

**THE CHIEF DOCTRINAL
DIFFERENCES
BETWEEN THE
ELCR
AND OTHER LUTHERAN CHURCHES**

By

Pastor Gavin L Winter

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PO Box 692
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INTRODUCTION

The following presents in the one booklet a series of essays presented at four Fellowship Days of the Evangelical Lutheran Congregations of the Reformation. These Fellowship Days were held on 18 March, 2001, at Lowood, 24 March, 2002, at Toowoomba, 23 March, 2003, at Brisbane, and 20 March, 2005, at Woombye. The author was requested to state what the Scriptural differences are between the ELCR and other Lutheran Churches. He has particularly concentrated on the differences between the ELCR and the Lutheran Church of Australia (LCA), but has also referred to other smaller Lutheran Churches in Australia, as well as the USA, where it is felt that was pertinent.

Upon completion of this series, the ELCR requested that they be placed in the one booklet, as representing the Doctrinal position of the ELCR. Hence what you have before you. Concerning these essays it is stated that the ELCR at its Convention and in its congregations has unanimously adopted the resolutions that since it regards each of these essays to be:

“in full agreement in doctrine and practice with what Holy Scripture teaches,

Be it resolved,

That all congregations of the ELCR accept it as their official Scriptural Position and bind themselves to abide by it in doctrine and practice.”

In order to give an introduction to the various Lutheran church bodies in Australia, the author has also added a short history of the Lutheran Church in Australia he wrote several years ago.

May the contents of this book help to fulfill the Lord's command, “Whosoever therefore shall confess Me before men, him will I confess also before My Father which is in heaven” (Matt 10:32)

Pastor Gavin L Winter (8/06/2006)

HISTORY OF THE LUTHERAN CHURCH IN AUSTRALIA

FORMATION OF ONE CHURCH IN GERMANY. Luther and true Lutherans in Germany had distinguished themselves by their unswerving loyalty to the Scriptures. The Reformed, the followers of Zwingli and Calvin, ultimately allowed human reason to decide matters of doctrine. Sadly by the early 1800's, the Lutheran church in Germany had departed to a large extent from the doctrines that Luther regarded as so precious. To many, human reason reigned supreme, Scripture was no longer looked upon as God's Word and few knew the true way to salvation through Christ the Saviour. In the wars brought by Napoleon in the early 1800's, much of Prussia was devastated by the many battles that were fought. But a very sincere King, Frederick William III, took the throne, with the desire to again make Prussia strong. In his desire to unify the country, he decided in 1817 to attempt to unify the church by uniting the Lutheran and Reformed Churches together to form the Evangelical Church (State Prussian Church).

COMPROMISE IN DOCTRINE OF LORD'S SUPPER. One of the differences between the Lutherans and Reformed was the doctrine of the Lord's Supper. In 1830 the King ordered that a new church liturgy (Agenda) be used in the Union Church. The Lutherans believed Christ's body and blood to be truly present in the Lord's Supper. The Reformed declared that this was not so, the bread and the wine merely representing Christ's body and blood. The Agenda proposed a compromise, using the words, "Christ said: This is My body; Christ said: This is My blood." Each side could then understand these words as they pleased. There was no true unity in doctrine. Though many accepted this, true Lutherans were not prepared to accept such a false union and refused to be a part of the Union Church. The King decided to use coercive measures to force them to join. Churches were closed, pastors were dismissed from office and imprisoned, people were fined for attending true Lutheran services and some farmers were even forced to billet small groups of soldiers. Their faith meant so much to the faithful Lutherans that they refused to budge in the face of such persecution. Yet finally they began to yearn to travel to a place where they had religious freedom.

PASTOR KAVEL AND HIS FLOCK LEAVE GERMANY. Amongst the faithful Lutheran pastors was Pastor Kavel. He had trained at Berlin University, not an orthodox Seminary. He had belonged to the Union Church, but began reading the writings of Dr Scheibel, an orthodox Lutheran professor of Breslau University. This convinced him of his duty to leave the Union Church. He took up the idea of his members to leave Germany. He visited London, England, and there visited George Fife Angas, a wealthy British businessman, who offered to settle the persecuted Lutherans in Australia. Angas advanced money both for their fares, as well as for the purchase of land in the new colony. When the King allowed them to leave, they boarded barges in June 1838, and began their long journey to Hamburg harbour and finally to Australia.

SETTLEMENT IN ADELAIDE, SOUTH AUSTRALIA. The first of three boatloads having arrived at Port Adelaide, Pastor Kavel and his flock first settled at Klemzig on the Torrens River, now a suburb of Adelaide. The second boatload settled at Hahndorf, named in honour of their ship Captain, Hahn, who helped his passengers find this rich farming district. A third boatload settled at Glen Osmond. Pastor Kavel was faithful to his members and endeavoured to teach them the Word of God. He had learned the English language, and so was a great help in them settling the new country. However his training had not been soundly Lutheran, and thus he had a number of false ideas. His people chiefly were farmers, growing vegetable crops to sell in Adelaide. They took their religious life seriously, seeing to it that there was regular religious instruction in both church and home. The first Lutheran Convention in Australia was held in 1839 under a Gum Tree at Glen Osmond. At this Convention an Apostolic Constitution was adopted. Though it had some fine points, yet it also had unscriptural elements. Undue prominence was given to the office of elder, allowing them to rule the congregation, and Kavel would not regard someone as truly Lutheran who would not accept his Apostolic Constitution.

