

What Is The CLC's Position Over Against The WELS Today?

Dakota-Montana District  
Spring Pastoral Conference  
April 28-29, 1981  
St. Paul's Ev. Lutheran  
Church, Rapid City, SD  
Wm. Russow, Essayist

## ROMANS 16:17-18

"Now I beseech you, brethren, mark them which cause divisions and offenses contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned; and avoid them. For they that are such serve not our Lord Jesus Christ, but their own belly; and by good words and fair speeches deceive the hearts of the simple." These inspired words of the apostle became the focal point and basis for the upheavals that took place in the former Synodical Conference and in our own Synod during the 50s and 60s, bringing about separation of Synods, congregations, pastors and laymen that were formerly in fellowship. They take us back to the heartwrenching Lutheran Church history of those days. Romans 16:17-18 is indeed an important Scripture in the Biblical doctrine of church fellowship and separation from fellowship. St. Paul in this passage warns the believers at Rome and Christians of all times against such as teach a doctrine at variance with the plain truths as he has proclaimed them. He begs all Christian brethren most earnestly to mark them, literally, to keep their eye on them, to be on constant lookout for them, that cause factions and scandals contrary to the doctrine which they have learned. But this is not all, the apostle also tells Christians to avoid those who bring and propagate false doctrine into the flock.

In the time frame of those hectic years, our Commission on Doctrinal Matters made comment in the booklet Church Fellowship on this passage under the heading, "Persistent adherence to false doctrine and practice calls for termination of church fellowship." Writing...."The apostle admonishes the Christians in Rome to mark, i.e. carefully to watch those who seek to arouse divisions and 'skandala' which are contrary to the doctrine which they have learned. ...Note the solemn preface 'Now I beseech you, brethren,' with which Paul introduces the plea that Christians should take note of those who are causing divisions and offenses in opposition to the doctrine which had been taught them...Here Paul is not thinking of anyone who might casually make an erroneous doctrinal statement. No, he had such in mind as cling to their error and with it create divisions. He uses a present participle to bring out the fact that it is something which those against whom he is warning practice habitually.

These are to be avoided, and that means ceasing all Christian fellowship with them....Those who question our application of this inspired exhortation to all who persistently deviate from any teaching of God's Word are apt to complain that we stress the seventeenth verse of Romans 16 but fail to do justice to the following verse, which goes on to say: 'For they that are such serve not the Lord Jesus Christ, but their own belly; and by good words and fair speeches deceive the hearts of the simple.' In applying verse 17 to all persistent errorists we have no thought of slighting this following verse. We will say, however, that it does not give a description by which Paul's bidding to mark and avoid is restricted only to a certain class of those who cause divisions and offenses contrary to true doctrine. It doesn't serve the purpose of telling us whom we are to mark and avoid. It sets before us God's own appraisal and judgment upon all those whom He would have us avoid, namely upon all persistent errorists. God would have us know that in the matter of clinging to error and disseminating it they are taking orders from their own heart, from their own desires - that is what belly means here - instead of serving the Lord Jesus, whether they are fully conscious of it or not. We cannot fellowship with them as though ours and theirs were a common cause. All who follow such an errorist and make his confession their own help to spread it. They, too, make it impossible for us to recognize them as Christian brethren."

Thus our Commission on Doctrinal Matters made this statement concerning the termination of church fellowship: "Persistent adherence to false doctrine and practice calls for termination of church fellowship. (A) We cannot continue to recognize and treat anyone as a Christian brother who in spite of all brotherly admonition impenitently clings to sin. His and our own spiritual welfare calls for termination of church fellowship. Matt. 18:17; I Cor. 5:1-6. (Excommunication) (B) We can no longer recognize and treat as Christian brethren those who in spite of patient admonition persistently adhere to an error in doctrine or practice, demand recognition for their error and make propaganda for it. Gal. 1:8,9; 5:9; Matt. 7:15-19; 16:6; II Tim. 2:17-19; II John 9-11; Rom. 16:17-18. If the error does not overthrow the foundation of saving faith, the termination of fellowship is not to be construed as an excommunication. Moreover an excommunication can only apply to an individual, not to a congregation or larger church group.

