¹²⁴ Others wanted advice. “We would like your help as what to do under these circumstances and would like to hear from you.”¹²⁵

Many times, national leaders would point to local leaders to try and sort matters out.

¹²² O. J. Naumann, Personal Letter to Charles Westcott, August 21, 1961, O. J. Naumann Collection, Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary Archives, Mequon, Wisconsin.

¹²³ Arthur Hackbarth, Personal Letter to O. J. Naumann, November 29, 1959, O. J. Naumann Collection, Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary Archives, Mequon, Wisconsin.

¹²⁴ Fred C. Bondewald, Personal Letter to O. J. Naumann, August 20, 1961, O. J. Naumann Collection, Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary Archives, Mequon, Wisconsin.

¹²⁵ A. E. Abbott, Personal Letter to O. J. Naumann, September 25, 1961, O. J. Naumann Collection, Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary Archives, Mequon, Wisconsin.

I would suggest that you call on your District President, Pastor R. W. Mueller of Jefferson, Wisconsin, to counsel and advise you in this situation. He may suggest that representatives of the Synod be invited to discuss with the congregation the reason for taking the action we did take in August. Arrangements for representation at such informative meetings have been made. Our people should hear both sides before they judge a matter.¹²⁶

Other times leaders would write personal letters explaining situations to the best of their ability. President Naumann in particular was prolific in his correspondence, often writing three or four personal letters a day to laymen. In many, he would explain why Wisconsin chose to act the way they did. “For that reason our Synod’s position over against The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod differs not only, as the Newspapers like to report it in Scouting, military chaplaincies, and joint prayer, but in the doctrine of Fellowship itself and I fear, in the doctrine of Holy Scripture.”¹²⁷

Through most of the personal correspondence, leaders stressed that they were judging the doctrine now taught by the Missouri Synod, not the faith of the individual members of the church body. “By our action we by no means call into question the personal faith or the Christianity of any member of the Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod. This we wish to emphasize. Yet the Lord directs us to avoid those who cling to error lest we also lose the Scriptures and be led into error and false doctrine.”¹²⁸

Most of the time, national leaders would not only send correspondence with at least some personal explanation, but they would include previous materials the synod had produced.

Under separate cover I am sending copies of the “Four Statements on Fellowship”, “Fellowship Then and Now”, “Church Fellowship” and a copy of our recently adopted resolutions. I ask you to read them and to study the Bible

¹²⁶ O. J. Naumann, Personal Letter to A. E. Abbott, September 28, 1961, O. J. Naumann Collection, Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary Archives, Mequon, Wisconsin.

¹²⁷ O. J. Naumann, Personal Letter to Helma Stenske, July 31, 1961, O. J. Naumann Collection, Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary Archives, Mequon, Wisconsin.

¹²⁸ O. J. Naumann, Personal Letter to Fred Bondewald, August 30, 1961, O. J. Naumann Collection, Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary Archives, Mequon, Wisconsin.

passages that are quoted. This should afford you a better picture of the questions that have brought about the parting of the ways between our Synod and the corporate body of the Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod.¹²⁹

Often Naumann would point to a particular passage that would help the particular concern espoused by the individual letter writer. “I should like to urge you to study especially Tract 3 [of Continuing in His Word] “Every Sinner Declared Righteous.” From your letter I gather that a distortion of the doctrine of justification is troubling you.”¹³⁰

Leaders leaned on Continuing in His Word for many years, even after the split.¹³¹ Those tracts, though written in 1954, clearly stated the issues with Missouri. They explain the biblical basis for Wisconsin’s stand, and show how Missouri was not agreeing with those doctrines in their actions. Most of those who wrote back expressed gratitude for the tracts.¹³² The problem with using such old material, however, is that the situation in Missouri was constantly changing. Newer material likely should have been used, if for nothing else, to keep the witness against Missouri current.

Of course, some laymen did not take hold of the materials offered them by their own congregations and thought of the wedge between Missouri and Wisconsin as nitpicking. “To most laymen this ‘hairsplitting’ does not make sense and if some of our ministers would practice a little christian [sic] forgiveness instead of seeing ‘red’ when Missouri is mentioned the problem

¹²⁹ O. J. Naumann, Personal Letter to W. F. Schwalm, September 8, 1961, O. J. Naumann Collection, Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary Archives, Mequon, Wisconsin.

¹³⁰ O. J. Naumann, Personal Letter to Justus B. Linderholm, September 13, 1961, O. J. Naumann Collection, Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary Archives, Mequon, Wisconsin.

¹³¹ For instance, see O. J. Naumann, Personal Letter to Kenton H. Knorr, September 22, 1961, O. J. Naumann Collection, Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary Archives, Mequon, Wisconsin: “Under separate cover I am also sending a series of tracts published in 1954.”

¹³² For instance, see Kenton H. Knorr, Personal Letter to O. J. Naumann, October 6, 1961, O. J. Naumann Collection, Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary Archives, Mequon, Wisconsin: “I would like to express my deepest thanks for this material.”

of working together as one body could be solved.”¹³³ “I realize that, being only a layman, there is a lot that I do not know about the issues on which our Synods differ. But surely the Christian Law of Love, the obligation of bringing the Saving Gospel to a dying world, should be of first importance.”¹³⁴ Some went so far as to call the disputes over doctrine sin. “This bickering, gentlemen, is sin and it is time that first Christian admonition be given and if that fails, then church discipline applied.”¹³⁵

Naumann addressed such questions by once more explaining the issues involved, sending further information in the form of tracts, and offering for local ministers to meet with the offended parties. He would often plead that the person in question trust that these issues were not mere hairsplitting. “Please believe me, Dear Brother, that we are trying to do our God-given duty and to pay a debt of love, even though the newspaper accounts may at times lead you to conclude that we are ‘bickering.’”¹³⁶

Even to laymen who came to the discussion with their minds made up and ready to reprimand synodical officials, Naumann offered patient instruction. He pointed to Scripture, he used previous publications, and he exhorted to the best of his ability. To see an excellent example of Naumann’s patience and tact, see Appendix 2.

¹³³ John W. Jung, Personal Letter to O. J. Naumann, July 19, 1956, O. J. Naumann Collection, Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary Archives, Mequon, Wisconsin.

¹³⁴ Ben Nolte, Personal Letter to O. J. Naumann, September 15, 1957, O. J. Naumann Collection, Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary Archives, Mequon, Wisconsin.

¹³⁵ W. M. Buescher, Personal Letter to O. J. Naumann and John Behnken, April 7, 1961, O. J. Naumann Collection, Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary Archives, Mequon, Wisconsin.

¹³⁶ O. J. Naumann, Personal Letter to W. M. Buescher, April 12, 1961, O. J. Naumann Collection, Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary Archives, Mequon, Wisconsin.

At times, there were odd requests from laymen. One concerned layman sent a clipping that perturbed her: “Lutheran Church adopts RESOLUTION to extend their Boy Scout Programs to ‘Any Planet in Outer Space that may be discovered in the new Space Age.’”¹³⁷

Even this seemingly insignificant letter was answered with tact and care from President Naumann. “My first reaction would be that the writer is trying to be humorous... Usually one simply brushes such things aside and ignores them just as one does with anonymous letters.”¹³⁸

The requests for information did not stop in the first years after the split. Laymen continued to request information on the synodical level concerning the break with Missouri. “Would you be kind enough to point out – in the simplest terms possible – exactly what the basic differences are between the Wisconsin and Missouri Synods?”¹³⁹

Even with these later letters, synodical officials continued their procedure of personal letters, usually coupled with tracts or an offer for a personal visit. “I wish to state very briefly that I am convinced it is the changed attitude toward the authority of the Word of God.”¹⁴⁰ Sometimes the enclosed tracts would be a “core” of books which included “Your Blessed Fellowship,” “Fellowship Then and Now,” and “Catechism of Differences,”¹⁴¹ a book that studied the differences between various Lutheran church bodies, including the Missouri synod. Sometimes the list would be much more exhaustive, including

Catechism of Differences
Set of 11 tracts – continuing in His Word [sic]
Your Blessed Fellowship in Christ

¹³⁷ Elizabeth B. Bylaska, Personal Letter to O. J. Naumann, March 9, 1961, O. J. Naumann Collection, Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary Archives, Mequon, Wisconsin.