FRITZSCHE ARRIVES IN ADELAIDE. About this time, four missionaries from Dresden, Germany had been brought out by Mr Angas to help Christianise the aboriginals. Their names were Schuermann, Teichelmann, Meyer and Klose. They began mission work in South Australia, even setting up a school for the natives in the Adelaide area. Since they would not accept Kavel's Apostolic Constitution, Kavel would not regard them as truly Lutheran. Meanwhile, Pastor Fritzsche, a sound Lutheran Pastor who had received a thorough, orthodox Lutheran training under Dr Scheibel, was encouraged by Pastor Kavel to travel with his flock to South Australia. He arrived in 1842, his members settling in Hahndorf, Lobethal, and in Bethany in the Barossa Valley. Fritzsche compensated for what Kavel lacked in sound Lutheran Theology. Much trouble was made by a man by name Krumnow, who tried to gather around him members of Kavel and Fritzsche. In due time he was excommunicated, and left to settle in Victoria in a communistic settlement he established.

TROUBLE LEADS TO SPLIT BETWEEN KAVEL AND FRITZSCHE. Three issues now arose between Kavel and Fritzsche which eventually lead to a split between them. The first of these was the Apostolic Constitution, which Fritzsche also was unhappy with, but was prepared to patiently deal with in love. Secondly, Kavel had false millennialistic ideas on which he refused to budge. Finally, at the 1846 Convention in Bethany, Kavel had raised 6 protests against the Lutheran Confessions, passages with which he said he could not agree. At the Convention, Kavel objected to the attendance of the Dresden Missionaries. With the Convention only having begun, Kavel and his people walked out and continued their sessions a few kilometres away. This resulted in a split in the Lutheran Church in Australia, which has continued to this day.

FIRST TRAINING OF PASTORS IN AUSTRALIA/ CONFSSIONAL UNION. In due time the Dresden Missionaries assisted Pastor Fritzsche in serving his congregations. However Fritzsche saw the need to train other pastors for the Lord's work. From 1845-1855, a seminary was set up by him at Lobethal, the building still standing today. Three men, Oster, Henzel and Stempel were given a thorough, orthodox Lutheran training by Fritzsche, and became pastors in the Evangelical Lutheran Synod in Australia, as the Fritzsche group later became known. Meanwhile both Kavel (1860) and Fritzsche (1863) died. Both groups decided to meet to bring about a union. Their purpose was jointly to establish a mission in Central Australia amongst the Aborigines (Lake Killalpaninna). Sadly, this union was not based on a complete settlement of matters of doctrine. The millenium was effectively looked upon as an Open Question. This Confessional Union lasted from 1864 to 1874 when the Kavel group went into fellowship with other liberal Lutheran churches in South Australia and Victoria. The Fritzsche group (ELSA) could not accept this as Scriptural and severed the Confessional Union.

CONTACT WITH MISSOURI SYNOD/ EXPANSION OF ELSA. The ELSA had been receiving ministers from the Hermannsburg Mission Institute in Germany. Though they were on the whole sound, they were inflicted with pietism, an undue emphasis on the Christian life. Other liberal Lutheran Synods in South Australia and Victoria received pastors from Basle, Switzerland (thoroughly liberal), and Neuendettelsau, Germany (Open Questions principal). In the 1880's, the ELSA made contact with the orthodox Missouri Synod in America, founded by Dr Walther. ELSA pastors subscribed to their church papers, were instructed by the fine doctrinal articles, Australian men trained in Missouri Seminaries, and in due time pastors and Seminary professors were called from America to serve in Australia. Missouri men who made their mark on the ELSA were Dr C F Graebner, Prof Koch, Dr Janzow, and Dr Nickel. Thus Missouri had a strengthening affect on the doctrinal position of the ELSA. In the late 1890's, the ELSA had a College and Seminary at Murtoa, Victoria, where Pastor Peters, writer of *The Judge is at the Door*, was principal. In 1904, this Seminary was transferred to Adelaide, becoming Concordia Seminary. Director was Prof C F Graebner, other teachers being Profs G C Koch, Zscheck and Winkler. About this time congregations belonging to the ELSA were forming in Victoria, New South Wales and Queensland.

HEIDENREICH CONTROVERSY. In 1877, the ELSA had established a mission in central Australia on the Finke River, called Herrmansburg Mission Station. After a number of years the ELSA could not continue to support the Hermannsburg mission. It was purchased by the congregations of Pastor Heidenreich, Bethany, and resold to the Immanuel Synod (Kavel's group). Heidenreich, contrary to the teaching of the ELSA, agreed to support financially this mission, now belonging to a heterodox Lutheran church. Their sinful action caused great controversy. Finally it resulted in a Convention at Eudunda in 1902, at which Pastor Nickel presented a fine essay on Church Fellowship. The matter was resolved at this Convention when fellowship was severed with the Heidenreichs. The Heidenreich group remained independent until they joined the UELCA in 1926.

FORMATION OF UELCA. In the early 1900's, apart from the ELSA, there were 5 other Lutheran Synods, 2 in Queensland, one in Victoria and 2 in South Australia. They were all obtaining pastors mostly from Germany. However due to German hatred connected with World War I, in 1919 the Commonwealth Government banned persons of German nationality coming to Australia. There was a need to establish a Seminary to train their own pastors in Australia. But all of these synods were too small to undertake such a venture. Pastor Leidig from the Immanuel Synod in South Australia encouraged talks between the various synods towards a union of all 5 synods. Since there were major differences in doctrine that held them apart, it was proposed that they simply declare such matters Open Questions, in other words agree to disagree agreeably. Thus, in 1921, the UELCA was formed on the basis of the evil Open Questions Theory. Shortly after, Immanuel College and Seminary was established in Adelaide, which after the union to form the LCA became Luther Seminary.