The 'avoid them' of Rom. 16:17,18 excludes any contact that would be an acknowledgement and manifestation of church fellowship; it calls for a cessation of every further joint expression of faith.....

(C) Those who practice church fellowship with persitent errorists are partakers of their evil deeds. II John 11.

From all of 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. Conscientious recognition of both principles will lead to an evangelical practice also in facing many difficult situations that confront us, situations which properly lie in the field of casuistry."<sup>2</sup>

The Romans 16:17-18 Scripture reference is the inspiration for a booklet entitled Mark....Avoid, a pamphlet authorized by the Coordinating Council of the Church of the Lutheran Confession. Mark...Avoid explains the origin of the CLC, while taking exception to the doctrine and practice of WELS in the matter of separation of fellowship with the LC-MS. For the record it ought to be recalled that the CLC is composed largely of pastors, teachers, and congregations who broke fellowship with us over a period of years before our Synod suspended fellowship with the LC-MS and who after our break with Missouri charged WELS with unscriptural fellowship principles. Thus we will find criticism of WELS in Mark....Avoid in most cases where Romans 16:17-18 is referred to or amplified. Here is one sample: "Whenever error arises in an orthodox church body, two questions need be asked: By whom? And, To what end? If the error is spoken by a 'simple' (Rom. 16:18) Christian because he just doesn't know or is confused or made a slip of the tongue, then patient admonition is called for--which takes the form of instruction in the Word of Truth. Such a person was 'just talking.' He wasn't trying to instruct anyone or gain a following. But when teachers in the church--either clergy or laymen, and when duly informed conventions and responsible leaders of church bodies speak error, the situation is different. Such speak as

---

2. Church Fellowship Wisconsin Synod Commission on Doctrinal Matters pages 5-6.

teachers and spiritual leaders whose aim is always to gain a hearing, to win disciples or followers. The Lord says of such, 'Beware!' St. Paul urges us to 'avoid' such, lest they 'deceive the hearts of the simple' - the common man in the pew and the children. Wisconsin followed an approach that led them to treat the responsible leaders of Missouri as though they were learners, weak brethren. False prophets frequently give every appearance of being willing to listen and learn ---provided they are left free to continue teaching their errors. This is the way of the unionist, not the weak brother....Does the 'marking' that St. Paul urges us to do in Rom. 16:17 involve admonition? The simple answer is 'No.' The Romans passage does not speak at all of admonition, for the important point is that those teaching and preaching otherwise than God's Word teaches be avoided---isolated---for the protection of the flock. Concern for the errorist is a secondary matter....The question is whether one can 'mark' a church body as being guilty of 'causing divisions and offenses,' but yet continue admonishing her within the bonds of fellowship. The official Proceedings of the conventions of the WELS clearly reveal that the WELS exhaustively 'marked' Missouri as an erring church body in 1953, in fact ever since 1939, but continued admonishing her within the bonds of fellowship until 1961." <sup>3</sup>

So we see that the CLC's position is this: as soon as the "marking" has taken place, the "avoiding" must immediately follow out of concern for the flock. "Marking", but not "avoiding"; is the heart of CLC's charges against WELS in the matter of termination of fellowship with LC-MS. In view of the foregoing statement one would be inclined to ask CLC concerning its understanding of the durative present participle (skopein) in Romans 16:17. On what basis has CLC distinguished between the individual Christian who in weakness is caught in some doctrinal error and a congregation, conference, or synod caught in some error. If I understand the CLC position correctly, it focuses on the teaching element where false doctrine is involved, that is, if a pastor, teacher, congregation, conference, church body proclaims or supports some doctrinal error, then because of the teaching element an immediate and automatic "avoiding" must be required. That in turn raises other questions about cases where an individual is caught teaching a false doctrine privately - whether the scope of one's teaching has any bearing on the "avoiding" of an

individual or church body at all. But we are getting ahead of ourselves in coming to grips with the CLC's position over against WELS.