¹³⁸ O. J. Naumann, Personal Letter to Elizabeth B. Bylaska, March 15, 1961, O. J. Naumann Collection, Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary Archives, Mequon, Wisconsin.

¹³⁹ S. M. DeBuhr, Letter to the Wisconsin Ev. Lutheran Synod, February 19, 1965, O. J. Naumann Collection, Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary Archives, Mequon, Wisconsin.

¹⁴⁰ O. J. Naumann, Personal Letter to S. M. DeBuhr, February 25, 1965, O. J. Naumann Collection, Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary Archives, Mequon, Wisconsin.

¹⁴¹ Harold E. C. Wicke, *A Catechism of Differences* (Milwaukee, WI: Northwestern Publishing House, 1956).

This We Believe
 The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod No. 10 377
 Brief Statement
 Four Statements on Fellowship
 An Open Letter
 Report of Theologians' Conference-reprint from Wisconsin Lutheran Quarterly
 Report – Of the Standing Committee on Matters of Church Union to the Nine
 Districts of the Joint Synod of Wisconsin and Other States
 Church Fellowship
 Entrenched Unionistic Practices
 Fellowship Then and Now
 Proceedings – 29 Convention, 1947
 “ 31 “ 1951
 “ 32 “ 1953
 “ 33 “ 1955
 “ 78 Convention, Michigan Dist. 1956
 “ 34 “ 1957
 “ 35 “ 1959
 “ 36 “ 1961
 “ Special Synod “ 1962
 “ 37 “ 1963
 “ 38 “ 1965
 “ 39 “ 1967
 “ 46 Convention of the Lutheran Synodical Conference 1960¹⁴²

As can be seen, when someone requested information, they could get a deluge of data.

Wisconsin was not shy with providing information. However, what was provided varied considerably, particularly as the years progressed. Some booklets ran out of print, particularly convention proceedings. At times, Naumann would even provide his own copies, asking that they be sent back once the layman had read them.¹⁴³ Others, such as *Continuing in His Word*, were still available as late as 1969.¹⁴⁴

However, Synod never put together an official, simple booklet or statement to be sent to every congregation and distributed to every layman. Because of this, synodical officials could

¹⁴² O. J. Naumann, Personal Letter to Fred Dissen, February 24, 1969, O. J. Naumann Collection, Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary Archives, Mequon, Wisconsin.

¹⁴³ Ibid

¹⁴⁴ O. J. Naumann, Personal Letter to N. H. Heitfeld, March 17, 1969, O. J. Naumann Collection, Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary Archives, Mequon, Wisconsin.

rarely send one pamphlet, but would have to send a small bundle to explain their reasons for breaking with Missouri. The laymen would have to piece together evidence themselves from the various tracts.

Though there were few efforts at education at the synodical level for the laymen after 1961, pastors in the front lines knew they had to explain the situation to their congregations.

On the front lines

Pastors approached the difficulty of explaining what was happening between the Wisconsin and Missouri Synods to their congregations in various ways. Some decided to write their own materials; some waited patiently for synodical materials that never came. Some published news updates in church newsletters; others elected to hold full Bible studies to investigate the issues. The approaches were as varied as there were congregations.

Immediately after the break, many pastors held congregational meetings. They spoke to their people and answered questions to the best of their ability. They were able to point to materials previously published by Wisconsin to help their members understand what was happening. Unfortunately, not every public meeting went well, though not necessarily because of Wisconsin Synod members.

More recently, however, two neighboring Missouri Synod congregations have held “public” open meetings to answer the information which I supplied my members on the suspension [of fellowship] issue. In connection with this a letter .. which contains flat denials on many issues, particularly on the matter of a lack of discipline... This naturally causes some concern for me and my membership, and for this reason I am seeking additional, official information which may be of help to us in our problem.¹⁴⁵

¹⁴⁵ N. W. Kock, Personal Letter to O. J. Naumann, October 30, 1961, O. J. Naumann Collection, Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary Archives, Mequon, Wisconsin.

In his return letter, Naumann addressed the issues brought up in the letter, but did not directly address the “counter-meeting.”¹⁴⁶

Besides meetings, many published notices in their bulletins. One such statement reads,

Peace Lutheran Church is a mission station of the Wisconsin Synod and receives financial support from that Synod. This past week our Wisconsin Synod voted in convention to “suspend fellowship” with the Missouri Synod. Your pastor was personally much opposed to this course of action. We are very disappointed that it came. We do not believe that there was sufficient reason for this suspension of fellowship. However, in discussing this suspension of fellowship, it must be made very clear (and we hope that you will make it clear) that the Wisconsin Synod does not thereby consider that the people in the Missouri Synod are not Christians. We believe that there are Christians in every Christian church body, whether Methodist, Roman Catholic, Presbyterian, Baptist or any other. But a suspension of fellowship does mean that because of a difference of opinion in certain religious matters, the two Synods will no longer be able to work together as they have so wonderfully in the past. These differences of opinion may yet be worked out and the fellowship resumed. Let us all pray that this will happen.

Meanwhile as individuals this suspension of fellowship means very little to us. We will continue to worship and pray and act as we have in the past. We may disagree with those who made the decision to suspend fellowship. But we know that pastors and laymen who voted on this matter can make mistakes just as can anyone else. In the Church we will not always agree with one another and with our Synod. That doesn't mean that we will stop being Christians. All who are baptized and truly believe in Jesus Christ are united in Him and are members of His Body (Gal. 3,26-28). Let us be certain that we all continue to hold firmly to Christ our Savior and follow His Word without fail. This is what really counts—that we are all one in Christ. God grant that we remain in Him.”¹⁴⁷

Some published newsletters. After the release of *Continuing in His Word* in 1954, Pastor Christian Albrecht published notes in his church's newsletter, the *Grace & St. John's Messenger*. “The Norwegian and Wisconsin synods plus a considerable block from within the Missouri stand on one side, and the majority of Missouri and Slovacs under the leadership of Missouri on the other. That the unity of spirit, unity in confession, unity in practice no longer exists became clear

¹⁴⁶ O. J. Naumann, Personal Letter to N. W. Kock, November 21, 1961, O. J. Naumann Collection, Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary Archives, Mequon, Wisconsin.