DIFFERENCES BETWEEN ELSA AND UELCA. After 1926 there were only 2 Lutheran bodies in Australia. In 1928 negotiations between the two bodies were attempted. However they broke up because the differences were too great. In what did these differences consist? The UELCA taught falsely in the following matters: Open

Questions, Holy Scriptures, the Last Things, the Millenium, Antichrist, Conversion of Israel, Church and Ministry, Election, Christ as the God-man, Attitude to the Lutheran Confessions, Sunday, Church Fellowship and Engagement. These differences were clearly recognised by both churches.

A CHANGE IN THE ELSA (ELCA). Already in 1930, Prof Zschech made the comment to Pastor Kleinig, “We (the ELSA) are no longer the old ones. A different spirit is entering our church.” In 1926 Dr Hamaan (snr) was called as professor to Concordia Seminary, Adelaide. Being a highly educated man, he soon was highly respected by the ELSA. But sadly he was infected with a false view on the doctrine of Church Fellowship. In 1941 he wrote an article in the Theological Magazine of his church proposing a change in position on the doctrine of church fellowship. In regard to Rom 16:17-18 he claimed that the command, “Mark and Avoid,” should no longer be applied to all false teachers, but only to those who can be proven to be unbelievers. This false position was accepted by the ELCA (its new name) in 1948, at a Pastoral Conference held at Jindera, NSW. This conference also agreed to allow prayer fellowship between the committees of both churches, who had commenced union negotiations again in 1941. Sadly, very few voices from the ELCA raised any objections to these changes in doctrine.

OUTWARD UNION ACHIEVED/ FORMATION OF LCA. After this change in position of 1948, the ELCA quickly gave way to the UELCA’S position in one doctrinal matter after another. A document called the Theses of Agreement was drawn up which supposedly settled the differences between the two churches. However it was based on the evil Open Questions Principle, having cleverly worded statements which allowed each side to retain their former teachings. This is clearly seen by Theses I, para 4 (e), which states that differences in doctrine need not hinder fellowship between the churches. The Theses of Agreement were adopted by the UELCA in 1956 and ELCA in 1959. However union did not occur for another 7 years because of the different overseas bodies with which both churches were in fellowship. The UELCA, for example, was a member of the LWF (Lutheran World Federation). This was a clear sign that there was no true unity between them. Finally in 1965, the Document of Union was drawn up which proposed that both churches cut their overseas fellowships, in order that union could proceed. Differences in these matters were declared to be Open Questions, and the suggestion made that they be settled after union by the united church. Both churches accepted this document in 1965, resulting in the declaration of fellowship in Nov 1965, and formation of the LCA in 1966. This was a sad day for true Lutheranism in Australia.

FORMATION OF ELCR. To the events just described, only one faithful pastor from the ELCA objected and was prepared, taking his stand on Scripture, to leave the now heterodox ELCA. This was Pastor F G Kleinig, who had been trained in Concordia Seminary, ELSA, graduating in 1924. Recognising that the ELCA had departed from Scripture, he and a number of solid lay Christians refused to be a part of the LCA. A number of independent Lutheran congregations were formed at Kumbia, Murgon, Maryborough, Gympie and Woombye, Queensland, who called Pastor Kleinig to be their shepherd. In March-May, 1966, a number of meetings were held, which resulted in the formation of the Evangelical Lutheran Congregations of the Reformation (ELCR), Pastor Kleinig being their sole pastor. The ELCR was characterised by love for and loyalty to Christ and the pure Word, adherence to pure Lutheran teaching, and out of love to Jesus the leading of Godly lives. Within a short time a church paper *Steadfast* was begun, a young people’s organisation *Lutherleague* was established and regular conventions held.

CALLING OF PASTOR/CONTROVERSY. Within a short time the need was seen to provide assistance for Pastor Kleinig in his huge workload. A pastor named Keith Hunter in 1967 was called from the LCR in America (its members were formerly members of the Missouri Synod). The ELCR had sought and obtained fellowship with the LCR in 1966. Pastor Hunter served ELCR congregations at Maryborough, Gympie, Woombye and later Brisbane. However the matter of the wearing of the head covering in public worship arose, Pastor Hunter refusing to support the position taken by the ELCR. This lead he and about 40 members to sever fellowship with the ELCR in 1971. In the following year, the ELCR severed fellowship with the LCR in America. For a time the Hunter group remained independent, in due time calling pastors from America to serve them, and finally forming the Evangelical Lutheran Synod of Australia.

FURTHER CONTROVERSY. Sadly after these events, the devil did not leave the ELCR alone. Audley Grieger, a lay missionary from the LCA, left and in 1971 was accepted into membership in the ELCR. He was appointed as a vicar of the ELCR while he began theological studies for the ministry under Pastor Kleinig. However problems soon arose with him in the area of worldly indecent dress of women and long hair of men. Pastor Kleinig preached and taught concerning the matter, as well as writing a fine essay. To the application of this Grieger together with his family objected, leaving in 1973. He formed the Orthodox Evangelical Lutheran Church (OELC), of which he is the only pastor.

FURTHER PASTORS TRAINED. In 1972 Student Bryce Winter began theological studies under Pastor Kleinig, being ordained on July 5, 1975. In this same year Pastor Kleinig retired from the ministry, but continued on as a theological professor for the training of students. In 1976 Student Gavin Winter began studies for the ministry under Pastors Kleinig and Bryce Winter, being ordained on June 29, 1980. For a time both pastors together served all the congregations of the ELCR, however in 1983 Pastor Bryce Winter was called to serve Kingaroy and Toowoomba congregations, with Pastor Gavin Winter asked to serve Brisbane, Lowood and Woombye congregations. A sad occurrence was a doctrinal dispute over the use of a Catholic Campsite in 1983, which led to a number of members leaving, together with Pastor Kleinig who had then been retired for 8 years. Pastor Kleinig died in 1987. About 1990, a group of congregations left the LCA for doctrinal reasons and formed the Australian Evangelical Lutheran Church (AELC), Pastors C Priebbenow, M Grieger and V Grieger serving their members.

