

The Military Chaplaincy Question

Ministering to the Military during the Synodical Conference and the Resulting Conflict between Missouri and Wisconsin

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December 8, 2008

When the soldiers of a nation go to war, it is a relevant question for churches to ask, "How are we going to minister to our men and women who are serving in our Armed Forces?" These men and women, who are separated from their local congregations, ought to be served with the Word of God. In the past, churches have undertaken this ministry in various ways. During the early 20th century, the Lutheran Churches of the Synodical Conference were trying to figure out the best way to carry out this service. One option that was being explored was to join the government's Military Chaplaincy program. Through the First World War, both the Wisconsin and Missouri Synods of the Synodical Conference were opposed to this program. However in the years in between the first and second World Wars, Missouri changed their stance. Missouri allowed their clergy to become a part of the Military Chaplaincy.

Both
participate
in WWI
but the
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was much
less structured
than in
the late
1930s and
thereafter

This choice by Missouri created a conflict with their Wisconsin brothers. Wisconsin opposed involvement in the ^cChaplaincy because of issues revolving around the separation of ^cChurch and ^sState and ^cChurch ^fFellowship. In spite of the differing views in this issue, both ^sSynods served their members in the ⁱⁿMilitary to the best of their ability. In order to see how the problems over the chaplaincy developed, it is important to take a look at how Missouri and Wisconsin served their members in both of the World Wars. After World War II, Missouri's participation in the Military Chaplaincy led to even more conflict with Wisconsin and eventually became one of the major issues that led to the breakup of the Synodical Conference.

When the United States became involved in World War I, both Wisconsin and Missouri became more involved in military ministry than they had been in the past. There are a few examples of ^cChaplains and camp pastors before that time, but not many. For example, Friedrich Richmann served as a Missouri ^cChaplain during the Civil War, and Reverend C.J. Broders was a Missouri ^cChaplain during the Spanish-American War. Wisconsin called Pastor Paul Brockman to

serve as a camp pastor at Fort Douglas in Utah around the beginning of the 20th century. These three examples are some of the few that can be found concerning ministries before World War I.

During the war, President Pfothenauer of Missouri appointed the Lutheran Church Board for Army and Navy to oversee the spiritual care of Synodical Conference Lutherans in the Armed Forces. Wisconsin took part in this board and was responsible for one-fifth of the costs for the military services provided to Synodical Conference members. This board ended up appointing 124 part time camp pastors who ministered at bases that were near their congregations. The board also accredited 13 pastors so that they could be commissioned as chaplains for the US government.

The board kept a list of Synodical Conference servicemen so that they could send them spiritual materials. A total of 37,582 men were registered with the Army and Navy Board. During the war, Wisconsin and Missouri worked together to distribute more than 80,000 hymnals and prayer books, 12,000 New Testaments, 425,000 sermons, and 260,000 tracts. They also issued 30,000 copies per month of a *Soldier's and Sailor's Bulletin*. These high numbers show the concern that the Synodical Conference displayed for the spiritual well-being of their members in the armed forces.

Toward the end of the war, the Synodical Conference was receiving requests from other Lutheran churches for cooperation in ministering to soldiers. Missouri was cautious about joint service. President Pfothenauer pointed out that "if mixed service were demanded of Missouri pastors, 'we may in no case join, even if we could then serve our boys very economically.' Pfothenauer did not want Missouri's soldiers coming back from the camps 'spiritually infected.'"¹ The Army and Navy Board came to an agreement with the National Lutheran

¹ Braun, Mark E. A Tale of Two Synods: Events That Led to the Split between Wisconsin and Missouri. (Northwestern Publishing House, Milwaukee, WI, 2003.), 77.