#### EXPLORING THE CLC POSITION OVER AGAINST WELS

We will explore the CLC position over against WELS by looking at some of the particular words and phrases of our fellowship principles with which CLC has spoken and written against in stating its assertion that WELS doctrine of fellowship is in error, specifically in the matter of terminating an existing fellowship. CLC repeatedly refers to the actions of our Synod Conventions in 1953, 1955, 1956 (a special convention), 1957, 1959, and 1961 to prove its charges against WELS. The CLC's charges against WELS boils down to this that WELS was disobedient to God's command in the matter of termination of fellowship with LC-MS. CLC asserts that testimony by WELS to erring LC-MS had been given, but the preaching, teaching and defending of the errors continued in LC-MS; in fact error instead of being checked was multiplied. At the same time, according to the CLC assertion, the will and determination of WELS to "come out and be separate," to "avoid," seemed to be lacking. And these charges are rehearsed again and again as CLC quotes from the actions of our conventions in 1953, 1955, 1956, 1957, 1959 and 1961 in this matter of our "vigourously protesting" fellowship with LC-MS. The CLC concluded that "three decades of 'marking' Missouri, while at the same time living in disobedience to the exhortation to 'avoid' them, has produced spiritual anemia -- the inability of will to act in accordance with one's profession."<sup>4</sup>

Let us review some of the terms in our fellowship principles with which CLC has objections. We note that they were underlined in the first part of this paper.

(A) Weak brother vs. Persistent Errorist: The CLC had qualms about the term persistent errorist, a concept hitherto employed in the Synodical Conference and in the WELS (c.f. Walther's 1868 "Theses on Open Questions and Theses III particularly, and also WELS 1980 "Report to the Ten Districts," page 108). The CLC uses "false teacher" in the place of "persistent errorist." It would seem that the CLC

---

4. Mark....Avoid, -- Origin of the CLC, page 18

feels the "persitent errorist" term inadequate. Again pointing to the history of WELS' dealings with the LC-MS issue, the CLC puzzled over the reason why "admonition was deemed necessary to determine whether the erring would repent of their errors or persist in them."<sup>5</sup> CLC asserts that this posture caused WELS to follow an approach that led us to treat responsible leaders in the LC-MS as though they were learners, weak brethren - something that CLC counts as inexcusable. Thus in a 1972 paper delivered at a meeting of the Board of Doctrine of the CLC and the Commission on Doctrinal Matters of WELS, a meeting that we will treat later, the CLC representatives put forth this statement: "We feel that the 'persistent errorist' position of the WELS has caused WELS to shift its attention from the flock enjoined upon us by our Lord to concern for the false teacher, who should be admonished outside the framework of fellowship if admonition is called for."<sup>6</sup>

(B) Patient Admonition: Between the 1957 and 1959 WELS Conventions a document was produced by WELS called "A Report to the Protest Committee" which was sharply criticized by the CLC. Especially this statement came under fire: "Termination of church fellowship is called for when you have reached the conviction that admonition is of no further avail and that the erring brother or church body demands recognition for their error." CLC labeled this "false doctrine" and "new theology." "This false doctrine was adopted by the 1959 Convention...The new theology had the practical effect of urging the membership of Wisconsin to observe very carefully Missouri's reaction to all the admonition brought to bear on her to determine whether she would turn from the error of her way or continue therein. Only after this exercise of judgment could Missouri be 'marked' and 'avoided'."<sup>7</sup> It is clear that CLC never allowed for the use of Matthew 18 and other pertinent Scriptures to temper WELS' dealings with the LC-MS. CLC stands firm in this that there can be no allowance for "patient admonition" within the bonds of even a "vigorously protesting fellowship". CLC sees no parallel to the situation where the Christian congregation admonishes an erring member within its fellowship. It appears that the CLC separated Romans 16:17-18 and