¹⁴⁷ Victor Prange, Peace Evangelical Lutheran Congregation, Janesville, Wisconsin Sunday church bulletin, August 20, 1961.

to all in attendance, and was freely admitted in many public statements on the floor of the convention.”¹⁴⁸

Some churches used the Synod materials and formed Bible studies around them. Prof. Schuetze’s pamphlet “Timely Topics” was especially helpful for congregations, as it dealt with the practical implications of the split.¹⁴⁹

Some churches published their own material to help their congregations. An undated pamphlet from Los Angeles, California, written by A. Keibel, traced the entire history of the issues between Missouri and Wisconsin. The pamphlet also steps through the pertinent doctrines. While it does not quote much Scripture, it does give many references, allowing the diligent layman to look up the Biblical support of each doctrine. The booklet also is not afraid to address some accusations. “Responsibility for division in Christendom has always rested with the church which adopts an un-Biblical teaching. The Wisconsin Synod stand on church fellowship has not changed or been shown to be wrong. The false teaching of the Missouri Synod, however, makes it accountable for the split which took place.”¹⁵⁰ The tract ends with a section of suggestions for further reading, which include “Fellowship Then and Now” and “Church Fellowship.” This is an excellent all-inclusive pamphlet that must have served the local congregation well. Unfortunately, it appears the tract was not shared with others except possibly a few other local congregations.

¹⁴⁸ Christian Albrecht, *Grace & St. John’s Messenger*, November 21, 1954, O. J. Naumann Collection, Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary Archives, Mequon, Wisconsin.

¹⁴⁹ For instance, as used by Mount Calvary Ev. Lutheran Church of Tampa, Florida. See E. C. Renz, Personal Letter to O. J. Naumann, November 6, 1961, O. J. Naumann Collection, Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary Archives, Mequon, Wisconsin.

¹⁵⁰ A. Keibel, *Break Between Wisconsin Synod and Missouri Synod*, after 1963, O. J. Naumann Collection, Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary Archives, Mequon, Wisconsin, 3.

Others not only published their own materials, but to make sure that as many in the congregation as possible received the information, these materials were presented in lieu of a sermon.

After our Synod suspended fellowship with the Missouri Synod in August of 1961, I thought it might be helpful to the congregation in Kawkawlin if I explained the reason for the action taken. Many of the members had Missouri background or had intermarried with members from several neighboring Missouri congregations. Since I wanted to reach as many of our members as possible, I asked the church council for permission to present the matter in place of the sermon during one of our regular morning services. When I began to organize the material, I discovered that I could not possibly cover the subject in one presentation. I asked the church council if they would object to devoting two or three services to the study of the matter, and they told me to take as many as I needed. The result was six separate topics.

The six discussions are essays rather than sermons, but since they were presented during the morning worship services, I based them on a text and tried to organize them in the form of sermons. Duplicated copies were distributed to all who were present so that they could follow as it was read.

The seventh sermon was written during the last week of August last year in an attempt to summarize what has transpired during the intervening period.¹⁵¹

The seven sermons are well laid out and cover not only the history but the doctrines involved with the Missouri split. They were written with laymen in mind, and as a result are very clear. Naumann remarked, "I am in the process of reading these pamphlets as time allows and find them exceptionally clear and well done."¹⁵²

The first tract begins:

All of us were probably shocked when we learned that our Wisconsin Lutheran Synod at its convention in August of 1961 suspended fellowship with The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod. The action should not have come as a complete surprise, however, for information concerning the seriousness of the issues disturbing relations between the synods had been made available to all members of the congregation in various ways on numerous occasions during the

¹⁵¹ William Krueger, Personal Letter to O. J. Naumann, May 15, 1973, O. J. Naumann Collection, Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary Archives, Mequon, Wisconsin.

¹⁵² O. J. Naumann, Personal Letter to William Krueger, June 27, 1973, O. J. Naumann Collection, Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary Archives, Mequon, Wisconsin.

past ten years or more. All of us should have known that differences existed and should have known to some extent what the trouble was about. Nevertheless, it probably still struck most of us as a heavy blow when the break came.¹⁵³

That same tract concludes:

When God's Word is at stake, it will not do to shirk... This is the struggle that is involved in the suspension of fellowship with Missouri, a struggle against the beginnings that would in the process of time eat into the very heart of the truth that saves men's souls, the doctrine of salvation solely by grace through faith alone.¹⁵⁴

The remaining tracts covered rejecting heretics, how false prophets can infiltrate the true church, how a house divided against itself cannot stand, what it means to heed doctrine, and the call to follow Jesus despite what the world says. The third tract in particular may be of interest even today. It teaches that tolerating false doctrine to further the Lord's work doesn't achieve the goal.¹⁵⁵

These tracts, though excellently written and presented, never went farther than Krueger's congregation until 1973 when he mentioned them to Naumann, who requested a copy. These copies now lie in the Seminary Archives, though they could be very useful to those looking to see how Wisconsin viewed the break with Missouri in 1961.

Conclusion

Before and immediately after the break with Missouri, Wisconsin did an excellent job informing the laity about the growing tensions with Missouri. They released information

¹⁵³ William Krueger, "Christ Came Not to Send Peace, but a Sword" (Wisconsin's Suspension of Fellowship with Missouri," Series of Seven Tracts, Tracts 1-6 written "About six months after the split," Tract 7 written Dec. 1972. Presented to his congregation, Our Savior Evangelical Lutheran Church, San Antonio, Texas), 2.

¹⁵⁴ Ibid 12

¹⁵⁵ William Krueger, "A House Divided Against Itself" (Wisconsin's Suspension of Fellowship with Missouri," Series of Seven Tracts by Pastor William Krueger, Tracts 1-6 written "About six months after the split," Tract 7 written Dec. 1972. Presented to his congregation, Our Savior Evangelical Lutheran Church, San Antonio, Texas).

primarily through their church paper, the *Northwestern Lutheran*, as well as publishing *Continuing in His Word*, a tract series they continued to use even after the break.

After the break occurred, officials on the synodical level were more than willing to help pastors and answer their questions through correspondence and personal visits to congregations. However, there was nothing formally published to aid pastors in speaking to their congregations about the break. There was no “official” publications available for widespread distribution after the break.

The cause of the publishing gap may have had a number of causes. The lack of communication may have been purposeful by officials who had been accused of being autocratic in their dealings with Missouri. If they did not tell pastors what to say, how could they be autocratic? It is also true that the tension leading to the break in 1961 was tremendous on synodical officials. They faced disapproval from close friends and family no matter what way they turned. After the matter had resolved with the break, they may have wanted to wash their hands of the whole affair. It may also be that no single official was willing to carry what would be the herculean task of writing a single booklet that could wrap up decades of controversy.

However, by shirking their duties, synodical leaders gave a greater burden to the local minister. Many requested aid, if nothing else to make sure their telling of the facts matched others'. When no aid from their synod came, a plurality of effort occurred when none would have been necessary. Some of these efforts were highly successful, others less so. To this day, many laymen who survived that period do not fully understand what is “so bad” with Missouri.

Modern pastors know that it is nearly impossible to reach every member in a congregation. A pastor might announce an upcoming event three subsequent weeks after church, speak about it in Bible class, send out newsletters mentioning it, place a notice in the bulletin,

and even attempt personal calls to every household. Yet, in the end, there will be at least a few that will say, “Well, we would have come if we’d known about it! Why didn’t you tell me?”

This problem faced Wisconsin from the start, yet the matters were grave and of paramount importance. Wisconsin did their best to get information to the laity of the synod early on, but at least seemed to fail later on. While it is true that it is impossible to reach everyone, while it is true that synod leaders were exhausted after the long battle, some effort would have been better than the scant communication that followed the 1961 convention.

It has now been nearly fifty years since that momentous occasion in 1961. The point may be moot; since that time, there have been numerous publications and essays that examine the cause of the break with Missouri. Any layman still interested has multiple resources, some of them quite recent, available to him.¹⁵⁶

Yet, Wisconsin can learn (and, in this author’s opinion, has in large extent learned): even after the event has happened, it is useful to have official publications explaining to the laity the causes of the events. Rather than leaving laymen in the dark, inform them. Whatever you do, don’t leave the laity asking, “What just happened?” Explain to them, tell them, show them. They are the flock the shepherd has been called to tend. The shepherd must help them know their surroundings and learn to cope with their circumstances. When a pastor can aid his laymen in understanding the issues facing the larger church body, the synod will be united and able to move forward with confidence.