Commission's newly formed Commission for Soldiers' and Sailors' Welfare, but they said in point five of the agreement, "But the Synodical Conference reserves the right to minister to the spiritual needs of men from their congregations through their own representatives whenever it is possible for them to do so."²

This cooperation proved to be a difficult thing because of doctrinal differences. The Michigan district saw this early on. In 1918, they said, "It became apparent that it was not possible to maintain this separation of externals in doctrinal matters in joint practical work. For those people have a definite purpose in mind in this joint work. They want to erase the previously maintained boundaries and differences in doctrinal matters; they want to employ the prevailing circumstances to force a general union."³ The other Lutheran churches were trying to be united with the Synodical Conference even though there was disagreement on doctrine.

The members of Missouri noticed this as well. Part of the reason for this was the fact that joint work in serving the military members made it difficult to focus on doctrinal differences. O.H. Pannkoke noted that during time of war "it was difficult for a Missouri Synod camp pastor to consider a camp pastor from another Lutheran Synod as a traitor to God. A few extremists did. Most did not." Pannkoke said that "experience has shown that in actual practice it is impossible to define the point where external cooperation ends and spiritual fellowship begins." Such a distinction "may be made in logic," but it disappears in life.⁴ These were important issues that needed to be discussed but they were not dealt with because of the end of the war.

The years in between the World Wars led to some changes. Most importantly the government began to change their stance on the chaplains that were able to serve the members of

² Braun 78.

³ Braun 79, direct quote from the Michigan District Proceedings, Wisconsin Synod, 1918.

⁴ Braun 80.

the military. "Just as the troops were returning home the U.S. War Department issued an order that had the practical effect of excluding civilian clergymen from the training camps."⁵ The government put in place new regulations that the Synodical Conference would have to look at to see if they would be able to participate in the chaplaincy program. Krug says:

There would be a chaplain corps, selected from lists of clergy accredited by their respective denominations, ideally to be in proportion to the numerical strength of the denomination. The chaplain, acting for the commanding officer, was to be made responsible for armed forces morals and morale. There should be one chaplain for each 1200 service personnel, so far as possible. Religious beliefs of all sorts were to be grouped under three "recognized religions," Protestant, Roman Catholic, and Jewish. The chaplain, to foster the morals and morale of all persons in his assigned unit, was to be required to offer or provide for regular worship and other religious observances for all.⁶

When Missouri and Wisconsin looked at the regulations that the government was laying down, they came to two different conclusions. Missouri started looking at the program in 1935. At their convention that year, the Missouri Synod instructed President John Behnken to appoint a committee to see if calling chaplains into the Military program could be done without violating scriptural principles.⁷ Over the next three years they looked into it and came back in 1938 with the conclusion that they could join the chaplaincy. Their Army and Navy Commission then worked with the government and military authorities so that they could call pastors to serve as chaplains.

Wisconsin took a different approach. In 1937, when President John Brenner was asked to supply names of pastors that could be recommended for the chaplaincy, he declined. He then appointed a committee to answer three questions about the chaplaincy: 1. Was there need for this work? 2. Would such service employed by the government be compatible with spiritual

⁵ Krug, Clayton E. "Ministering to Members in the Armed Forces." (WLS Essay File, 1978.), 3.

⁶ Krug 4.

⁷ Braun 80.

principles? 3. Should not the church body take on the obligation of paying its own missionaries?

⁸ The Committee came back in 1939 and said:

1. There was no need to call Wisconsin pastors specifically to that work, because “any ordained minister is at liberty to minister unto the men in service.” 2. To submit to government regulations and to accept government remuneration would violate the separation of church and state. Despite official assurances that commissioned chaplains would be permitted to practice sound doctrine and confessional Lutheranism, the committee feared that “it will become a practical impossibility for them once in service.” 3. Feeling ill-equipped to offer definite cost proposals, the committee recommended that respective mission boards survey stateside army camps and navy zones to determine whether such action was needed.⁹

At the same convention there was the Report of the Committee on Chaplaincies. This report gave three reasons that Wisconsin Synod did not support the Chaplaincy. They were:

