

A BRIEF SURVEY OF THE ELCA CLERGY

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In Pastoral Theology, Professor Vallesky handed out a sheet bearing the title What's the Difference? (Cf. Appendix #1) This sheet contained statistics from a survey of 241 Lutheran parish pastors of the greater Detroit area. The statistics were very shocking to me. I had heard how "liberal" pastors were in other Lutheran denominations, but I always thought it was only a few here or a few there who were so liberal. I checked out The Lutheran Ethic from the library (this was the book from which these statistics were taken). Further reading aroused my curiosity even more. I thought it would be interesting to see to what degree the views and doctrines of the pastors of these various denominations have changed since this survey was conducted in 1967.

It was my original intention to survey pastors from the ELCA, LCMS and WELS, but the costs of postage prevented me from doing this. But because of my interest in the newly formed ELCA which began operation in January, 1988, I limited my efforts to strictly them. Choosing to focus in on the area around Milwaukee, I drew up a list of 36 statements to which each pastor could either agree or disagree. Some of these statements were taken directly from Dr. Lawrence Kersten survey used in his book, The Lutheran Ethic. The rest were questions that I formulated dealing with current doctrinal issues among religious bodies. After having Professor Fredrich proofread and make suggestions, I randomly selected 100 pastors from the Southeastern Wisconsin Synod of ELCA to whom the survey was sent. I also included a letter of explanation. (Cf. Appendixes #2 and #3).

Of the 100 surveys sent, I received 49 responses. Of the 47 responses, 20 were merely letters or short notes which stated a

refusal to fill out the survey for one reason or another. Some of these reasons and letters will be noted later in the paper. There were a number of pastors who did not fill out the survey but invited me to call and discuss matters with them. I returned the calls of seven of these pastors and was able to converse with three of them, two by phone and the other in person. I will also include some of the things I discussed with them.

The other 29 responses were filled out to one degree or another. Of these 29, 14 were received from former LCA pastors and 15 from former ALC pastors. The results of these 29 filled out surveys are contained in the next four pages. The pages following the survey are reactions to the survey itself by both me and those who participated. In some cases several questions have been grouped together because they cover a specific area. The percentage is based on the 29 completed surveys. The percentages have also been rounded off so in some cases the total may be more or less than 100%. The N.R. refers to those who chose not to respond to that particular statement.