¹⁵⁶ For instance, Mark E. Braun, A Tale of Two Synods (Milwaukee, WI: Northwestern Publishing House, 2003).

Appendix 1

The following letters form the correspondence between WELS President O. J. Naumann, LCMS President John W. Behnken, and LCMS Prof. Martin Scharlemann. These letters are indicative of the discussions that occurred concerning the appropriateness of various articles that were available to the laity.

December 1, 1958

Dr. John W. Behnken, President
 The Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod
 210 No. Broadway
 St. Louis 2, Missouri

Dear Dr. Behnken:

I have been asked to write the reply to an invitation extended by Dr. Martin Scharlemann, Dean of the School for Graduate Studies, to Dr. Paul Peters of our Thiensville Seminary, asking him to deliver a series of lectures in the summer course of the Graduate School June 23 to July 25, 1959. After consulting with his colleagues at our Seminary and with me, Dr. Peters has requested me to formulate the reply.

Though we value the exchange of professors and the sharing of the gifts that the Ascended Savior has bestowed upon our respective Synods, and though we look forward prayerfully and hopefully to the day when this exchange may again be carried out without hesitation, we must today weigh such invitations in the light of the testimony which we feel constrained to bring from the Word of God.

You are well aware of the article in the November 1957 issue of the Lutheran Chaplain, in which Dr. Martin Scharlemann in his column, entitled "Vapor Trails", ridicules our Wisconsin Synod convictions regarding the military chaplaincy as now constituted. Since this article appeared in public print in an official publication of a department of your Synod, we considered it entirely proper that we ask you as President of the Synod to deal in the matter and to institute corrective action. I recall distinctly how incensed the members of the Joint Union Committees became when this article was brought to their attention. After you dealt with Dr. Scharlemann, he sent a reply under date of June 5, 1958, of which I was given a copy, in which he does three things: 1. he complains about the method of procedure; 2. he makes a sweeping countercharge about representatives of Wisconsin as being people "who have a very difficult time remembering certain elementary principles of ethics"; 3. he tries to laugh off the entire matter by saying that the Wisconsin Synod "men must be utterly devoid of a sense of humor. . . In my article I was poking some fun at Wisconsin's exotic attitude toward the chaplaincy. What is that for the years of maligning we have had to put up with? I haven't heard one word of regret from them for all the misrepresentations and half-truths perpetrated over a period of extended calumny."

Would we not be giving tacit approval to these charges by sending one of our theological professors to lecture at the Summer School under the direct supervision and sponsorship of Dr. Scharlemann? What he terms an "exotic attitude" is for us a firm conviction based upon the Word of God, and convictions are no laughing matter for us. I can assure you that the discussions of the Joint Union Committees would have been terminated long ago, if this attitude had been displayed by your Synod's representatives there. Instead, we are convinced that those men who represent your Synod in our Joint Committee discussions are earnestly searching the Scriptures with us and are seeking to understand and to evaluate our position in the light of God's Word.

Whenever our professors carry out the duties of their calling, whether at the Seminary, at conferences, or at summer school sessions, their lectures constitute a confession of their own personal faith and convictions, and are not intended for either them or their hearers to be an intellectual exercise. They are being obedient to the Savior's Word: "teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you."

Frankly, I cannot understand why Dr. Scharlemann invites for his summer school faculty a member of a Synod whose principals and convictions on the military chaplaincy as now constituted he holds in utter contempt. For we can draw no other conclusion from his article and his letter to you.

The members of our faculty at Thienerville share with me the conviction that we are here confronted squarely with a situation which calls for the application of our "vigorously protesting fellowship". By declining the invitation to send one of our theological professors to the Summer School next year, we intend to carry out the admonition and testimony enjoined upon us in II Thessalonians 3, 14, 15: "If any man obey not our word by this epistle, note that man, and have no company with him, that he may be ashamed. Yet count him not as an enemy, but admonish him as a brother."

I had intended to bring the matter of Dr. Scharlemann's reply to your attention in our October Joint Union Committee sessions. Time did not allow, since our schedule was very well filled with the primary business of the committees. I had, however, been urged by our Union Committee to see to it that the matter would receive attention in our coming meetings in January.

Finally, I trust that this letter will not only serve to give the reasons why Dr. Peters is declining Dr. Scharlemann's invitation, but that it will also strengthen your arm in dealing with a man who needs to be admonished. For, certainly, his writings, both article and letter, will by no means serve the cause of strengthening the bonds of fellowship between our synods.

May the Advent and Christmas seasons be filled for you with the richest of spiritual blessings!

Sincerely yours in Christ,

OJN:dn

c.c. to Dr. Martin Scharlemann

to Dr. Paul Peters



OFFICE OF THE SCHOOL FOR GRADUATE STUDIES

December 10, 1958

The Rev. Oscar J. Naumann,
727 Margaret St.,
St. Paul 6, Minn.

It has been quite some time since I saw a letter so petty as yours of recent date to Dr. Behnken. That such a communication could come from the responsible head of a church body is beyond my comprehension.

At first I thought of returning it to you as being unworthy of a Lutheran pastor. However, I am keeping it as an exhibit to show people what kind of mentality we have to work with in our dealings with your Synod.

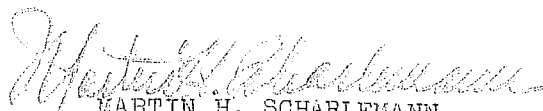
The really bothersome part about the letter is the sheer hypocrisy of your position. For years as a chaplain I had men coming to me from congregations in the Wisconsin Synod with communion cards signed by their pastors and requesting that we take care of them. This you condemn by implication. I can only conclude that these pastors were men of great and good sense.

Moreover, you are presumptuous, Sir. You actually claim to be able to know what my attitude is to your Synod's position on the chaplaincy. You are not God; you have no way of reading my heart.

You are presumptuous, furthermore, in suggesting to Dr. Behnken whom and when you should admonish. This is his business and not yours. I'm quite sure he'll tell you so, too.

Again, you are presumptuous for implying that your professors have a kind of monopoly on teaching what the Lord commanded. We are also committed down here to the Scriptures and the Confessions. Who are you to set yourself up as a judge?

My prayer is that your church body may soon be delivered from such petty leadership so that the Wisconsin Synod may once again become the kind of body with which it is a pleasure to be in fellowship. May God hasten that day.


MARTIN H. SCHARLEMANN
Director of Graduate Studies



OFFICE OF THE SCHOOL FOR GRADUATE STUDIES

December 20, 1958

The Rev. Oscar J. Naumann,
727 Margaret St.,
St. Paul 6, Minnesota.

Dear Pastor Naumann:-

Last evening Dr. Behnken, Dr. Grumm, Dr. Fuerbringer and I met to discuss the content and purpose of your letter to Dr. Behnken in re of the invitation extended by me to Dr. Peters. From our conversation it became clear to me that my letter to you of December 10 was neither in order nor in good taste.

I am writing this, therefore, to offer my apologies for both the tone and content of my letter.

Furthermore, I finally discovered why my remarks in The Lutheran Chaplain regarding your Synod's view on the chaplaincy would cause such difficulties for you and others who are working seriously at a somewhat better understanding between Wisconsin and Missouri.

Actually -- and in all sincerity -- I wrote those paragraphs in fun. I can see, however, how they might cause you some embarrassment. This I regret.