---

5. Mark...Avoid, Origin of the CLC, Page 15

6. CLC Position Paper, July 18-19, 1972, Lines 34-38

7. Mark...Avoid, Origin of the CLC, Page 9

and made it the "sine Qua Non" in this matter, thus isolating this Scripture from other Scriptures that would also apply when error and sin arises among those who are united in fellowship. In 1972 CLC reiterated this position, writing, "We further believe that such (patient) admonition should take place within the framework of fellowship as long as the individual or Synod refrains from teaching the error. Here indeed we will reprove, rebuke, exhort with all long-suffering and doctrine. We believe that we are faced with an entirely different problem when a lay person, pastor, teacher or church body distorts or rejects any part of the Word of God after the charge of error has been made. If the teaching of that error continues, we must recognize the 'false teacher' even though willingness is there to discuss the matter....We are therefore to recognize the Lord's evangelical mandate to avoid those who teach or practice contrary to His Word so that the flock may be protected from the false teacher. We find no indication in Scripture that heresies are no longer a danger to the simple while false teachers are being admonished."<sup>8</sup> Thus if I understand the CLC position correctly, CLC stands firmly on this point that concern for the flock takes precedence over other Scriptures and all other concerns when the "teaching" element of false doctrine raises its head. And thus there can be no "patient admonition" within the bonds of fellowship.

(C) The Great Debt of Love Which the Lord Would Have Us Pay the Weak Brother. CLC holds that the treatment due a weak brother is entirely out of place when dealing with responsible church leaders as in the case with LC-MS. "This course of action was rationalized and defended on the grounds that the 'marking' was not yet conclusive, that there were allegedly now 'rays of hope'; that 'a debt of love' remained to be paid, and that the continuing fellowship was 'vigourously protesting.' Many present members of the CLC participated in this contradiction of 'marking,' yet fellowshiping. But the CLC has disavowed this as error and has returned to the simple Scriptural position that the 'marking,' enjoined in ROM. 16:17, is to be followed by the 'avoiding' without a time lapse allowing for a process of admonition and without artificially delaying the official, conclusive 'marking'."<sup>9</sup>

8. CLC Position Paper, July 18-19, 1972, Lines 10-33

9. Mark....Avoid, Origin of the CLC, Page 17



So we continue to rehearse the charge of CLC against WELS that continued admonition and witness to LC-MS, within the framework of even a vigorously protesting fellowship, and although done because of a "debt of love" and a desire "to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace" (Ephesians 4:3); is still disobedience to the Word of God.

(D) In Statu Confessionis: The "vigorously protesting" fellowship that WELS maintained with LC-MS in the last years before the termination of same in 1961 held this official title "In Statu Confessionis". CLC charges that there is no Scriptural warrant for such a State of Confession in dealing with situations in which error in doctrine or practice has infected a larger group of confessional brethren, such as a sister Synod, for all the reasons that have already been stated. Of course our Synod does not accept this assertion by the CLC as being correct. WELS representatives have defended the "In Statu Confessionis" action along with the other fellowship principles that have been questioned. The areas of disagreement have not been resolved, as we shall see in the next section of the paper.

But finishing the exploration of CLC's position over against WELS, we should add one more point. Perhaps we have concluded that the dispute that CLC has with WELS really boils down to the question of "when" - "when" should have the separation from LC-MS taken place. It may well be that in spite of all the rhetoric we have explored, it is still a question of "when," a matter of human judgment that has been tempered by Christian concern for the Truth of God's Word and for people, who were straying from that Truth. Could it be that CLC acted too hastily? Well, the CLC strongly objects to such a suggestion. CLC contends that the disagreement is not a matter of "when" at all, but a matter of "how" persons or persons are to be identified as such who are "causing divisions and offenses," and hence must be "avoided." Doctrine is involved, not just human judgment, counters CLC. "Thus the entire dispute has been made to appear at its worst as nothing more than impatience and rashness on the part of CLC or at its best as a mere difference in human judgment as to WHEN the separation from Missouri should have taken place....The members of the CLC freely confess that they too were misled by the false emphasis on the WHEN. Historically speaking the break should have been made much sooner. But the CLC contends.