1.	A or D	The Bible is God's Word and all it says is true, including all it says about history.											
		<u>Agree</u>			<u>Disagree</u>			<u>N.R.</u>			<u>Both</u>		
ALC	LCA	Total	ALC	LCA	Total	ALC	LCA	Total	ALC	LCA	Total		
20%	14%	34%	25%	27%	52%	7%	7%	14%	-	-	-		
2.	A or D	The Bible was written by men inspired by God, and its basic moral and religious teachings are true, but because the writers were men, it contains some human errors.											
		<u>Agree</u>			<u>Disagree</u>			<u>N.R.</u>			<u>Both</u>		
ALC	LCA	Total	ALC	LCA	Total	ALC	LCA	Total	ALC	LCA	Total		
34%	38%	72%	10%	7%	17%	7%	4%	11%	-	-	-		
3.	A or D	Even though the Bible contains many errors and myths, it still represents God's teachings.											
		<u>Agree</u>			<u>Disagree</u>			<u>N.R.</u>			<u>Both</u>		
ALC	LCA	Total	ALC	LCA	Total	ALC	LCA	Total	ALC	LCA	Total		
35%	20%	55%	10%	7%	17%	3.5%	20%	23.5%	3.5%	-	3.5%		
4.	A or D	The account of Adam and Eve falling into sinfulness is simply a story which did not take place in reality.											
		<u>Agree</u>			<u>Disagree</u>			<u>N.R.</u>			<u>Both</u>		
ALC	LCA	Total	ALC	LCA	Total	ALC	LCA	Total	ALC	LCA	Total		
17%	21%	38%	24%	14%	38%	10.5%	14%	24.5%	-	-	-		
5.	A or D	Only those who believe in Jesus Christ as their Savior can go to heaven.											
		<u>Agree</u>			<u>Disagree</u>			<u>N.R.</u>			<u>Both</u>		
ALC	LCA	Total	ALC	LCA	Total	ALC	LCA	Total	ALC	LCA	Total		
31%	21%	54%	10.5%	21%	31.5%	10.5%	7%	17.5%	-	-	-		
6.	A or D	Jesus Christ was a real historic person who was born of the Virgin Mary.											
		<u>Agree</u>			<u>Disagree</u>			<u>N.R.</u>			<u>Both</u>		
ALC	LCA	Total	ALC	LCA	Total	ALC	LCA	Total	ALC	LCA	Total		
48%	41%	89%	-	3.5%	3.5%	3.5%	3.5%	7%	-	-	-		
7.	A or D	The miracles of Christ are unimportant.											
		<u>Agree</u>			<u>Disagree</u>			<u>N.R.</u>			<u>Both</u>		
ALC	LCA	Total	ALC	LCA	Total	ALC	LCA	Total	ALC	LCA	Total		
-	-	-	48%	52%	100%	-	-	-	-	-	-		
8.	A or D	Some of the miracles of Christ are doubtful.											
		<u>Agree</u>			<u>Disagree</u>			<u>N.R.</u>			<u>Both</u>		
ALC	LCA	Total	ALC	LCA	Total	ALC	LCA	Total	ALC	LCA	Total		
3.5%	3.5%	7%	38%	31%	69%	10.5%	14%	24.5%	-	-	-		
9.	A or D	Jesus Christ did bodily rise from the grave on Easter Sunday.											
		<u>Agree</u>			<u>Disagree</u>			<u>N.R.</u>			<u>Both</u>		
ALC	LCA	Total	ALC	LCA	Total	ALC	LCA	Total	ALC	LCA	Total		
52%	41%	93%	-	3.5%	3.5%	3.5%	3.5%	3.5%	-	-	-		
10.	A or D	A person at birth is neither good nor bad.											
		<u>Agree</u>			<u>Disagree</u>			<u>N.R.</u>			<u>Both</u>		
ALC	LCA	Total	ALC	LCA	Total	ALC	LCA	Total	ALC	LCA	Total		
10.5%	17%	27.5%	34%	24%	58%	7%	7%	14%	-	-	-		