FURTHER EXPANSION. In 1977 a congregation joined the ELCR in Lowood. As well, preaching places at Biloela, Hervey Bay and Cairns (Qld), Warialda (NSW), Melbourne and Nhill (Vic), Adelaide and Naracoorte (SA) and Burnie and Deloraine (Tas) are presently being served. May God in His mercy grant that the ELCR continue to remain faithful to pure Lutheran teaching, that through God's Word souls be rescued from sin and kept in the true faith to eternal life.

Lutheran Synods in Australia at present are:- LCA, ELSA, OELC, AELC and ELCR.

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THE CHIEF DOCTRINAL DIFFERENCES BETWEEN THE ELCR AND OTHER LUTHERAN CHURCHES

The following paper is meant to be only a **summary** of what we regard to be **the chief doctrinal differences between the ELCR and other Lutheran Churches**. The position of the ELCR is first stated, followed by the dangerous errors that are taught or tolerated in other Lutheran Churches. Reference is then made to articles that may be read for further explanation.

The **following areas** are covered:-

1. Inspiration, Inerrancy and Authority of the Bible, (including Bible Translations);
2. Law and Gospel;
3. Charismatic Movement;
4. Lodge (Also Scouting and Guides);
5. Mixing of Church and State (State aid for church schools and missions, Involvement of the church in purely political issues);
6. Marriage, including Engagement; the Forbidden degrees of Relationship; Divorce; Homosexuality;
7. Head Covering in Public Worship (1 Cor 11:2-16);
8. Dance;
9. Long Hair (of Men) and indecent dress;
10. Distinction in dress between the Man and the Woman (Deut 22:5);
11. Rock Music;
12. Gambling;
13. Position of women in the church (women voting and speaking in the congregational meeting, leading or being in a public teaching position in the congregation, ordination of women);
14. Genesis, Creation and Evolution;
15. Church Fellowship and Unionism;
16. Evil Open Questions Principle;
17. Doctrinal Discipline;
18. Church Discipline;
19. Christian Giving;
20. Church and Ministry; Doctrine of the Call;
21. Close Communion;
22. Matters not settled before the Union of the UELCA and ELCA, including:-
 - Millennium;
 - Papacy as Antichrist;
 - Sunday;
 - Church and Ministry;
 - Conversion;
 - Election;
 - Attitude to Lutheran Confessions.

1. INSPIRATION, INERRANCY AND AUTHORITY OF THE BIBLE

The Holy Scriptures teach that **every Word of the Bible**, both of the Old and the New Testament, **is the inspired Word of God** given by inspiration of the Holy Ghost to the holy writers (2 Tim 3:16; 2 Peter 1:21). It is therefore totally the very Word of God Himself. Thus the Bible, in all its parts and words, is the **absolute truth without error** or contradiction, also in those parts which treat of historical, geographical and other matters (John 10:35; John 17:17).

Not human reason, nor the opinions of men, but **the Holy Scriptures alone** are therefore the **only source and judge of doctrine and practice**. The Bible-believing Christian will obediently listen to every word of the Bible, and where the Lord has spoken, say, "I will gladly obey." (Matt. 28:19-20; Acts 20:27).

When this vital doctrine is denied, not only can the Christian no longer trust the Bible, but many other teachings of the Scriptures, including the doctrine of Justification, are made uncertain (John 3:12).

Within the LCA the **following errors** are taught or tolerated:

- a. Already before the union of 1966, the dangerous error was taught in the former UELCA that there are mistakes and errors in the Bible;
- b. The Theses of Agreement, the basis for union between the two churches, while containing some fine statements on Scripture and Inspiration, also contain many loopholes to allow for false teachings in this matter. For example, the Theses claim that "Scripture ... is silent on the manner or method" of inspiration. As well it speaks of "that which human reason might call a deficiency in Holy Scripture." (VIII. Theses on Scripture and Inspiration).
- c. The LCA has since the Union adopted several statements on the issue of Inspiration and Inerrancy. This was due to the fact that a number of leading officials and seminary lecturers in the LCA attacked this doctrine. "The Theses of Agreement and Inerrancy" (1972), and "A Consensus Statement on Holy Scripture" (1987). Both of these statements contain loopholes which allow for it to be held that there are errors and contradictions in the Bible.
- d. Attacks on this doctrine have occurred within the LCA by pastors and Seminary lecturers. In these attacks the claim has been made that the Bible contains errors and contradictions. For example, doubt is cast on the accuracy of such Bible facts as the story of Creation and the length of the Creation days (JEDP Theory), the Flood, the number of people involved in the Exodus, the story of Jonah, the miracles of Jesus, etc. Since no Scriptural doctrinal discipline has occurred over against these errors, they therefore have been officially condoned and tolerated by the LCA. These attacks are found in the following:-
- Between Fundamentalism and Philosophy, H.P.Haaman (Jnr.);
 - Theology of the Word, Hebart;
 - Holy Scripture, Comments on this Inspiration Doctrine of Augustine, Dr. H. Sasse;
 - Luther Seminary Lecturers openly teach the evil JEDP Theory, which claims that Moses was not the author of the first five books of the Bible as the Scriptures plainly teach.

A church body that allows it to be taught that the Bible is not the absolutely reliable Word of God shows itself to be a false teaching or heterodox church. If this is taught in the seminary to students, future pastors will also believe and teach error in these matters. Whoever attacks this primary fundamental doctrine, is at the same time undermining salvation by grace through faith in Christ. If Satan enters a church body through an attack on this doctrine, the flood-gates are opened wide for **many other dangerous errors** to intrude.