1. Since any ordained pastor is at liberty to minister unto the men in service, we deem it not necessary, in obedience to the command, “Go ye, therefore, and teach all nations, etc.,” to call men as commissioned Army and Navy chaplains; and
 2. We believe that to appoint or call ordained pastors as commissioned chaplains in accordance with the rules and regulations of the government, which includes remuneration by the government for their services, as well as the final choice by the government of the man so commissioned, is not in harmony with Scripture, because the fundamental principle of the separation of Church and state is thereby violated; and
 3. Although we have most definitely assured by such who have been, and are now, in the services that it is possible for such commissioned chaplain to practice sound doctrine and confessional Lutheranism, we fear after a thorough study of AR 605-30, TM 2270-5 and AR 60-5 that it will become a practical impossibility for them when once in the service.¹⁰

Missouri and Wisconsin had arrived at different points of view. Wisconsin said that any minister could serve a soldier. It did not have to be a chaplain. They also said that the chaplaincy program violated the principles of God’s Word. They said that it was a violation of the separation of Church and State and that because of the government regulations it would become

⁸ Braun 82, quoting from Wisconsin Synod Proceedings.

⁹ Braun 82-83, quoting from Wisconsin Synod Proceedings.

¹⁰ Woldt, Alfons L. “A History of WELS Special Ministries.” (WLS Essay File. WELS Historical Institute paper, 1989.), 12, Appendix A.

impossible for the chaplain to practice sound doctrine. The Wisconsin [§]synod even brought this up again at their convention in the summer of 1941, after the start of World War II but before the US was fully involved in the fight. There they said that they still opposed the chaplaincy for these three reasons:

1. The application for and the appointment to chaplaincy conflicts with our doctrinal stand on the divinity of the pastoral call. Also, the Training Manual of the War Department entitled "The Chaplain" specifies duties to the chaplain which are in direct violation of the divine call of a Lutheran pastor.
2. The appointment to chaplaincy and the regulation of the chaplains' duties by the War Department are a violation of the principle of separation of Church and State.
3. The spirit of doctrinal indifferentism pervades the regulations of the War Department pertaining to the office of chaplaincy and fosters unionism.¹¹

The problems that Wisconsin had with the chaplaincy would not change. Even after the war, Wisconsin still pointed out that the chaplaincy was a violation of the doctrine of the call, a violation of the separation of Church and State, and a promotion of unionism.

Missouri took a different point of view. They did not think that the program was a violation of the call. They took the point of view that the church was still extending the call to the chaplains. They also said that the chaplains could practice pure doctrine while serving in the field. In the Report of the Special Committee on Army and Navy Chaplaincy they said:

- although they (the chaplains) are under the authority of the commanding officers this provision does not imply any dictation to their spiritual ministry; consequently, the conscientious Lutheran chaplain can avoid all unionistic practices.
- The committee is also convinced that in offering our men for the chaplaincy there is no departure from the accepted Scriptural position of our Synod on the separation of Church and State.
- The Church commissions or calls these men and, even though appointed by the government, they represent us only as long as they conform to the principles and practices of our Synod as members in good standing.¹²

¹¹ Woldt 14, Appendix C.

¹² Krug 11, Addenda.

These differences, which were present before the war, did not prevent either Missouri or Wisconsin from serving their members in the military to the best of their ability. Wisconsin ended up serving their members mostly through a mailing program similar to the one used by the Synodical Conference in the First World War. They did this through the Spiritual Welfare Commission (SWC) which was organized in 1941. This commission organized meetings with the Army-Navy Board of the Missouri Synod so that they could avoid duplication of cost and work.¹³ The commission encouraged congregations to send information about those serving in the armed forces so that they could be added to the mailing list. At the height of the war there were over 17,000 names on file with the SWC.

In 1942, Wisconsin had 22 key pastors. These were pastors of congregations in the vicinity of camps, naval stations and airfields. Thus they were able to personally minister to the spiritual needs of our servicemen.¹⁴ We were even able to send our mailings to American POWs by cooperating with the International Red Cross.