As far as I am concerned I should want no action of mine to contribute to any worsening of the relationship between your church and mine; for at heart I am as devoted to the preservation of conservative Lutheranism as you are.

It is time, therefore, to remove misunderstandings -- also between myself and you. On your next visit to St. Louis I should be honored and happy to meet you and to have lunch with you.

Respectfully,

Walter A. Riedel

THE LUTHERAN CHURCH - MISSOURI SYNOD

210 NORTH BROADWAY • SAINT LOUIS 2, MISSOURI

TELEPHONE CENTRAL 1-6969

December 21, 1958

OFFICE OF THE
PRESIDENT

The Rev. Oscar J. Naumann
727 Margaret Street
St. Paul 6, Minnesota

Dear Brother Naumann:

Your letter, under date of December 1st, still remains unanswered. I wanted to discuss it with Drs. Fuebringer and Scharlemann and Dr. A. H. Grumm. This meeting could not take place until last Friday.

We discussed your letter and the fact that Dr. Paul W. Peters, your Thiensville Faculty and you felt constrained that the invitation extended to Dr. Peters to deliver a series of lectures in the summer course at Concordia Seminary should be declined. We regret that you felt impelled to take this action.

Let me assure you that the men of the Faculty at Concordia Seminary had no ulterior motive in inviting Dr. Peters. They were sincere about it.

Let me mention furthermore that Dr. Martin Scharlemann assured us that he considered the article which he wrote in the "Lutheran Chaplain" a closed issue. He had heard nothing more after he wrote you the letter. He stated that he did not receive an answer from you. Hence his conclusion that it was now a "closed issue."

Dr. Scharlemann also mentioned that in extending the invitation he was not acting for himself, but for the President of the Seminary.

Again Dr. Scharlemann stated that the invitation to Dr. Peters is totally unrelated to whatever private opinion or public utterances you may think he holds and has made with regard to the Wisconsin Synod view on the chaplaincy.

If you are dissatisfied with Dr. Scharlemann's letter, let me suggest that you write to him. Since we are meeting in St. Louis in January perhaps even an oral discussion could be arranged.

As for the invitation to Dr. Peters we shall not pursue this farther. We are sorry that he could not decide to be with us.

With best wishes for a blessed Christmas

Your in Christ

THE REV. J. W. BEHNKEN, D. D.
PRESIDENT

THE REV. A. H. GRUMM, D. D.
FIRST VICE-PRESIDENT

THE REV. H. HARNIS, D. D.
SECOND VICE-PRESIDENT

THE REV. W. F. LICHTSINN, D. D.
THIRD VICE-PRESIDENT

THE REV. O. R. HARNIS, D. D.
FOURTH VICE-PRESIDENT

January 12, 1959.

Dr. J. W. Behnken
210 No. Broadway
St. Louis 2, Mo.

Dear Dr. Behnken:

This will acknowledge receipt of your letter of Dec. 21 somewhat belatedly because of the holidays.

I am somewhat surprised that a ~~carbon~~ copy of Dr. Scharlemann's letter to you last summer was deemed sufficient to close the subject of "Vapor Trails" article in "The Lutheran Chaplain." I have received a further letter from Dr. Scharlemann under date of Dec. 10, 1958, and his subsequent apology for the tone and content of that letter in a communication under date of Dec. 20 after he had spoken with Dr. Fuenfbringer, Dr. Grumm, and you. I accepted his apology for the Dec. 10 letter. He said nothing of his earlier letter of June 1958 to you of which I received the carbon copy. Poking fun at a brother's religious convictions and principles is hardly a brotherly action.

Whether Vice-President Haback wishes to pursue the subject any further or not, I shall leave to his discretion. I shall not be able to attend the meetings next week. A heart condition has made a rest and treatment in the hospital necessary.

May the Lord bless the efforts of the Joint Union Committees abundantly.

Sincerely yours,

Oscar F. Nauman

GJN:dn
c.c. to Vice-President I.J. Haback

January 12, 1959

Dr. Martin H. Scharlemann
1 Seminary Terrace
St. Louis 5, Mo.

Dear Dr. Scharlemann:

Your letters of December 10 and December 20, 1958, have both been received. Needless to say I was much happier about the second than about the first. I accept your apology for both ^{the} tone and the content of your letter of December 10. I wish, also, again to state that it is never in place to joke or poke fun about anyone's religious convictions and principles.

Two days ago I was ordered to the hospital by my doctor because of a heart condition. This is being written a few hours after I was admitted. I shall not be able to attend the coming meetings in St. Louis. May the Lord richly bless the Joint Union Committees in their efforts to remove what has disturbed our fellowship and to restore the former fraternal unity and confidence.

Needless to say I am unable to accept your invitation to lunch with you.

With kindest personal regards,

Sincerely yours,

Oscar J. Neumann

OJN:dn
c.c. to Vice-President I. J. Habeck

THE LUTHERAN CHURCH-MISSOURI SYNOD

210 NORTH BROADWAY • SAINT LOUIS 2, MISSOURI
TELEPHONE CENTRAL 1-6969

OFFICE OF THE
PRESIDENT

January 15, 1959

The Rev. Oscar J. Naumann
727 Margaret Street
St. Paul 6, Minnesota

Dear President Naumann:

Your letter under date of January 12th was brought to my attention yesterday afternoon.

First of all let me say that I certainly am sorry to hear that "a heart condition has made a rest and treatment in the hospital necessary." May the good Lord grant wisdom and understanding to your physician and graciously bless the treatment which you are receiving. If it is His will, may He soon restore you to full health and strength again.

With reference to Dr. Martin Scharlemann's correspondence with you let me say that I have been informed of the letter of apology which he addressed to you after he had his consultation with us. Let me say that we did not even suggest such a letter of apology. This was voluntary on his part. I am sure that you will appreciate knowing this. Personally, I believe that Dr. Scharlemann will carefully avoid everything of that nature in the future.

I am sorry that your illness will prevent your being present with us. If Vice-President Habeck desires to meet with Dr. Scharlemann I feel sure that during these days such a meeting could be arranged.

I certainly join you in the prayer that the good heavenly Father may graciously bless the efforts of the joint union committees abundantly. In these days when Lutheranism throughout the world has weakened terribly on some of the very fundamental doctrines of Scripture it is all the more urgently necessary that we who are members of the Synodical Conference and those who are in fellowship with us in Australia and in Europe and other countries not only hold fast that we have but also bear witness solidly and definitely to the truths of Scripture.

Again wishing you the Lord's gracious blessings for a speedy recovery, I am, with kindest personal greetings,

Fraternally yours,

JWE:HS

THE REV. J. W. BEHNKEN, D. D.
PRESIDENT

THE REV. A. H. GRUMM, D.D.
FIRST VICE-PRESIDENT

THE REV. H. HARMS, D.D.
SECOND VICE-PRESIDENT

THE REV. W. F. LICHTSINN, D. D.
THIRD VICE-PRESIDENT

THE REV. O. R. HARMS, D.D.
FOURTH VICE-PRESIDENT

100-100
S. J. ...



OFFICE OF THE SCHOOL FOR GRADUATE STUDIES

February 10, 1959

The Reverend Oscar J. Naumann
727 Margaret Street
St. Paul 5, Minnesota

I was happy to have your letter of January 12, Pastor Naumann. I deeply regret, however, that it was necessary for you to be hospitalized for a heart condition. I do hope that the Lord may grant you strength and health.