11.	A or D	Man is naturally good but is taught evil and wickedness in his environment and society.										
		<u>Agree</u>			<u>Disagree</u>			<u>N.R.</u>			<u>Both</u>	
ALC	LCA	Total	ALC	LCA	Total	ALC	LCA	Total	ALC	LCA	Total	
3.5%	7%	10.5%	41%	34%	75%	7%	7%	14%	-	-	-	
12.	A or D	A child is already sinful at birth.										
		<u>Agree</u>			<u>Disagree</u>			<u>N.R.</u>			<u>Both</u>	
ALC	LCA	Total	ALC	LCA	Total	ALC	LCA	Total	ALC	LCA	Total	
41%	31%	72%	7%	10.5%	17.5%	3.5%	7%	10.5%	-	-	-	
13.	A or D	It is all right for a person to engage in sexual relations before marriage with the person he or she intends to marry.										
		<u>Agree</u>			<u>Disagree</u>			<u>N.R.</u>			<u>Both</u>	
ALC	LCA	Total	ALC	LCA	Total	ALC	LCA	Total	ALC	LCA	Total	
-	14%	14%	43%	24%	67%	7%	10.5%	17.5%	-	-	-	
14.	A or D	It is possible that a particular situation could justify a sexual relationship outside of marriage.										
		<u>Agree</u>			<u>Disagree</u>			<u>N.R.</u>			<u>Both</u>	
ALC	LCA	Total	ALC	LCA	Total	ALC	LCA	Total	ALC	LCA	Total	
21%	28%	49%	28%	14%	42%	3.5%	7%	10.5%	-	-	-	
15.	A or D	In the area of sex relations, traditional religious standards are no longer adequate.										
		<u>Agree</u>			<u>Disagree</u>			<u>N.R.</u>			<u>Both</u>	
ALC	LCA	Total	ALC	LCA	Total	ALC	LCA	Total	ALC	LCA	Total	
3.5%	10.5%	14%	38%	31%	69%	10.5%	7%	17.5%	-	-	-	
16.	A or D	Homosexuality is a sin.										
		<u>Agree</u>			<u>Disagree</u>			<u>N.R.</u>			<u>Both</u>	
ALC	LCA	Total	ALC	LCA	Total	ALC	LCA	Total	ALC	LCA	Total	
31%	21%	52%	10.5%	24%	34.5%	10.5%	3.5%	14%	-	-	-	
17.	A or D	A woman should be able to have an abortion if she wants one.										
		<u>Agree</u>			<u>Disagree</u>			<u>N.R.</u>			<u>Both</u>	
ALC	LCA	Total	ALC	LCA	Total	ALC	LCA	Total	ALC	LCA	Total	
7%	14%	21%	34%	17%	51%	10.5%	14%	24.5%	-	3.5%	3.5%	
18.	A or D	Women should have as equal a voice in church decisions as men.										
		<u>Agree</u>			<u>Disagree</u>			<u>N.R.</u>			<u>Both</u>	
ALC	LCA	Total	ALC	LCA	Total	ALC	LCA	Total	ALC	LCA	Total	
52%	48%	100%	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	
19.	A or D	Women should be allowed to become ordained Lutheran ministers.										
		<u>Agree</u>			<u>Disagree</u>			<u>N.R.</u>			<u>Both</u>	
ALC	LCA	Total	ALC	LCA	Total	ALC	LCA	Total	ALC	LCA	Total	
52%	48%	100%	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	
20.	A or D	Homosexuals should be allowed to become ordained Lutheran ministers.										
		<u>Agree</u>			<u>Disagree</u>			<u>N.R.</u>			<u>Both</u>	
ALC	LCA	Total	ALC	LCA	Total	ALC	LCA	Total	ALC	LCA	Total	
24%	28%	52%	17%	7%	24%	7%	10.5%	17.5%	3.5%	3.5%	7%	

21. A or D Denominations should issue policy statements on morally neutral social and economic matters.

<u>Agree</u>			<u>Disagree</u>			<u>N.R.</u>			<u>Both</u>		
ALC	LCA	Total	ALC	LCA	Total	ALC	LCA	Total	ALC	LCA	Total
17%	21%	38%	17%	17%	34%	17%	10.5%	27.5%	-	-	-

22. A or D The church can best contribute to the solution of social problems by preaching the gospel and by winning individuals to salvation.

<u>Agree</u>			<u>Disagree</u>			<u>N.R.</u>			<u>Both</u>		
ALC	LCA	Total	ALC	LCA	Total	ALC	LCA	Total	ALC	LCA	Total
31%	28%	59%	10.5%	10.5%	21%	10.5%	7%	17.5%	-	3.5%	3.5%

23. A or D The abiding mission of the Church is the salvation of mankind to eternal life rather than carrying on a social reform program here in this world.

<u>Agree</u>			<u>Disagree</u>			<u>N.R.</u>			<u>Both</u>		
ALC	LCA	Total	ALC	LCA	Total	ALC	LCA	Total	ALC	LCA	Total
31%	17%	48%	3.5%	10.5%	14%	14%	17%	31%	3.5%	3.5%	7%

24. A or D Church creeds can be expected to change over time.

<u>Agree</u>			<u>Disagree</u>			<u>N.R.</u>			<u>Both</u>		
ALC	LCA	Total	ALC	LCA	Total	ALC	LCA	Total	ALC	LCA	Total
14%	14%	28%	24%	24%	48%	10.5%	10.5%	21%	3.5%	-	3.5%