Wisconsin learned of the effect that their ministry was having through many thank you letters. The following are just a few examples:

- "I have been receiving the 'Daily Devotional' booklets for some time now and would like to thank you from the bottom of my heart. They are really the only attachment to the church that I have."¹⁵
- "Your literature reached me in a hospital in England after following me all over France. You would be surprised at how many of the fellows wanted me to give them the gospel literature after I was through with it."¹⁶
- "Thank you for your literature. It has given me a great deal of pleasure to read and reread it. It is a godsend to have an organization such as yours to look after us men in the service of our country, and more so in the service of our Lord."¹⁷

¹³ Renz, Edward C. "A History of WELS Spiritual Services for Military Personnel." (WLS Essay File, 1983.), 3.

¹⁴ Renz 5.

¹⁵ Braun 95.

¹⁶ Braun 95.

¹⁷ Renz 5.

Missouri used their pastors who were serving in the chaplaincy to serve their members. By using the chaplaincy they carried out personal ministry and they proclaimed the gospel to many people. There are many examples of this ministry, reported by the chaplains themselves, in the book They Shall Not March Alone. Chaplain J.C. Brehm told about how he met a soldier in a hospital ward who had attempted suicide. After counseling the man he discovered that he had attended Sunday School as a boy but that he had never been baptized. This soldier began coming to worship services and receiving instruction. He was then baptized and gained a new outlook on life. Chaplain Brehm said that this was a good example that the Word is still the “power of God unto salvation.”¹⁸

Another example of ministry work was given by Chaplain William J. Reiss. He told about an experience when he was with the 101st Airborne in Germany. They were in a basement and the buildings around them were under grenade attacks by German soldiers. Chaplain Reiss suggested that they pray the Lord’s Prayer. As they began to pray he looked up and saw a German soldier with a grenade standing near the basement window. He thought that his earthly life was over. As they were praying he looked up and saw the German soldier on his knees praying with them. After the prayer was over the German got up tossed the grenade aside and left. Later in the war, Reiss was at a POW camp and he came into contact with that very same German soldier. The man told him that the day when he prayed the Lord’s Prayer had changed his life. Now he wanted to become a minister. After that German soldier was released from prison, he began studies in the Evangelische Lutherische Kirche.¹⁹

In spite of these examples from the Missouri chaplains, the fears of Wisconsin were vindicated. Already in 1943, Carl Schweppe gave an appraisal of the government chaplaincy. He

¹⁸ Ernstmeyer, M.S. ed. They Shall Not March Alone: Glimpses into the Life and History of the Chaplaincy of The Lutheran Church Missouri Synod. (Concordia Publishing House, St. Louis, MO, 1990.), 88-89.

¹⁹ Ernstmeyer, M.S. ed. 89-90.

pointed out many of the regulations for the chaplains that troubled Wisconsin. He even gave an example of a Lutheran chaplain who told about the unionism that Wisconsin had predicted would happen. Schweppe quoted Pastor Hjortland from Ascension Lutheran Church in Milwaukee as saying:

We work together in a friendly, helpful manner. For example, Friday morning I found several Catholic boys in quarantine, and I got Catholic prayer books for them. One evening a Jewish rabbi was ill, so I preached the sermon for his men. I even kept my hat on during the sermon to conform to their traditions. This gives you an idea of how adjustable we must be to meet the spiritual needs of our men.²⁰

Schweppe talked about many of the regulations that were troubling the WELS. Here are a few examples taken from the Military Chaplaincy manual of 1941:

-“He (the chaplain) should be devoid of mannerisms and fads, should be broadminded and sympathetic.”²¹

-“It is usual to conduct at least two services for the command each Sunday, no matter what the chaplain’s denominational allegiances may be. Such services as are required by the tenets of his church normally come first, and, second, such additional services of a general character as may be calculated to instruct, to give inspirational incentive, to improve the moral standards of the worshippers, and tend to inculcate in all a reverence for God and the truth”²²