For **further reading**, see:-

- The Inspiration and Inerrancy of Holy Scripture (Pastor F.G. Kleinig);
- An Examination of the Chief Doctrinal Errors in the "Lutheran Church of Australia", LCA (Pastor B.L. Winter);
- Some Comments On Explanation of Inspiration and Inerrancy (Pastor F G Kleinig, Steadfast, Dec 1968, pp.7-13);
- A Most Revealing Letter (Pastor F G Kleinig, Steadfast, Nov-Dec 1974, pp. 7-18);
- Brief Statement of 1932, Articles 1-3.

BIBLE TRANSLATIONS

Concerning Bible Translations the ELCR uses as its official translation from altar and pulpit the **Authorized** (King James) **Version**, because it regards this as the **most reliable translation** of the Bible available today.

Many **modern day translations** of the Bible are unreliable because they do not accurately translate the original Hebrew and Greek, and are based on a corrupted text of the Greek New Testament. Especially in the Old Testament, prophecies concerning the coming Saviour Jesus are often mistranslated to deny the Jews knew concerning Christ and His suffering and death. In the New Testament, the translators often deliberately mis-translate passages so as to deny that Jesus is true God. Translations that can not be recommended are the Good News Bible, Revised Standard Version (RSV), New International Version (NIV), and the Living Bible.

The LCA tolerates many unreliable translations of the Bible which are used both publicly and privately within its midst.

Further reading:

- Why the ELCR Does Not Use in their Worship Services the RSV Bible (Pastor F G Kleinig, Steadfast, Nov 1969, pp.6-9);
- A History of the Canon of the New Testament (Pastor G L Winter, Steadfast, 1982, p. 72; 1983, p. 61)

2. LAW AND GOSPEL

The Lord commands (2 Tim. 2:15) that the **two great doctrines of Law and Gospel** must be proclaimed by the faithful pastor. It is only through the correct preaching of both the doctrine of the Law, telling us about our sin and punishment, and the Gospel, telling us about the forgiveness of sins through Christ the Saviour, that a person can be **brought to the true Christian faith**. The Law must first be proclaimed in all its severity to bring home to the sinner the enormity of his sin and that without Christ he is lost forever. Then the Gospel must be proclaimed in all of its sweetness, to assure him that through Christ he has forgiveness, and through which the Holy Ghost works and strengthens faith in the heart.

Also **throughout his life** the Christian must hear the Law and the Gospel, otherwise he will forget that by nature he is a sinner deserving of God's punishment, or will think that his works can contribute to his salvation. If the Gospel is not preached, the person alarmed over his sin will either fall into security or despair. He who does not understand the differences between Law and Gospel will not be able **properly to understand the Scriptures**. Therefore the pastor must also instruct his hearers in the vital doctrines of Law and Gospel.

Also it is vital that the pastor preach **the third use of the Law**, the Law as the guide for the Christian life. Out of love to the Saviour, the Christian is urged to lead a life in obedience to God's commandments.

Even though a sermon may otherwise contain no error, if Law and Gospel are not proclaimed side by side, that sermon is wrong; and the pastor will be held responsible for the consequent loss of that person's soul. All truly orthodox Lutheran preaching is preaching in which the Law and the Gospel are rightly divided.

Though there are some **pastors in the LCA** who still rightly divide between Law and Gospel, there are many who

- preach no Law and Gospel at all, having virtually no doctrine in their sermons;
- preach only the Gospel, fearful of preaching any Law to their hearers;
- tone down on the Law, afraid that if they point out to their hearers the Law in its severity, showing them where they are sinners, their hearers will be driven away from the church;
- preach the "Gospel" in such a manner as to make it a Social Gospel, in other words that Jesus was merely a good man whose example we should follow for our salvation (salvation by good works);
- preach on issues of "social justice", e.g. aboriginal land rights, environment, etc.

No church can claim to be orthodox and at the same time allow such a dangerous violation of God's Word.

For **further reading** see:-

- Differences between Law and Gospel, A Scriptural Examination of Hymn 265 (Pastor F.G. Kleinig);
- Law and Gospel (Prof. G. Koch);
- Law and Gospel (Dr. C.F.W. Walther).

3. THE CHARISMATIC MOVEMENT

The Bible clearly warns against the modern **Charismatic** or "Speaking in tongues" **movement**. Speaking in different tongues or languages (cf. Acts 2:1-4; Acts 10:46; Acts 19:6; 1 Cor 12-14) was a **special gift** given to the early Christian Church in the time of the Apostles.

a. It was given, together with the power to perform miracles and other signs and wonders, in order **to confirm the Word of God** spoken by the Apostles (Mark 16:20), as well as for the foundation and spread of the New Testament Church in areas where the Greek language could not be understood. Since the written Word of God is now complete, no longer is it necessary for the Apostles' preaching to be confirmed by these special gifts. By the time of the end of the Apostolic era, the New Testament Church had been firmly established and the Scriptures were widely available for Christians to study and examine for themselves.

b. When the written Word of God of the New Testament was complete, the Lord indicated that **this special gift would "cease"** (1 Cor 13:8; Heb 2:3-4). No where does the Lord promise or indicate that the gift of tongues would be given to Christians shortly before the last day.

c. The Holy Ghost comes **not through voices, visions or dreams, but through the written Word of God** or the Holy Scriptures (Rom 10:17). Those who claim "speaking in tongues" today comes from God, take attention away from the Word of God and its proclamation, and direct it to the opinions of men. Our faith and teaching must be based alone on the Word (Eph 2:20; Matt 7:24-27).