making the WHEN the big issue has resulted in two harmful effects. First the whole issue has been reduced to the realm of human judgment....Second, the false emphasis on the WHEN has become a smokescreen which has covered a small, but vital change in the doctrine of the termination of fellowship. The reason for terminating fellowship has been changed from the observable fact that someone is causing divisions and offenses, that is preaching, teaching, and defending error, to a majority decision that the admonishing of the erring has reached an 'impasse'." 10 In this regard the CLC makes a point of mentioning that the vote at the WELS 1961 Convention concerning the impasse with LC-MS was 124 to 48, or a 72% majority vote. Then accusatory questions are asked about a breakdown of discipline in WELS and whether divergent and conflicting <sup>opinions</sup> are being tolerated in the area of doctrine, and whether WELS is following the pattern of LC-MS. For CLC notes that no disciplinary action was taken against the 48, whom they say, "disobeyed by voting against a resolution that was declared to be an act of obedience." 11

Let us conclude this section by hearing an invitation presented by the CLC in its booklet Mark...Avoid. "Now that the heat of battle has cooled we believe it would be most profitable for members of the WELS and the ELS to re-examine the history since 1938 and review the official resolutions and statements of their respective Synods.... We seek no 'pound of flesh,' no satisfaction in 'being right.' We seek but the glory of our God and faithfulness to His Word." 12 What became of this invitation to discuss this issue with CLC anew? We shall see that meetings were held, not at the initiation of CLC but by WELS, and that the areas of disagreement are still not resolved. Part of the stumblingblock is hinted at in the above CLC invitation. CLC is primarily interested in a re-examination of history of the matter, reviewing official resolutions and statements. I believe this paper has gone out of the way to give them that forum. However, WELS wishes a study of the Scriptures that form the basis for fellowship principles.

#### THE AREAS OF DISAGREEMENT STILL UNRESOLVED

Expressing a sincere desire that differences between WELS and CLC

10. Mark...Avoid, Origin of the CLC, Pages 17-18.

11. Ibid., Page 19

12. Ibid., Page 20

be removed and that fellowship between the two might be established, the 1971 Convention of our Synod asked its doctrinal commission once more to pursue every God-pleasing avenue of approach to resume discussions with the CLC. A previous meeting of the two commissions in December 1966 had failed to resolve any differences. Nor did the correspondence prior to the WELS 1971 Convention offer much hope, for it was reported to that convention that there was a "deadlock on procedure."<sup>13</sup> What was this "deadlock on procedure"? Since the CLC had charged WELS with unscriptural fellowship principles, our doctrinal commission maintained that the only proper procedure would be to discuss fellowship principles on the basis of Scripture. Accordingly, it was reasoned, the CLC would have to substantiate its charges of false doctrine and practice by WELS in the matter of termination of fellowship with the Scriptures. CLC, on the other hand, has insisted on attempting to prove our fellowship principles to be unscriptural by means of references to our Synod's official resolutions and actions. In regard to this point, the CLC President wrote on July 27th, 1970: "A discussion between the two Synods that would confine itself to the principles of church fellowship might well result in agreement that would not be agreement in fact."<sup>14</sup>

In an effort to overcome the "deadlock on procedure" our Commission appointed a committee of two to meet with a similar committee of the CLC's Board of Doctrine. So early in 1972 Pastor Harold Wicke and Prof. Heinrich Vogel went to Eau Claire to make the initial approach to the CLC for a meeting. They were cordially received, but were told that such a meeting would have to have an agenda of which they approved. They made their suggestions, we made ours. And after correspondence that cleared up the matter of the agenda, agreement was reached to meet at our Synod's office building in Milwaukee on July 18 and 19, 1972. Pastor Norman Berg was asked to serve as moderator in order to give all official representatives equal opportunity to take part in the discussions. These discussions never got beyond the first point of the agenda: "That we enter upon a discussion of the distinction between 'weak brother' and 'persistent errorist,' in the area of admonition and church fellowship."