-“The Chaplain is the servant of God for all, and no narrow sectarian spirit should color his utterance, nor should his personal work assist only a special group.”²³

These regulations were troubling to Schweppe because in his view they were examples of the Government telling the Chaplain how to carry out his ministry. These regulations foster unionism and teach the soldiers that one religion is just as good as the next. The paper by Schweppe was an explanation of the Wisconsin Synod view point. He said that the government was violating the doctrine of the call by telling the pastor to minister to those who are outside of

²⁰ Schweppe, Carl. “The Government Chaplaincy – an Appraisal.” (WLS Essay File. Wisconsin Synod Convention Essay, 1943.), 12.

²¹ Schweppe 5.

²² Schweppe 7-8.

²³ Schweppe 8.

his church. He pointed out many examples of unionism, such as the different denominations working together to minister to one another.

Missouri's pastors who had participated in the chaplaincy program made statements reflecting the unionistic attitude of the chaplaincy that had become part of their way of thinking. After coming back from the war, they wanted these unionistic ways to come into the churches in the United States. One chaplain said, "I certainly received a broader outlook of the Christian Church as a whole and that in other churches there are just as devout and dedicated individuals – both lay and clergy as our own."²⁴ Braun writes, "These Lutheran chaplains considered it 'simply ridiculous having so many groups as we have today working separately.' They were finding 'a real harmony together' and declared, 'So it should be at home; it will be it we half try.'"²⁵ These attitudes that fostered unionism were exactly what Wisconsin had feared.

There were many examples of the chaplaincy promoting unionism. Some of these were from non-Lutheran chaplains and some were from the Missouri chaplains. There was a widely circulated story called "The Silver Cord." In this story a Reformed, Methodist, Roman Catholic, and Jewish chaplain all joined together in prayer as their ship was sinking. These four chaplains gave up their life belts and then knelt down in prayer, joined together by the arms as the ship sank. "They knew no creed here but the universal creed of faith unrationed, the common property of all men who believe, the mystic union which exists between Christ and the children of God whether they worship in Protestant meeting houses, Catholic cathedrals, or Jewish synagogues."²⁶ This kind of story proclaimed to the world that all faiths are essentially one and that differences in beliefs do not really matter.

²⁴ Braun 91, quoting Griffen, "Effects of Participation".

²⁵ Braun 92, quoting "A Chaplain Looks Ahead".

²⁶ Braun 85, quoting "The Silver Cord".

Missouri Chaplain Raymond C. Hohenstein demonstrated a similar attitude in his retelling of events at Pearl Harbor. He recounted a portion of the attack by saying, “In the passageway stood one of our Guamian mess boys, also semiconscious from the fumes. When he recognized me, he clung desperately to me. In that moment, all color, creed, and military differences vanished. We were simply two Christians praying for God’s mercy and professing our common Christian faith in the Apostles’ Creed.”²⁷ Perhaps both men were true believers in Christ. However, many Christians have faith in the Apostles’ Creed while still differing on doctrine. These differences are important. The statement by the Chaplain that creeds did not matter was upsetting to Wisconsin. It showed that attitude of unionism.

Another example of doctrinal indifference is shown in the account of Missouri Chaplain Oscar Schoech. When recounting what happened at a Sugamo prison, he said that a prisoner who was sentenced to death requested communion. He had some conversations with the man and found out that he was a Christian. The Chaplain gave him the Lord’s Supper before his death. Schoech was later asked, “To what denomination did this man belong?” Schoech replied, “You do not ask in those circumstances. Just so he can see.” “See what?” “See his Lord.”²⁸ Again, this man surely could have been a true Christian, but the statement of the Missouri chaplain was characteristic of what Wisconsin said was wrong with the chaplaincy. It put pastors in situations where they might be unsure of the faith of the person to whom they were ministering.