25. A or D Many of the doctrines of the Bible have little relevance to the modern world.

<u>Agree</u>			<u>Disagree</u>			<u>N.R.</u>			<u>Both</u>		
ALC	LCA	Total	ALC	LCA	Total	ALC	LCA	Total	ALC	LCA	Total
-	7%	7%	45%	38%	83%	3.5%	7%	10.5%	-	-	-

26. A or D Man plays no part whatsoever in his own salvation or conversion.

<u>Agree</u>			<u>Disagree</u>			<u>N.R.</u>			<u>Both</u>		
ALC	LCA	Total	ALC	LCA	Total	ALC	LCA	Total	ALC	LCA	Total
31%	17%	48%	10.5%	21%	31.5%	7%	14%	21%	-	-	-

27. A or D It is not as important to worry about life after death as about what one can do in this life.

<u>Agree</u>			<u>Disagree</u>			<u>N.R.</u>			<u>Both</u>		
ALC	LCA	Total	ALC	LCA	Total	ALC	LCA	Total	ALC	LCA	Total
21%	28%	49%	17%	14%	31%	10.5%	7%	17.5%	-	3.5%	3.5%

28. A or D Personal salvation is the chief reason for being Christian.

<u>Agree</u>			<u>Disagree</u>			<u>N.R.</u>			<u>Both</u>		
ALC	LCA	Total	ALC	LCA	Total	ALC	LCA	Total	ALC	LCA	Total
24%	10.5%	34.5%	28%	31%	59%	-	7%	7%	-	-	-

29. A or D A Lutheran can accept a view of the evolution of man from lower forms of animals as quite possible.

<u>Agree</u>			<u>Disagree</u>			<u>N.R.</u>			<u>Both</u>		
ALC	LCA	Total	ALC	LCA	Total	ALC	LCA	Total	ALC	LCA	Total
34%	31%	65%	10.5%	10.5%	21%	7%	7%	14%	-	-	-

30.	A or D	I have no objections to another Lutheran minister from any other branch of Lutheranism preaching in my church.											
		<u>Agree</u>			<u>Disagree</u>			<u>N.R.</u>			<u>Both</u>		
ALC	LCA	Total	ALC	LCA	Total	ALC	LCA	Total	ALC	LCA	Total		
41%	38%	79%	10.5%	10.5%	21%	-	-	-	-	-	-		
31.	A or D	I have no objections to a Lutheran from any other branch of Lutheranism taking Communion at my church.											
		<u>Agree</u>			<u>Disagree</u>			<u>N.R.</u>			<u>Both</u>		
ALC	LCA	Total	ALC	LCA	Total	ALC	LCA	Total	ALC	LCA	Total		
52%	48%	100%	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-		
32.	A or D	I have no objections to a person from another Christian denomination (Baptist, Catholic, Methodist) taking Communion at my church.											
		<u>Agree</u>			<u>Disagree</u>			<u>N.R.</u>			<u>Both</u>		
ALC	LCA	Total	ALC	LCA	Total	ALC	LCA	Total	ALC	LCA	Total		
34%	41%	75%	14%	3.5%	17.5%	-	-	-	3.5%	3.5%	7%		
33.	A or D	A person can be a member of a Masonic Lodge and still be a good Lutheran.											
		<u>Agree</u>			<u>Disagree</u>			<u>N.R.</u>			<u>Both</u>		
ALC	LCA	Total	ALC	LCA	Total	ALC	LCA	Total	ALC	LCA	Total		
31%	34%	65%	7%	7%	14%	14%	7%	21%	-	-	-		
34.	A or D	I see all American Protestant religions as equally good.											
		<u>Agree</u>			<u>Disagree</u>			<u>N.R.</u>			<u>Both</u>		
ALC	LCA	Total	ALC	LCA	Total	ALC	LCA	Total	ALC	LCA	Total		
7%	10.5%	17.5%	34%	28%	62%	10.5%	10.5%	21%	-	-	-		
35.	A or D	I would like to see the ELCA merge or join together with other Protestant church bodies.											
		<u>Agree</u>			<u>Disagree</u>			<u>N.R.</u>			<u>Both</u>		
ALC	LCA	Total	ALC	LCA	Total	ALC	LCA	Total	ALC	LCA	Total		
17%	14%	31%	24%	28%	52%	10.5%	3.5%	14%	-	3.5%	3.5%		
36.	A or D	Religious fellowship may be practiced without complete confessional agreement.											
		<u>Agree</u>			<u>Disagree</u>			<u>N.R.</u>			<u>Both</u>		
ALC	LCA	Total	ALC	LCA	Total	ALC	LCA	Total	ALC	LCA	Total		
48%	44%	92%	4%	-	4%	-	4%	-	-	-	-		