Let me just attach a sentence here in connection with your statement that "it is never in place to joke or poke fun about anyone's religious convictions and principles." This, of course, works both ways. This principle would also apply to your church which has not only poked fun but actually maligned those of us who have been in the chaplaincy. This to my mind is a much more serious matter than poking fun. If this point has been made, I shall be very happy. I hope that the time will never come again when those of us who served as chaplains are subjected to all kinds of criticism. For most of that is totally unwarranted.

May our Lord constantly guard and keep His Church!

MARTIN H. SCHARLEMANN
Director of Graduate Studies

Appendix 2

This appendix contains the correspondence between WELS President O. J. Naumann and layman Roger Homan. This correspondence shows the patient instruction that synodical leaders used when their own laity held to false believe. Notice how Naumann gives missing pieces of information as well as instructs in basic and not-so-basic doctrines.



September 11, 1963

Oscar J. Naumann
 3524 W. North Avenue
 Milwaukee 3, Wisconsin

Dear Mr. Naumann,

I have been a member of St. John's Church in Waterloo, Wisconsin since birth, over 29 years ago. I attended the Lutheran Grade School there for eight years. I also attended Waterloo Public High School and I graduated from the University of Wisconsin in Electrical Engineering.

Ever since February, 1954, when I was drafted in the Army, I have been "on the go". I have lived in various locations throughout the United States and I spent a year on Ascension Island (midway between Brazil and Africa) and right now, I am working on a military project on Kwajalein Atoll in the Marshall Islands (with my wife of one year who is also a member of St. John's).

Since I have been moving around very much I have attended various Protestant churches--the majority of which have been Lutheran Churches--Missouri Synod. I have never changed membership from St. John's because I have never been in one spot long enough to justify it.

Like any citizen I have opinions on all important legislation. Yet I have never written to any Congressman concerning any issue. As a general rule I prefer to let everything "go as it may". But a couple of weeks ago when I read a newspaper clipping concerning the final Missouri-Wisconsin split I again got the urge to put into writing my views on the subject. As in previous times I thought my urge to express myself would subside but it hasn't. Thus I feel I must at least make my views known. Incidentally, I have written to Rev. Nitz concerning this.

I, of course, cannot elaborate on this issue very much in a single letter. However, let me make just a few points. First of all, I consider the basis of the difference as "hair-splitting". The Wisconsin Synod could be split up into perhaps a dozen more groups by using more detailed interpretations of the Bible. In other words, I don't believe there is any difference between the Wisconsin and Missouri Synod.

By splitting, it will, of course, be harder to carry on the Lord's work. In other words the important work of the Church will suffer. Also, the unchurched will tend to remain unchurched when they read of all this dissonance and divisions in the Lutheran Church.

It will also cause much confusion among laymen as the vast majority of the Church don't know what you are splitting over, and more than likely, don't care. I think a poll of the laymen of the Wisconsin Synod concerning the issue of the split would surprise the leaders of the Synod. I believe all of us have the tendency to think that everyone understands what we are doing and we sort of get wrapped up in ourselves. In short, we don't realize that we are just a little segment of a big wide world. Thus in the field of religion, we get bogged down in details and don't realize that a good share of the world doesn't accept or has even heard of Christ.

407 I have a little story that might give you a more vivid idea of what I am trying to say. When I was in the army, I was stationed near El Paso, Texas. As this was the first time I had been outside of the State of Wisconsin any appreciable distance, I was still very much "dry behind the ears". It was at this time that I was introduced to the vice-ridden City of Juarez, Mexico. To me it was unbelievable that prostitution, narcotics, and almost any other vice you could think of, could be so prevalent. I was amazed.

Then the following summer (1955) I went home on leave. I met one of my friends who had just graduated from Dr. Martin Luther College at New Ulm, Minnesota. The first thing he mentioned to me was the proposed "split". Clearly to him this was a major item. Just coming from Juarez I considered the "split" irrelevant and not even worth talking about.


Thus I think our emphasis is wrong. We have generated a split on minute details over fellowship when we should have a united effort toward spreading the Gospel throughout the world.

In closing let me add a bit on liberalism vs. conservatism in the Missouri Synod. To me these are very general terms and liberalism is not necessarily bad (as some people are inclined to believe) nor is conservatism necessarily good (as some people are inclined to believe). It depends on what you are specifically talking about. Thus if conservatism in religion is always good and if conservatism is a measure of the true church we should belong to the Monks--certainly they are more conservative than the

Wisconsin Synod.

I would certainly be happy to hear from you on this subject.
It has been troubling me for quite some time.

Sincerely,



Roger W. Moran
Navy 824, Box 227
FPO, San Francisco, California

53908

September 26, 1953

Peter W. Koch
Navy Bldg. Room 227
1117 1/2 Ave. Franklin, St. Louis

Dear Mr. Koch:

Your letter of September 13 was received here on September 16. I am sorry that I cannot address you by your correct title, since neither your letter nor our Lutheran Spiritual Welfare office has your name indicated. What does matter, of course, is that we are brethren in faith and confession, both concerned about the work and welfare of our Synod.

Since you indicated in your letter that you had shared your concerns with Pastor Nits, I am sending him a copy of it, so that he as your pastor will know in what vein I answered your letter.

I can well understand why in visiting Missouri Synod churches during your time in service you saw no large numbers any great differences. Hence your judgment that the basis for our separation of Fellowship and our withdrawal from the Synodical Conference is based on "their position."

We, too, are convinced that some of the pastors and congregations in The Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod are doing in the direction Missouri is following and are trying to reverse the trend. Some have withdrawn in protest; quite a number, pastors, teachers, professors, and laymen, critic and express their concern to me.

Whereas we had conversions and vocations to Missouri in the past, the process is beginning to reverse itself. We received three pastors, two professors, four teachers, and five congregations, all transferred toward us, into membership at our last convention. Others have joined us since. Our Executive Committee is very busy hearing the requests of concerned pastors and laymen who want to join our Synod and be called by our congregations.

What is behind all this? The authority of the Holy Scriptures as the only infallible norm and guide in all matters of faith and life has been and is being ever more widely attacked in Missouri. This attack began in the 1840's when Missouri made a distinction between prayer fellowship and joint prayer. We considered this a distinction without a difference. Their purpose was to hold doctrinal discussions with the American Lutheran Church in the framework of Fellowship, joint prayers and devotions, before doctrinal agreement had been reached. In doing so they brushed aside clear Bible passages which Missouri had always believed and confessed as God's clear Word forbidding this. Volumes of Missouri literature had used their own language to bar us out of just such unionistic associations (joint church work and joint prayer without doctrinal and confessional agreement) before they would enter the door of Fellowship. In 1848 we forced the Synodical Conference together with the

idea they simply say "These passages do not apply! Their application is limited to non-Christians," etc.

At the same time the original truth of the first eleven chapters of Genesis is being denied.

Robert H. Thomas

The creation story is called a myth, a parable, a pre-scientific story, and so on. The history of evolution is taught and celebrated in some Missouri circles with the same reverence that the officials. Doctrinal discipline has broken down. Missouri pastors and congregations have tried in vain for many years to reverse the trend or at least to stop it. The doctrinal resurrection of the dead is being denied, Jesus and Paul are called myths. The president of Valparaiso University in public print states that he prays our Lord to give our people the intercession of a new mediator, St. Rita, during the balance of this century. The Bible tells us there is one God and one Mediator between God and man, the man Christ Jesus.

Joint prayers and common devotions with people with whom Missouri is by no means in doctrinal confessional agreement are carried on in many places and many technical confessions where no study of God's Word and no working toward doctrinal agreement is intended.