Throughout the late 1940’s and early 1950’s the debate about the chaplaincy went on between Missouri and Wisconsin. Neither one was willing to budge on their position. In 1948, the Synodical Conference appointed a committee to study the issue of the Chaplaincy. This committee reported that there were differences in nine areas. These included “the nature and

²⁷ Ernstmeyer, ed. 28.

²⁸ Ernstmeyer, ed. 116-117.

divine institution of the local congregation, the doctrines of the call and of church and state, and unionistic practices allegedly unavoidable in the chaplaincy.”²⁹ This report did not do much to fix any of the differences. In 1953 the Missouri Synod came out with “A Fraternal Word on the questions in controversy between the Wisconsin Synod and the Missouri Synod.” This document, however, did not answer questions on the Chaplaincy. Rather, it said the questions were still being studied by the faculties of the seminaries.

In 1954 this issue was thoroughly discussed between the two synods. Wisconsin put out 11 tracts on the issues that were of concern in the Synodical Conference. The 11th tract stated their position on the Chaplaincy. It again restated the complaints against the unionism in the program. The Missouri Synod came out with “Another Fraternal Endeavor.” This document presented their side of the issue. The first main point was that the government is not the one who calls the chaplain; rather it is the church who calls the man. Missouri stated, “The government commissions the chaplains called and endorsed by the respective church bodies to promote religion and morality in the armed forces.”³⁰ They followed that up by saying, “These chaplains, commissioned by the government to do the government-prescribed work, are called by the Church as pastors.”³¹

Missouri tried to answer the charges of unionism. However, in their answer they pointed out instances where unionism was promoted. They said that there had been instances of commanding officers who tried to pressure the chaplains to become unionistic. They even pointed to a chaplain who was expected to assist in a mixed communion service at the Naval Academy. They said, “There is much temptation and danger in that direction (unionism), and the man who would serve as ambassador of Jesus Christ in uniform needs a goodly portion of stout

²⁹ Braun 96, quoting SC proceedings.

³⁰ “Another Fraternal Endeavor.” (The Lutheran Church – Missouri Synod, 1954.) 51.

³¹ “Another Fraternal Endeavor” 52.

spine.”³² They admitted the dangers of unionism, but they still thought that they could participate in the chaplaincy and maintain pure doctrine.

In the beginning of the year, G.A. Press laid out the Wisconsin position at the Missouri-Wisconsin Synod Presidents Conference. He stated that the objections had to do with the doctrines of ^sState, ^cChurch, and ^fFellowship. He pointed out that according to Romans 13:1-7 the government did not have any spiritual responsibilities. He said that these verses said the government was God’s appointed authority which had the activity of maintaining order by force. He also pointed out that according to God’s Word the responsibility of the ^cChurch was to proclaim that Word. Concerning both the ^cChurch and the ^sState he said, “Side by side they are to function in this world, honoring and supporting each other, but never mingling even their borderline activities, and certainly not meddling in one or another’s affairs or dictating policy to each other.”³³ Then concerning ^cChurch fellowship, he said, “But where this complete unity of doctrine and practice is evidently not present ^jJoint prayer, worship, and work is sinful ^uUnionism, and therefore an offence, particularly to those who are weak in faith.”³⁴

These statements by Press were a reiteration of what Wisconsin had been saying all along. They said that in the chaplaincy, the government was stepping into the realm of the church and they were promoting unionism among religions. Wisconsin looked to God’s Word for their principles, and then said that this program violated the principles. Missouri said that those principles were not being violated.

One of the last confrontations specifically concerning this issue came at the Synodical Conference ^{convention} in the summer of 1954. At the Conference ^{convention} Edward Fredrich presented a paper about

³² “Another Fraternal Endeavor” 56.

³³ Press, G.A. “The Military Chaplaincy.” (WLS Essay File. Missouri-Wisconsin Synod Presidents Conference paper, 1954,) 2.