A secretary from each body kept "minutes" or a journal of the dis-

---

13. Wisconsin Lutheran Quarterly, Vol. 69, No. 4, Oct. 1972, Page 281

14. Ibid., Page 281

cussions. Both sets of "minutes" seem to indicate that the meeting resulted in an opportunity for the CLC representatives to criticize the WELS sharply for not suspending fellowship with the LC-MS in 1955, 1957, 1959, but only in 1961. The discussion of point 1 on the agenda, which as I indicated earlier was the only point discussed at this meeting, was carried out particularly on the basis of a written presentation distributed by the CLC representatives. I have labeled this document the CLC Position Paper and have already taken the liberty of quoting from it in references no. 6 and 8 of this essay. Special attention was given, first of all, to the manner in which one deals with an individual who becomes involved in false doctrine or practice. There seemed to be basic agreement to the Scriptural principles which govern such situations, although CLC and WELS representatives used different terms - the CLC used the term "false teacher" and the WELS employed the terminology of "those who in spite of patient admonition persistently adhere to error." But when the discussion turned to the matter of dealings between church bodies where error or false doctrine has arisen, disagreement apparently became strong. In this connection references were made to official resolutions of WELS Conventions during the era in question, on the basis of the document distributed by the CLC representatives. No Scriptural warrant was allowed by the CLC representatives for a "State Of Confession" in dealing with situations in which error in doctrine or practice has infected a group of confessional brethren such as a sister Synod. The CLC "Minutes" state: "CLC believes that continued admonition (within the framework of fellowship) while the admonished errorist is teaching the error is disobedience to the Word of God, Romans 16:17-18....CLC points out that the application of Rom. 16:17-18 when our Lord calls for it does not eliminate the opportunity for admonition. In itself the act of 'avoid' is admonition, and there may be opportunity for admonition outside the fellowship also.....CLC asks: 'What program dare one substitute for the Lord's 'avoid'?'<sup>15</sup> The WELS representatives pointed out the fact that the members of CLC had not taken the "avoid" step simultaneously, but over a series of years. Their reply, as we shall see, was that they had repented of that error. However, they saw no sign of repentance on the part of WELS for the same mistake. "Let it be clearly understood - we want to present no posture of righteousness. We confess that we too are guilty of disobedience during the years that

---

15. CLC Minutes, CLC Board of Doctrine, July 18-19, 1972, Page 2

we were caught up in confusion and did not understand the Word clearly and did not have the strength of faith to act as we should have. For some of us it took longer to find this understanding than for others. All of us had to experience a process of growth in our understanding of the Word and in our personal faith before we could act as we believe our Lord requires. Our sincere hope is that the WELS will recognize the past as a period of confusion in which it was most difficult for all of us to see clearly what the Lord would have us do. Our fervent prayer is that today the WELS may come to share with us the conviction that the Scriptures do clearly show when men must be recognized as false teachers and can accept with us the uncompromising directive He presents to us because of His deep concern for the flock." <sup>16</sup> As this essayist looks at the above statements of the CLC's position over against WELS, as presented in this 1972 meeting, it still seems to me that the basic dispute centers in the question of when the WELS should have separated from the LC-MS. I point to the CLC Position Paper in reference to its criticism of the WELS for not suspending fellowship with the LC-MS in 1955, 1957, 1959, but only in 1961; and also the inadvertent when in the CLC's call for contrition and repentance on the part of WELS.

In defense of our fellowship principles, especially the "In Statu Confessionis" action in dealing with the LC-MS matter, our men held that "such a state of confession is frequently called for before terminating fellowship with a group that has been infected by error," and this for the following reasons: "1. In order to offer opportunity for determining what the confessional position of the group for which it must be held responsible really is (this may become necessary because of mutually exclusive statements, pronouncements, resolutions made in such a group; because of conflicting positions contending for mastery in this group, one or the other of which may for good reasons be considered to be only temporarily in control); 2. To offer opportunity to bring Scriptural testimony against the error infecting the group to those brethren who are not themselves advocating and propagandizing the errors --before treating such brethren as responsible partakers of the error or false practice infecting the group." <sup>17</sup> Our representatives held such procedure to be called for "to satisfy the many Scriptural injunctions quoted in their (WELS) Church Fellowship Statement bidding us to exercise and make earnest effort to preserve the