The first four statements all relate to the doctrine of Scripture. I worded them to try and get an indication of the view of Scripture ELCA pastors had. The first one contained the phrase "including all it says about history" to see how many would hold to the inerrancy and infallibility of Scriptures. The response makes it obvious that there are those in the ELCA who do not believe this. This was reinforced by a conversation with an ELCA pastor. Statements number two and three carry it a step further to try and classify how "liberal" they are. The fourth statement is what you might call an application statement to see how much some pastors do believe in the historicity of Scripture. The response there also speaks for itself.

In my conversation with three of the pastors I focused in on this fourth statement and asked both if they thought Adam and Eve were real historic people. All three of them responded that it is not all that important if Adam and Eve were real historic people. What is important is to show that people are in a broken relationship with God. One of these pastors grew up in a conservative LCMS where he learned that Moses was the author of the first five books of the Bible. Now he holds firmly to the historical-critical interpretation. He said he was introduced to it in his seminary training and had no reason to doubt it. When asked how he taught this story when preaching or teaching he replied that he merely takes each creation account (Gn 1 and 2) and points out why each author wrote his viewpoint of creation.

He also stated that stories like the fall of Jericho and Jonah in the belly of the fish are stories which have stretched the truth. He quickly added, however, that these stories are still important in

that they teach us God's Word. Both pastors do not deny the existence of Jesus because historical evidence from writers such as Josephus are too strong.

One pastor wrote this in response to "disagreeing" with the first statement, "I believe that the Bible is the Word of God which reveals without error God's message of his truth and mercy showing us all that we need to know and trust. In that it is absolutely reliable. Its purpose is not historical and in minor details it at times does not agree with itself, as you should full well know if you have studied it." This same pastor agreeing with #2 commented, "No errors on matters of what God's will is for his people."

One pastor commented that "inerrant" is a word that perhaps served the church in past but it certainly does not need to belong in a statement concerning Scripture in this day and age. He also stated that perhaps the LCMS and WELS are doing themselves harm by not keeping up with "current" biblical scholarship.

Responses to these first four statements as well as the conversations with the two other pastors confirmed what I had heard and read about the ELCA. It saddens me to think that there are those who call themselves Lutheran and at the same time deny parts of the Bible as probably not really happening. It frustrates me to hear the one pastor tell me that if the 86 year old lady in the front pew wants to believe Adam and Eve were real human beings who existed at a real point in time, he won't trouble her. At the same time he would also have no problem with the professor in the back pew who believes they were not real historic people.

Statements #5-9 address themselves briefly to the Person and

Work of Jesus Christ. The statistics speak for themselves. It is a sad commentary on the condition of the ELCA if the response to #5 is any indication of their teaching of justification. To me, it does not get any clearer than the words of Peter in Acts 4:12, "Salvation is found in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given to men by which we must be saved."

It appears that while many may deny some of the miracles of the Old Testament, ELCA pastors for the most part would believe in the miracles of Jesus by the 100% agreement to the importance and the 69% disagreement that they did not occur. My interview with the two pastors however, raised some further questions. Both of these men do not deny the fact that Jesus did indeed perform miracles. Both then qualified themselves when they noted that he did not do as many as the Gospel writers would have us believe. Both of the men did however point out the importance of the resurrection and what it means for preaching. One of them said simply that there would be no Christianity if Christ had remained in the grave.