Two students from our Northeastern College enrolled in Concordia St. Louis. After school they had advantages. After two years the foundation of their faith and hope was so thoroughly shaken that they said to our Study Committee: "How can we know what is true? Doesn't the devil tempt us? Doesn't the Holy Spirit work on others?"

I answered with the words of Jesus in John 1: 21 and 23: "If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples and ye shall know the truth and the truth shall set you free."

Continuing in Jesus' verbally inspired and inerrant Word, we will have and know the truth. This is what Jesus wants us to know and to have. Our pastors, also want their parishes to have peace and certainty of forgiveness, life, and salvation. Our denominations want the same for their members.

But if we worship and work together with carnalists, those who deny one or more clear truths taught in God's Word, then we are taking away from our people the authority of God's Word and the sure foundation of their faith and hope. For that we could not sooner before our God, who will demand an accounting from us when we appear before His judgment seat.

What lies at the bottom of the work now being done? As he has so often done, man is again placing the authority of human reason above the Word of God. Men in Missouri have said that the Bible, for example in Genesis, teaches a truth, but not fact. There is a truth hidden in the myths and tales that are told there, but one must remove the lambs, the shell, the rind of the plain words and find the kernel of truth and fact hidden underneath. This new form of theological procedure is called hermeneutics. One of the chief elements is Rudolf Bultmann's Demythologizing. - The result of this.

I can understand that you are concerned about the sin and vice in the world and that the church must preach the Ten Commandments and Gospel, as the only real help and hope for sinful mankind. - The statement from Rev. H. who spoke chiefly of "the end" is not, you may not have expressed himself too clearly, very enlightening. The casual phrase "end" while attempting to set forth the real reason and the underlying cause for the phenomenon.

If I can't tell the souls redeemed by Christ: "Thus saith the Lord" and "Thus saith I, written," concerning God's revelation in Genesis, the creation, the fall into sin, the promise of a Savior, the flood and so on, how can I hold them "Thus saith the Lord" and "Thus saith I, written" when I have been a "believer" of the Lord Jesus Christ, and they shall be saved and the home? If the Bible contains errors or contradictions concerning creation and concerning Christian fellowship, how can I believe it when it speaks of salvation by cross, through faith in Christ, on the basis of His sacrifice,

Roger V. Homan

3

The new trend in Missouri, where Missouri is being swept into the stream of the ecumenical movement (the-one-visible-Christian-organization-on-earth movement), is a movement fostered by men and would-be theologians, who find their authority in human beings (Barth, Brunner, Niebuhr, Kierkegaard, Tillich, Michals, and dozens of others) instead of saying with Luther: Thus it is written and thus saith the Lord. If Luther had based his faith and confession on the church fathers and on renowned theologians instead of on the clear Word of God, God could not have used him to restore the pure Gospel to the World in the Reformation.

In closing let us repeat that we are in close and daily touch with many in Missouri who have been bringing the same admonitions and testimony as our Synod for years. Some are continuing, others have become convinced that they should sever their connections with their Synod, because they fear for their own faith and for the faith of their hearers.

In the past the Lord has driven His people to their knees in repentance and back into the Scriptures for assurance of peace and hope through various chastisements: war, famine, loss of freedom, pestilence, or other sufferings, even the Babylonian captivity of 70 years. Perhaps He will in His wisdom and love find it necessary to direct our people once more in such a manner to that which really counts in life: to find and cling to the hope of salvation through the blood of Christ, so that we can live in joy and can die in peace, knowing that in our Father's house are many mansions and our Savior, who died for us, rose again, and ascended into heaven, has prepared a place for us there.

"In Christ we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of His grace." Ephesians 1: 7.

"Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, by which we must be saved." Acts 4: 12.

I hope this has in a small way helped to explain to you the why and the wherefore of our Synod's confessional position. May the Lord keep you in His gracious care both in body and soul.

Sincerely,

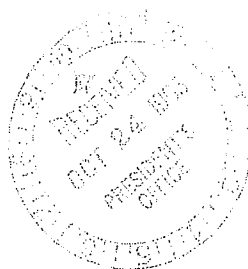
Oscar J. Mansmann

OJM:vas

cc: Pastor H. E. Hite

Oct. 21, 1953

Rev. Geo. J. W. Truman
 3524 East North Ave.
 Milwaukee 3, Wisconsin



Dear Rev. Truman:

I received your letter a couple of weeks ago. As you recall I wrote to you first concerning the split between the Miss. and Missouri Synods. A central point was that in my experience I have never heard in any sermon given by a Missouri Synod pastor any contradiction with that of the Wisconsin Synod. I have been a member of the Wisconsin Synod all my life but I have been attending Missouri Synod churches for approximately seven years. This is because I have not lived within reasonable commuting distance of a Wisconsin Synod church.

I would like to ask you several questions to clarify in my mind exactly what you meant in your letter. Where do you find in the Bible that you must agree or fellowship with other Lutheran church bodies that are not in complete doctrinal agreement? Also, how does the Bible define complete doctrinal agreement and what was the doctrinal disagreement between the American Lutheran Church and the Missouri-Wisconsin Synods (I assure they were together in 1940)?

In the next paragraph of your letter you state that the "factual truth of the first eleven chapters of Genesis is being denied." Also, you state, "the theory of evolution is taught and tolerated in some Missouri circles." I would like to ask you specifically what factual truths are being denied and by whom (what is the official position of the Missouri Synod on this)? Also, how does the particular theory of evolution you are referring to conflict with the Bible?

In the same paragraph you state, "the President of Valparaiso University in public print states that he prayed our Lord to give ear to the intercession of a new mediator St. Rita." The implications of this statement are the Missouri Synod believes in praying to saints, or that a high official in the Missouri Synod prays to saints. What exactly did you mean by the statement? I haven't read the University President's article and statements taken out of context can give erroneous implications. Are you absolutely sure that he believes in praying to saints? Have you ever asked him what he meant by that statement?

Referring to the little booklet on Fellowship you sent to me. This pamphlet says that Christians are to be found in non-different church bodies throughout the world and there have been Christians thruout the centuries. Then towards the end of the booklet it lists the "Septuagint" and "some Lutherans" as persistent errorists. What church body or bodies beside

the Wisconsin Synod Lutheran church is not a persistent error-
 ist? If the Missouri Synod is a persistent errorist (I do not
 know of any important church body in the United States that is
 closer to our Synod than Missouri) should I assume that all
 the other important Protestant church groups such as Methodists,
 Presbyterians, Church of Christ etc, are errorists?

One last question please. Do you believe the Bible is perfectly
 explicit? That is there only one correct interpretation? Or
 can there be legitimate minor variations? For instance the
 Baptists reject infant baptism but baptize only when a person
 is mature enough to understand what is taking place (Jesus was
 not baptized as an infant).

Your answers will be most appreciated.

Sincerely,

Roger W. Egan
 Box 227
 Navy 824 FPO
 San Francisco, California

53208

December 13, 1963

Mr. Roger W. Homan
 Box 227 Navy 020 PPO
 San Francisco, California

Dear Mr. Homan:

In reply to your letter of October 21 I wish to state that our Lord through His Apostle Paul in Romans 16:17 tells us:

"Now I beseech you, brethren, mark them which cause divisions and offenses contrary to the doctrine which ye have received, and avoid them." In the enclosed tract "The Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod," page 10, Missouri quotes this same passage as basic for uniting "in fellowship and worship only with those with whom they are agreed in Scriptural teachings. In this they believe that they are following God's Word, which says..." Missouri's books, publications, and literature from the year of its organization in 1827 also confess the same. In 1924 and 1925 a change began to creep in fostered by the Statementarians.