d. What is claimed to be "**speaking in tongues**" today is not the speaking in tongues of the Bible. In the Apostles' time, speaking in tongues was given directly by the Holy Ghost; was not given to all believers (1 Cor. 12:4-11,28-31); was always an intelligible language which could be understood and interpreted; involved preaching of God's Word which would be of spiritual benefit (edification, 1 Cor 14); could be understood by those present, or interpreted so that others could understand what was being said; was either in the presence or under the instruction and command of the Apostles. The majority of "speaking in tongues" today is unintelligible babble, produced by a type of self-hypnosis or auto-suggestion. It differs in many points from the true tongue-speaking of the Bible, and therefore is not that which was present in the early New Testament Church.

e. The Bible teaches we must **base our faith on the message of the Word** (Is. 8:20; John 8:31,32; 2 Peter 1:19; 1 Cor 2:5; Luke 16). Charismatics look upon their so-called "baptism of the Spirit" and other emotional experiences as being a proof of conversion. Since we have in the inspired Scriptures all that we need for our salvation, where is the need for speaking in tongues today?

f. Since we are to "prove all things" (1 Thess 5:21) by the test of the Word of God, **the false teachings of Charismatics** (denial of Infant Baptism; Lord's Supper; rightful position of women in the church; unionism; etc.) show them to be false teachers.

g. Finally many Charismatics **claim the power to perform miracles directly from God**, a claim which is not supported by God's Word. The Bible teaches that even the evil angels can perform lying wonders (Ex 7:11; 2 Thess 2:9).

The **LCA** openly allows Charismatic pastors and lay-people to be members of the church, with no correct Scriptural discipline. Their official Statement, "The Lutheran Church of Australia and the Lutheran Charismatic Movement," (Doctrinal Statements G5-9) does not in a Scriptural manner oppose this dangerous movement. Within the LCA, a Lutheran Renewal Committee has been responsible for the distribution of a Lutheran Renewal Newsletter amongst pastors and lay people. This movement is therefore making quick progress through LCA congregations, especially where doctrinal instruction has been neglected, and causing untold damage to the souls of Christians.

For **further reading** see:-

-What does the Bible Say: The Modern Charismatic Movement (Pastor G.L. Winter).

4. LODGE

The **Scriptures condemn Lodge membership** for the following reasons:-

a. Being a false religious movement, they believe in a god which is not the God of the Bible, **denying the doctrine of the Trinity** (Deut 6:4; Matt. 28:19);

b. Lodges teach that **Jesus** was merely a good man, and **not true God** (John 5:18; 1 John 5:20);

c. The belief is taught that by following the rules and regulations of the Lodge, one may get himself to eternal life (**salvation by good works**) Rom 3:20,28;

d. The Lodge requests **dreadful oaths** of those who wish to be members, causing the person to take oaths in uncertain matters, and that the person must not make known anything that is revealed to him as a lodge member (Matt 14:6-9; Lev 19:12).

While the **LCA** has a statement in its Theses of Agreement condemning lodge membership (See Appendix), yet lodge membership is openly condoned in the LCA, and persons are allowed to be members of the church in good-standing, and at the same time lodge members. If a church claims to uphold the Scriptural position on Lodge membership, at the same time it must Scripturally discipline those who are lodge members.

Further reading:

-There are many excellent articles on this subject in the old Queensland Messenger and Australian Lutheran.

SCOUTING AND GUIDES

Though not as serious a danger as Lodge membership, **membership in a Scouting or Girl Guide Association is also contrary to God's Word.**

This is shown by:-

- a. the principle set up in the Scouting and Guide Movement of **a god common to all beliefs and religions**, in which people of all religious groups unite together in a common brotherhood;
- b. the false principle instilled into their members' minds that a faithful **fulfilment of the Scout and Guide promise is sufficient for salvation**;
- c. the means by which the movement aims to develop character and promote good works is **not by the Gospel** but by the Law;
- d. the **Scout and Guide promise is close to an oath**, and this in uncertain matters;
- e. a leader of the Scout and Guide movement **being prevented and hindered from giving open testimony to the pure Word of God**;
- f. the **unionistic activities** (involvement in joint prayer of those not united together in doctrine and practice).

The **LCA** takes no stand against this movement within its midst.

For **further reading** see:-

-The Boy Scouts and Girl Guides (Pastor B.L. Winter, Steadfast, 1977, No. 4, pp.6-12).

5. MIXING OF CHURCH AND STATE

The Christian, while living in this world, has been made a member of **two separate institutions of God**. He is at the same time a member of the **church**, as well as a member of the **state**. These two kingdoms, though dwelling side by side in the world, are quite different in the duties and responsibilities God has given to them.

The **responsibilities and duties of the church** are:

- through the preaching of the Word to bring souls to faith in Christ (Matt 28:19-20; 1 Cor. 2:2; 2Tim. 3:15);
- through the Word of God to care for the spiritual welfare of these souls so that they finally are saved (Heb 13:17);
- to urge Christians, from faith to lead a Christian life (2 Tim 3:17; Titus 2:14; Matt. 5:16);
- to use the Word of God to admonish souls that have strayed from God's Word to bring them back to Jesus (Matt. 18:15-18; 2 Tim 3:16).

On the other hand, the **duties and responsibilities of the state** are:-

- to rule through the God-ordained government, "that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty" (1 Tim 2:2);
- to reward the good and to punish the evil doers (Rom 13; 1 Pt 2:13-14);
- to see particularly to the bodily welfare of its members.

The church has **no right to interfere** in the duties and responsibilities of the state, nor the state in those of the church. These two kingdoms are to remain separate from one another, and the Christian is to perform his duties both as a citizen of the church and the state (John 18:36; Matt 22:21).