In concluding my phone conversation with one of the pastors, she made the statement, "One of the reasons Christ lived on this earth was to show us how we are to relate to other human beings." This aroused my interest and so I asked this follow-up question, "What would you say then was the purpose of Christ' suffering, death and resurrection?" To that she responded, "Jesus' death shows us that there is suffering in the world for even the innocent, but he bore up under it. The fact that God raised him from the dead shows that he was vindicated." I then countered with this statement, "So you then would not agree that the real purpose of Christ's death was to pay

for the debt of sin that all people owe God." She stated, "I guess I have trouble picturing God as one who sits in heaven with a scorecard keeping track and then takes out his anger by punishing his Son." I still have trouble believing what I heard her say.

Statements #10-12 take up the subject of Original Sin. I worded this doctrine in three different statements to get an indication of when and if they felt a child became sinful. It would appear that many still hold to the Bible's teaching of Original Sin, but it is by no means 100%. One person wrote these statements in response. "Before birth we are a possibility. . . an essence, an image of God. Birth is mortality. We are born into a sinful humanity. . . affected by our own flesh, the world, and the devil." It was also interesting to note that several pastors began to strike the word "man" and write in the word "humanity" or "humans." This was not uncommon throughout the survey.

Statements #13-17 deal with questions of morality. Again I think the results are very thought provoking. The one that surprised me the most was the statement on whether or not homosexuality is a sin. One of the pastors I spoke with said that he did not believe it was a sin. He said that when Jesus refers to the sin of Sodom he is talking about their lack of hospitality as the wrong they did. This pastor also said that Paul does make a few passing comments and even calls homosexuality a sin but there he is really speaking about male prostitution. Another pastor commented that Paul was really referring to the grossest sinners of his day and the fact the studies shows people are born with homosexual tendencies is different and further study is needed to solve this delicate issue.

Another pastor wrote, "I believe that homosexual involvement with another person is against God's will. I am struggling with the question of what the case may be with the assertion that some come into this world with homosexual orientation. I wish it was as easy a decision as your synod and seminary seem to think it is." This same pastor wrote this about #14, "Yes - to ward off a greater evil like murder, but that doesn't mean that it could be without sin and need forgiveness. it might conceivably be the lesser of two evils and therefore the 'right' thing in some unusual circumstance."

One pastor, wrote upon agreeing that a woman should be able to have an abortion if she wanted one, "It is, after all, the law of the land." Another pastor wrote and said it depended on how many children she already had and whether this child was wanted or not. The one pastor who circled both simply stated that it would depend on the situation.

The next three statements address themselves to the role of man and woman and also the ministry of the church. It did not surprise me to see 100% agreement on statements #18 and #19. One pastor said that Paul does address the issue in his epistles, but those words simply do not apply to us today.

Many people jotted down a short comment concerning #20. About half who agreed with the statement added the qualification, "only if celebrate." One pastor wrote, "I am opposed to having practicing homosexuals in the ELCA just as I am opposed to having child molesters or heterosexual adulterers in the ELCA. But since neither you nor I are free of adultress thoughts, I don't know if an abstaining homosexually oriented person must be barred from the

ministry. I am still wrestling with this awful question."

If I were to send out another survey, I would omit #21 because as was properly pointed out, there really are no morally neutral issues. Many pastors commented the same thing and this no doubt explains why this statement was left blank by many who filled out the survey.

Statements #23-29 do not neatly fall into any one category but are merely random statements to get a feel about such things as social gospel, conversion and sanctification. One person wanted to know what the difference in #23 was between "the salvation of mankind" and "social reform program." A couple of people pointed out that historically, the creeds have changed when such phrases as "filioque" were added to the Nicene Creed. Another surprise to me was the response to #29. It would appear that many in the ELCA would cut out the very first chapters of the Bible as never really happening.

The remainder of the statements call attention to the doctrine of fellowship. Another area of seemingly doctrinal unity among the ELCA is communion other Lutherans who are not of your denomination. A sizable majority also would allow even Catholics to commune, although several added the qualification, "only if the believe in the Real Presence." There were at least three men who said that they would like to see the efforts to merge with the Catholic church move along a little more quickly. One pastor said that we are no longer dealing with the barbarian Catholic church, but with one that is current with the times.