Since this tract is still distributed today as the confessional position of Missouri, but is contradicted by other present-day publications: The Lutheran Witness, The Lutheran Layman, The American Lutheran, The Cresset, and others, and especially by Theology of Fellowship-Part Two as well as by the practice of her officials, her theological faculties, and by official boards and committees, the question is very much in place: "Where does Missouri stand today on this question? Does she still stand on Scripture, or on expediency?"

Other passages of Scripture, quoted also in Missouri's Brief Statement (copy enclosed) in the paragraphs "Of the Church," especially 28, "On Church-Fellowship," teach us the same. It is not the name "Lutheran" that justifies a man's doctrinal position, but what he actually teaches and confesses. This must agree with the Holy Scriptures.

Jesus says in Matthew 23: "...Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you."

The American Lutheran Church and the Missouri-Wisconsin Synods were not together in 1920 as you assume in your letter. The Ohio Synod, now a part of the American Lutheran Church, withdrew from the Synodical Conference during the Election Controversy, also called the Predestinarian Controversy in the 1880's. Ohio insisted that God chose or elected men unto faith and unto salvation in view of their enduring faith which He could see in advance. Thus something in man and not the grace of God alone was given credit for our faith and our salvation. This we could not accept on the basis of passages such as Ephesians 2:8 and 9 and others. Read the paragraphs on "Conversion" and "Election of Grace" in Missouri's "Brief Statement." It is sad that this "Brief Statement" is being rejected and repudiated by so many of the aggressive and vocal leaders in Missouri today. It is Scripturally sound and correct, but the new element in Missouri refuses to accept it as their confession today. The San Francisco Convention in 1950 and the Cleveland Convention of 1962 amply demonstrated this.

Mr. Roger W. Noman

2

The essays and articles of Dr. Martin Scharlemann, the review of the Klotz, Busch, Surburg, and Zimmermann book, "Darwin Evolution, and Creation" by Dr. Krekeler of Valparaiso University and others, shows that leading men in Missouri no longer want to accept the entire Bible as fact and truth. Scharlemann admits that he apologized at Cleveland for causing a disturbance in his Synod, but he denies that he retracted any statements in his essays and articles and that they contained any error in the first place.

These men refer to the first 11 chapters of the Bible as myths. They question the Mosaic authorship of the first five books of the Bible

Missouri's official position on the doctrine of creation is found on page 4 of the enclosed "Brief Statement." Her position on the Holy Scriptures is found on pages 1 and 2. But this confessional position is being rejected by so many. They therefore refuse to be bound to teach and confess as Missouri once taught and confessed by adopted and reaffirming the "Brief Statement" as her confession.

I did not state or imply in my previous letter that the Missouri Synod advocates praying to saints. Nor did I state that the president of Valparaiso prayed to saints. I did state that he wrote in the article mentioned that he prayed our Savior and Lord to listen to the suggestions and to the intercession of St. Rita during the balance of this century. Thereby he is stating that the saints do intercede for the living before the throne of grace. The Bible states that we have "one mediator," the man Christ Jesus. And I do not think that the President is giving a good example or confessing Scripture truth before the youth of the Church when he publishes such statements in the "Cresset."

It is a Scripture truth that people can be saved in spite of their clinging to and advocating error in some doctrines, provided they still cling in faith to the cardinal doctrine of Scripture the justification of the sinner before God by grace, through faith, on the basis of Scripture, for the sake of the all-sufficient sacrifice of Christ. This is a gracious miracle of God. We sometimes refer to it as a blessed inconsistency. Yet this does not justify or excuse any one for teaching error and contrary to Scripture in any matter. Christ charged us to observe all things whatsoever He has commanded us. We are not to add to the Scriptures, nor to diminish aught from them.

A persistent errorist is one who despite admonition clings to, proclaims, and makes propaganda for a position that is contrary to God's Word. Even though this error may not deal directly with a cardinal doctrine of Scripture, as error it is a defiance and a rejection of the Scripture's claim to inerrancy and to its sole authority in all matters of faith and life. II Timothy 3: 16-17 tells us what Scripture is and how it is to be used. Here we learn that "All Scripture is given by inspiration of God." Jesus also says: "Thy Word is truth." John 17:17. And so there are many passages in Scripture which clearly teach us that God's Word is truth and will stand and remain as truth though heaven and earth pass away.

Every error rejects and challenges this claim, and every teacher of error charges His Savior with telling falsehood.

Yes, I believe the Bible is explicit. If there is a difficult passage, I seek further instruction on that truth in other passages. So we have always believed and taught that the Bible interprets the Bible. Anyone who teaches contrary to what the Bible teaches, even though the clear teaching of the Bible may defy human reason, is teaching error.

Mr. Roger W. Howan

3

There are some matters not answered by the Bible. We call these open questions. For example: Did John the Baptist himself doubt, or was he just directing his disciples to Jesus when from prison he sent them to ask Jesus: "Art thou He that should come, or do we look for another?" The Bible does not give the answer. This will remain an open question to the end of time. But all things needed for our salvation and for life are clearly taught.

Yes, I believe the Baptists are errorists in that they reject infant baptism and deny the regenerating power of the Holy Spirit in and through the Sacrament. They teach other errors, also. They deny that the infant child of Christian parents is in need of forgiveness. They also deny the real presence of Christ's body and blood in the Sacrament of the Altar. They deny that we receive forgiveness of sins in both sacraments.

But enough for today. If you wish to know how the spirit of liberalism and modernism is working in Missouri and elsewhere and how concerned pastors are trying to alert their people to these dangers, subscribe for "Lutheran News," New Haven, Missouri. \$2.00 for a 1 year subscription. As proof of error they reproduce many documents photographically. They also bring the testimony of others outside the Missouri Synod, who reject the same dangerous errors that these men are opposing. I assure you, this will be an eye-opener and will show why we cannot take the question of Scriptural inerrancy and the supreme authority of Scripture lightly.

Do you receive our "Northwestern Lutheran?" It can be ordered from Northwestern Publishing House, 3616-32 W. North Avenue, Milwaukee, Wisconsin 53208 for \$2.00 for the year. Both these periodicals appear every two weeks.

May true Joy and Peace, which only the Christchild can bring, be and abide with you at this season and throughout the year.

Sincerely,

Oscar J. Naumann

OJN:vas
Encl.

Appendix 3

This appendix contains the list of recommended reading handed out from WELS synodical leaders during 1961, the time of the break with the Missouri Synod. This list was used in a mailing to Fred Dissen on February 24, 1969.

Catechism of Differences
 Set of 11 tracts – continuing in His Word [sic]
 Your Blessed Fellowship in Christ
 This We Believe
 The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod No. 10 377
 Brief Statement
 Four Statements on Fellowship
 An Open Letter
 Report of Theologians' Conference-reprint from Wisconsin Lutheran Quarterly
 Report – Of the Standing Committee on Matters of Church Union to the Nine Districts of the
 Joint Synod of Wisconsin and Other States
 Church Fellowship
 Entrenched Unionistic Practices
 Fellowship Then and Now
 Proceedings – 29 Convention, 1947
 “ 31 “ 1951
 “ 32 “ 1953
 “ 33 “ 1955
 “ 78 Convention, Michigan Dist. 1956
 “ 34 “ 1957
 “ 35 “ 1959
 “ 36 “ 1961
 “ Special Synod “ 1962
 “ 37 “ 1963
 “ 38 “ 1965
 “ 39 “ 1967
 “ 46 Convention of the Lutheran Synodical Conference 1960

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