A mixing or **failure to separate between church and state** would take place if:

- the church makes pronouncements on purely political issues, not connected with God's Word;
- the church accepts money from the state for the promotion of its religious objectives;
- the state denies of the church the practice of religious liberty;
- the state interferes in the responsibility of the church by supporting a particular religion;
- the state tells the church what it may or may not teach in matters of religion in its churches, missions and schools;
- the state gives money to the church to support its church work, missions or schools;
- the state directly involves itself in the teaching of religion in schools.

The **LCA** teaches and practises contrary to God's Word in that it accepts money from the state for the building and running of its schools and missions. To this extent it places itself subservient to the state in matters of religion. As well, LCA theologians and pastors regularly make pronouncements in matters not spoken of in God's Word (e.g. Anti-nuclear movement; Green Movement; Aboriginal Land Rights).

For **further study**:

-See the Brief Statement of 1932, Article 34.

6. MARRIAGE

Marriage is the Life-long union of one man and one woman unto one flesh. It was instituted by God in Paradise when He united Adam and Eve as husband and wife (Gen. 2:18-24).

The Bible condemns:

-**Homosexuality**, the sexual relationship of a man with a man, or a woman with a woman (Lev. 18:22; Deut 20:13; Rom. 1:26-27; 1 Cor. 6:9-11; 1 Tim. 1:9-10);

-**Polygamy**, the taking of more than one wife (Gen. 2:24; Matt. 19:5);

-**Fornication**, which is sexual sin of any nature, particularly that of couples living together outside of marriage;

-**Adultery**, which is sexual sin where at least one of the persons is married.

The **LCA**, though claiming that "homosexual behaviour" is "against the will of God," claims that God's Word says nothing about the "inclination or leaning toward" homosexuality (Doctrinal Statements and Theological Opinions of the LCA, H11). The Bible however not only condemns the outward sinful act, but also the evil thought and desire in the heart (Mark 7:20-23). The LCA also tolerates, without evangelical discipline, couples living together outside of marriage.

ENGAGEMENT

The Bible teaches that marriage of a man and woman begins already at a valid betrothal. At the point that a valid engagement takes place, the couple before God are already husband and wife, though they are not to live together as such until the public marriage ceremony.

This is seen from:

-Matt 1:18-20, where Mary, who was espoused (engaged) to Joseph, is called Joseph's "wife," and Joseph Mary's "husband." Likewise, Joseph was seeking to "put her away" or divorce her, something that can only happen if they are already husband and wife;

-Deut. 22:22-24, where an engagement is shown to be equivalent to marriage between husband and wife;

-Gen. 19:14, where the men who were engaged to marry Lot's daughters are called his "sons-in-law";

-Compare also Hosea 4:13-14.

The **LCA** erroneously teaches that Holy Scripture "contains no specific doctrine or law for Christians on betrothal or engagement." It also claims that the teaching of the Bible regarding engagement is "of human origin, and its meaning and significance is for that reason largely subject to prevailing custom" (Theses of Agreement, Appendix, Statements on Practical Matters, 2. Marriage and Betrothal). As well, the LCA accuses those of making "doctrines of Scriptural passages where no doctrine can be shown to exist" who teach "that engagement is tantamount to marriage" (Doctrinal Statements and Theological Opinions, p. B13).

THE FORBIDDEN DEGREES OF RELATIONSHIP

The Bible teaches that there are certain persons who are too closely related who are not to marry. Lev. 18:6-20 and Deut 22:20,22,23, teach that those related to the second degree of relationship (eg. a man with his sister, deceased wife's sister, but not his cousin; a woman with her brother, deceased husband's brother, but not cousin) are not to marry.

That these commands are a part of God's Moral Law is shown by:-

-Lev. 18:3, where the Israelites are commanded not to follow after the heathen doings of Egypt and Canaan;

-Lev. 18:5, where they are told that in keeping the Lord's judgements and statutes, "if a man do, he shall live in them;"

- Lev. 18:24-28, where those that disobey these laws are spoken of as defiling themselves and committing abominations;
- Deut. 27:20,22,23, where a curse is pronounced upon those who disobey these laws;
- 1 Cor. 5:1, where the Lord repeats His commands against the forbidden degrees in the New Testament.

The LCA claims that the "Scripture passages" dealing with marriage with a deceased wife's sister "are not sufficiently clear," and that therefore "different views on this matter are not divisive of church fellowship" (Theses of Agreement, Appendix, 3. Marriage with a deceased wife's sister). As well, the LCA accuses those of making "doctrines of Scriptural passages where no doctrine can be shown to exist" who teach "that marriage with a deceased wife's sister is contrary to the will of God" (Doctrinal Statements and Theological Opinions, p. B13). Thus the matter is declared to be an Open Question, on which each may please himself.

For further reading see:-

- Marriage with a Deceased Wife's Sister Prohibited**, Dr A Mackenzie (ATR, 1932, Vol 3&4, pp127-166);
- Pastoral Theology**, JHC Fritz, pp. 162-168.

LACK OF SCRIPTURAL DISCIPLINE

Though the LCA officially claims that "divorce is not permissible,... except on the grounds of adultery and malicious desertion," (Theses of Agreement, Appendix, 2. Marriage and betrothal), yet often no Scriptural Church Discipline results when unscriptural divorce takes place. Likewise, there is a noticeable lack of discipline against those couples living together outside of marriage.

For further reading, see "**The Christian Home**," a series of Studies by Pastor Gavin Winter.