---

16. CLC Position Paper, July 18-19, 1972, Lines 40 - 55.

17. WELS Minutes, Meeting of the Doctrinal Comm. of CLC and WELS, Milwaukee, Wis., July 18-19, 1972, Pages 1-2

bond of confessional fellowship, to help the weak and confused."<sup>18</sup> The CLC representatives were not impressed with this line of thought that our men presented. Under the heading "Not Impressed" in a Lutheran Spokesman Article after this 1972 meeting, we find this analysis: "As this writing indicates the CLC representatives were not impressed with the line of thought presented in these illustrations from synodical and intersynodical life. That such things on occasion are worthy of consideration we do not question, but that they should forestall a *Beuz* called for 'avoid' of Scripture is quite another matter."<sup>19</sup> The CLC representatives were particularly unimpressed with the WELS point that several positions striving for the mastery should enter into the consideration of terminating fellowship with a sister Synod.

The July 1972 meeting ended in a stalemate as both sets of "minutes" indicate. Expressing the conviction that continued discussion at this meeting would only lead to repetition and serve no useful purpose, the CLC representatives felt constrained to terminate the discussion after it had "given its testimony." Here is how the CLC "Minutes" put it: "The meeting recognized that the discussions were becoming cyclical and repetitious. CLC voiced the opinion that the discussions had demonstrated that WELS and CLC are not agreed on the principles of fellowship and separation in dealing with a church body. The CLC representatives were satisfied to have left their thoughts and witness with the WELS representatives for consideration."<sup>20</sup> The WELS "Minutes" echo the same conclusion to this meeting: "The joint discussion of the agenda was concluded when the CLC representatives expressed the conviction that they had given their testimony and that continued discussion at this meeting would lead to repetition and serve no purpose. The WELS representatives saw no reason to dissent from this evaluation of the discussions."<sup>21</sup>

Since that time there has been no attempt on the part of the CLC to discuss the matter with us. It is the opinion of some of the members of our Commission On Inter-Church Relations that the next move is up to the CLC, since WELS arranged the last meeting, and the CLC broke it off. That is where the matter stands.

- 
18. WELS Minutes, Meeting of the Doctrinal Commissions of the CLC and the WELS, Milwaukee, Wis., July 18-19, 1972, Page 2.
  19. Lutheran Spokesman, Vol. 15, No. 7, Jan. 1973, Page Page 13
  20. CLC Minutes, Meeting of the Doctrinal Commissions of the CLC and the WELS, Milwaukee Wis., July 18-19, 1972, Page 2
  21. WELS Minutes, Meeting of the Doctrinal Commissions of the CLC and the WELS, Milwaukee, Wis., July 18-19, 1972, Page 2

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

- (A) Reading Material On Church Fellowship Positions In Various Lutheran Churches Formerly Of The Synodical Conference
1. Church Fellowship, This is a presentation of our Wisconsin Synod Commission on Doctrinal Matters, Discussed by the Joint Doctrinal Committees of the Synodical Conference
  2. Mark....Avoid, Origin of the CLC
  3. Entrenched Unionistic Practices, A Record of Unionistic Practices in the LC-MS.
  4. Four Statements On Church Fellowship, presented by the constituent synods of the Synodical Conference for study and discussion. CPH, November 1960
  5. Fellowship Then And Now, Concerning the impasse in the Inter-Synodical Discussions on Church Fellowship. (WELS)
- (B) Documents of the Plenary Meeting of the WELS Commission on Doctrinal Matters and the CLC Board of Doctrine, assembled in the Conference Room of the WELS Administration Building, Milwaukee, Wis., on Tuesday and Wednesday, July 18-18, 1972.
1. WELS Minutes, kept by secretary, Prof. Oscar Siegler
  2. CLC Minutes, kept by secretary, Pastor G. Radtke
  3. CLC Position Paper, presented by the CLC Representatives
- (C) Reports on the July 18-19, 1972 Meeting:
1. Wisconsin Lutheran Quarterly, Vol. 69, No. 4, Oct. 1972  
Pages 281-282.
  2. Lutheran Spokesman, Vol. 15, No. 7, Jan. 1973, Pages 11-14.