Before I add some personal thoughts and reflections to conclude this paper, I would like to share with some comments I received from

both those who filled out the survey and those who chose not to fill it out.

"For a seminarian to assume that this survey will provide an enlightening data on the state of Lutheran confessional belief is naive."

"I cannot answer many of these questions. They are simplistic and ambiguous. While God's love for us is simplistic, the way that love is exercised is anything but!"

"I think that you shape your questions like a debater or politician rather than as one who wants to seek the truth about our ELCA.

"I cannot answer questions formulated in such a simplistic, dogmatic way."

"Not interested in providing ammunition to use to document your biases."

"I am not willing to fill out your survey for the following reasons: 1) I could not answer many of your statements with a simple agree or disagree. 2) The survey is very slanted and unprofessional in its presentation. 3) My own bias against your Synod would get in the way. I have seen too much of Synod's legalistic narrow ways..... and what it has done in the lives of so many of our people. Quite frankly I feel if Christ were to return today and he were to get into one of your pulpits (which he probably couldn't).....he would fill the hour with 'Woe to you!'"

When I first decided to conduct this survey, I did not fully realize what would be involved. If I were to do something similiar again, I would again mail out a very similiar survey, but I would

also do more personal interviews with pastors. This survey was indeed sent with some preconceived biases, the first and foremost being that God's Word is inerrant because ALL OF SCRIPTURE IS VERBALLY INSPIRED (2 Tm 3:16). I will also be the first person to admit that this survey was in no way a scientific one because any time people are allowed to add their own comments and also scratch out and change words, it is hard to get accurate data. And 29 responses is hardly proof to make sweeping judgments about every single ELCA pastor, congregation and member.

Yet among all the Agrees, Disagrees, No Responses, comments and interviews, there is some valuable information for us to learn. There are many things currently being taught, confessed and believed in the ELCA which are contrary to God's Word. On the following page is a letter from a pastor who did not fill out the survey. The only thing I have excluded from the letter is his name.

April 11, 1988

Dear Mr. Brokmeier,

I cannot return your questionnaire because obviously the questions are loaded and filled with double meaning. In practically every question the obvious response that I would make is, "It depends on what you mean by ie. errors, etc. " You are obviously a literalistic theologian and you depend on the bible as an absolute source for your views on all kinds of modern issues, such as homosexuality, women's roles in ministry. It is a simplistic view that seems to attract a lot of people, who don't want to struggle with the issues. I would question how much struggling you have done with recent scholarship. I note that your questions were written by somebody else from 20 years ago. Now, Mr. Brokemeier, where are you in this process? Don't you have any questions of your own? Are you so filled with hatred for others who don't think like you do, that your mind is closed?

The antecedent bodies of the ELCA fought this issue of the Doctrine of the Word early in this century. It's an old and dead issue for us. We have moved on to more important issues. My advice for you is to leave your present Sunday school setting and try to get accepted into a real theological seminary, such as LSTC in Chicago or Luther-Northwestern in St. Paul. Then you will find out how much you have missed and how much you don't know!!! But if you want to keep plodding along in the narrow dogma and dead issues of yesteryear and you want somebody else to do your thinking for you, then by all means stay put.

While this pastor did not fill out a survey, to me, his position on many of the statements of the survey is quite obvious. I would also add that this letter alone made the entire project worthwhile because it made me appreciate immensely the grace God has shown to me in making me a member of The Holy Christian Church through a church body which still regards all the doctrines of the Bible as important. It also makes me say a humble prayer that God, in his grace, would continue to grant Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod the knowledge and commitment to keep those teachings pure throughout all generations.

Appendix #1

WHAT'S THE DIFFERENCE?