³⁴ Press 3.

the Wisconsin view and Martin Scharlemann presented on the Missouri view. Fredrich stated concerning the matters of church and state, "Though the government is willing to say that the chaplain's spiritual authority is imparted in ordination, yet it jealously reserves for itself the right to say when and where, by whom and for whom this authority is exercised. Under the chaplaincy system the Church must surrender rights that are inherent in the absolute authority to call."³⁵ He later stated, "No matter from what good motive or under what extenuating circumstances or with what attempts at indiscrimination, the fact remains that in the chaplaincy system the State invades the realm of the Church."³⁶ He stated that since the government places regulations on the duties of the chaplain, it is really taking responsibility away from the church regarding the proclamation of the Word.

He also pointed out that since the ^cChaplain has to conduct a general service for everyone, he is really committing sinful unionism. The regulations of the government prevent him from speaking against the false teachings of other church bodies. The government is preventing the chaplain from speaking the full Word of God. In a closing statement regarding this matter, Fredrich pointed to the strength of the Wisconsin approach regarding ministering to the military and upset those who agreed with the Missouri point of view. He said:

Abhorrence of unionism, concern for the principle of separation of Church and State, and regard for the divinity of the call compel us of the Wisconsin Synod to take this stand against the military chaplaincy. We take this stand without doubting that many a chaplain may be able to report heart-warming experiences he has had, especially in his dealings with fellow-believers or the unchurched, but also without forgetting that harm and havoc will be wrought whenever the Lord's Will and Word are disregarded. We abide by this stand without being swayed by any listing of results or by any proofs that the chaplaincy system is more effective than a mailing program, for we deem such considerations beside the point.³⁷

³⁵ Fredrich, Edward C. "The Military Chaplaincy and Scouting." (WLS Essay File. Synodical Conference Convention paper, 1954.), 3.

³⁶ Fredrich 4.

³⁷ Fredrich 9.

Martin Scharlemann, a Missouri Chaplain, spoke after Fredrich. He tried to refute the points of Wisconsin but was unable to convince them of his view. He even said that when the Lutheran chaplain conducts the General Protestant service, he makes it a Lutheran service. "Scharlemann concluded with a deeply emotional recounting of Communion services held in North Africa the night before a bombing raid on Romania. The many men numbered among the flight crews of the 70 planes that did not return, 'now part of that 'cloud of witnesses' referred to in Hebrews chapter 12,' Scharlemann intoned."³⁸ Wisconsin merely saw his story as an appeal to sentiment and yet further proof of all the points they had made.

Some in Wisconsin wondered why they had been unable to persuade Missouri to their point of view. "One important answer – 'quite obvious even to 'neutral' observers' – was 'the strong organizational loyalty of Missourians to their synod,' combined with 'a reluctance to believe that a position could possibly be wrong, and a willingness to defend such a position right down the line.'"³⁹ Those in Missouri did not want to admit that they could be wrong about this. Some may have agreed with Wisconsin's point of view but they stuck by the official position of their church.

After the 1954 Convention, the conflicts between Missouri and Wisconsin in the Synodical Conference focused less on the issue of the chaplaincy. The chaplaincy became part of the larger issue of Church Fellowship. Disagreements about this doctrine eventually led to the breaking of fellowship between Wisconsin and Missouri. The Military Chaplaincy was one example of the doctrinal changes that were occurring in the Missouri Synod during the middle of the 20th century. The practical result of the split between the two Synods was that Wisconsin Synod members could no longer be directed to Missouri Synod chaplains for spiritual care. Already in

³⁸ Braun 100, quoting Scharlemann.

³⁹ Braun 101.

the 1950's, Wisconsin had started calling civilian chaplains to serve their men in the armed forces. The Wisconsin Synod today is still using a civilian chaplaincy program. These chaplains are not under the regulations of the government. Their responsibility is to serve Wisconsin synod men and women on military bases whenever it is possible for them to do so. Through these civilian chaplains and through many other avenues, Wisconsin continues to serve their members in the armed forces.

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