Statistics from "The Lutheran Ethic,"
 Dr. Lawrence Kersten, E. Michigan University - 1971
 Survey of 241 Lutheran parish pastors of greater Detroit area

	<u>LCA</u>	<u>ALC</u>	<u>LCMS</u>	<u>WELS</u>
*Ch. 1 - 1) Bible God's inerrant Word	10%	19%	74%	100%
Ch. 2 - 2) Evolution of man from lower forms possible	78%	78%	19%	0%
3) Adam and Eve historical persons	17%	28%	80%	100%
4) Child sinful at birth	67%	74%	96%	100%
Ch. 3 - 5) Salvation only through Jesus	43%	52%	84%	100%
Ch. 5 - 6) Extramarital relations okay in certain situations	44%	30%	17%	6%
7) Abortion okay if child not wanted	43%	18%	8%	0%
Ch. 4 - 8) Can be good Lutheran <u>and</u> lodge member	83%	85%	24%	0%
Ch. 7 9) Women ministers okay	62%	30%	8%	0%
10) Church best solves social problems by preaching Gospel	52%	70%	78%	100%

*This We Believe

Appendix 2

SURVEY OF ELCA CLERGY

Before filling out the survey please check what denomination you, as a pastor, were before the merger and formation of ELCA.

____ LCA ____ ALC ____ AELC ____ Other (Specify _____)

Directions: Please complete the survey by circling either A or D. Circle A if you Agree with the statement and D if you Disagree.

1. A or D The Bible is God's Word and all it says it true, including all it says about history.
2. A or D The Bible was written by men inspired by God, and its basic moral and religious teachings are true, but because the writers were men, it contains some human errors.
3. A or D Even though the Bible contains many errors and myths, it still represents God's teachings.
4. A or D The account of Adam and Eve falling into sinfulness is simply a story which did not take place in reality.
5. A or D Only those who believe in Jesus Christ as their Savior can go to heaven.
6. A or D Jesus Christ was a real historic person who was born of the Virgin Mary.
7. A or D The miracles of Christ are unimportant.
8. A or D Some of the miracles of Christ are doubtful.
9. A or D Jesus Christ did bodily rise from the grave on Easter Sunday.
10. A or D A person at birth is neither good nor bad.
11. A or D Man is naturally good but is taught evil and wickedness in his environment and society.
12. A or D A child is already sinful at birth.
13. A or D It is all right for a person to engage in sexual relations before marriage with the person he or she intends to marry.
14. A or D It is possible that a particular situation could justify a sexual relationship outside of marriage.
15. A or D In the area of sex relations, traditional religious standards are no longer adequate.
16. A or D Homosexuality is a sin.
17. A or D A woman should be able to have an abortion if she wants one.
18. A or D Women should have as equal a voice in church decisions as men.
19. A or D Women should be allowed to become ordained Lutheran ministers.

Appendix 3

6717 West Wartburg Circle
Mequon, WI 53092
March 30, 1988

Dear Pastor,

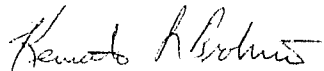
My name is Ken Brokmeier. I am in my last year of preparation for the ministry at Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Seminary. I am currently writing a paper on modern Lutheranism in America. I am doing my paper on the ELCA and request you help. I have chosen you and 99 other pastors from the Southeastern Wisconsin Synod to assist me.

Enclosed you will find a survey dealing primarily with your attitudes, values, and feelings about religion and the Lutheran Church. This survey is based on study that Lawrence K. Kersten conducted in 1967 in the Detroit area. I would appreciate your completing the survey as soon as possible and returning it in the enclosed pre-stamped envelope by April 14.

The questionnaire has been worded so that you will be able to respond by merely circling whether you Agree or Disagree with the statement. It should only take you about 20 minutes to complete the survey. All responses are completely confidential. There are no identification numbers on the forms and I am asking you to please not sign your name.

It is my sincere hope that you will enjoy answering this survey and use this opportunity to express your true feelings. If you have any questions or comments, please feel free to call me at school. My telephone number is (414) 242-4730. Many thanks for your help and cooperation.

Sincerely,



Kenneth L. Brokmeier

Enclosure