7. HEAD COVERING IN PUBLIC WORSHIP

In 1 Cor. 11:2-16 the Bible teaches that **a woman is morally obligated to wear a head covering in the Public worship service of the congregation.**

In 1 Cor. 11:2-9, the Apostle lays down three reasons for the command of verse 10. They are:

- the head of the man is Christ; the head of the woman is the man. The woman dishonours her head (the man) by not wearing a head-covering (verses 3-7);
- the man reflects the glory and image of God; the woman reflects the glory of man. God's glory alone is to rule in the public worship service, therefore the head of the woman is to be covered (verse 7);
- God created the man first, then the woman; the woman was created for the man. Therefore the woman is to show this order by the wearing of the head covering (verses 8-9).

On the basis of these reasons, the command of the Lord is given that the woman **is morally obligated** (Gk: a moral obligation flowing from reasons stated in the text) **to wear the head covering in the public worship service.**

According to the rules of grammar, the custom that the Apostle forbids in verse 16 is that of the woman coming to the worship service bare-headed, without the covering.

The **LCA, AELC and ELSA** treat the wearing of the head covering as a matter of Christian liberty. They claim that the wearing of the head-covering was a mere "custom of the times" in Corinth, which does not apply to us today. Thus the LCA accuses those of making "doctrines of Scriptural passages where no doctrine can be shown to exist" who teach "that women must wear a head-covering in church services on the basis of 1 Cor. 11" (Doctrinal Statements and Theological Opinions, p. B13).

For further reading see:-

- 1 Cor. 11:2-16**, a verse by verse study, by Pastor F. G. Kleinig.
- The Controversy, a statement Concerning Women's Head-covering in Public Worship Services.**
- Statement, Concerning the Matter of Women Covering their Heads while Attending Divine Worship Services (1 Cor. 11:2-16)**, by Pastor F. G. Kleinig.
- Numerous articles in Steadfast, official publication of the ELCR.

8. THE MODERN DANCE.

Holy Scripture **condemns the modern dance** for the following reasons:

- The **close bodily contact** involved in by those dancing stirs up evil sexual lusts and desires. Such sexual desires outside marriage are sinful. Matt. 5:28, "Whosoever looketh upon a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery with her already in his heart." Compare also 2 Tim. 2:22; Ps. 51:10;
- Dancing leads to heavy petting and sexual immorality;
- Heavy drinking and drunkenness are frequently associated with dancing;
- Some of the evil fruits associated with it are: broken homes, broken hearts, broken lives;
- The Modern Dance involves association with bad company (1 Cor. 15:33);
- A Christian at all times is to bear testimony to his faith in word and deed.

Therefore the Christian, out of love to the Saviour, will keep away from the Modern Dance, as well as all lust arousing matters eg. indecent television, picture shows and videos.

Though the LCA has a statement warning against the dangers of certain dances (See Doctrinal Statements and Theological Opinions, p. H10), it is a known fact that little is done regarding those in congregations who involve themselves in sinful dancing. The matter is left up to the individual. In many congregations this sin is openly condoned.

For further reading see:-

- Why We of the ELCR Cannot and Will not Tolerate the Modern Dance**, by Pastor F. G. Kleinig.
- The Lutheran Christian's Attitude towards the Modern Dance**, by Pastor O. Nichterlein.
- Lectures on Modern Dancing**, Dr CFW Walther.

9. LONG HAIR AND INDECENT DRESS

LONG HAIR FOR MEN

The Bible teaches that it is **sinful for a man to have his hair long like a woman's**. 1 Cor. 11:14 states, "Doth not even nature itself teach you, that, if a man have long hair, it is a shame unto him." Other reasons why such is to be condemned are:-

- men wearing long hair breaks down the distinction that is to exist between the appearance of a man and a woman (Deut. 22:5);
- Long hair on the man is often associated with an immoral and degenerate life-style (1 Thess. 5:22).

Nowhere does the Bible tell us that Jesus had long hair. Surely Jesus would not offend against His own Word! Samson and other Nazarites were permitted by God to wear long hair as a special privilege, in return for which they received some divine gift.

The LCA takes no stand on the matter of long hair for men.

INDECENT DRESS FOR WOMEN

God commands the woman **to avoid all forms of clothing that are indecent and immodest**. Such dress, which reveals too much of the body of the woman to the gaze of men, arouses sinful thoughts and lusts in the hearts of men. Examples are mini-skirts, immodest swimwear, low-cut and backless dresses. 1 Tim. 2:9 states, "In like manner also that women adorn themselves in modest apparel (dress, clothes)."

Again, the LCA takes no stand on this matter, and would not discipline those involved.

To assist our young people in observing the principles of God's Word in regard to these matters, the following guidelines have been adopted by the congregations of the ELCR:-

- For men, "hair to be above the ears, not below the collar and not too untidy;"
- For women's short dresses, "that girls are to wear skirts reaching down to their knee caps."

For further reading see:-

- Statement with reference to Men's Long Hair and Women's Short Dresses**, by Pastor F. G. Kleinig.

10. DISTINCTION IN DRESS BETWEEN THE MAN AND THE WOMAN

Deut. 22:5 states, "The woman shall not wear that which pertaineth unto a man, neither shall a man put on a woman's garment: for all that do so are abomination unto the Lord thy God."

That this matter is a part of God's Moral Law, is clearly shown by the words of the Lord "an abomination unto the Lord thy God." These words, stating what a grave offence it is to God to disobey, are only used in the Scriptures of something connected with Moral Law (cf. Deut 7:25; 12:31; 25:15-16). It therefore contains a principle of Moral Law that still applies to us today.

The Lord commands that the woman is not to wear that which is characteristically and typically masculine. Likewise, the man is not to put on the garment of a woman. In our western society, the wearing of the dress is characteristically feminine, while the wearing of slacks, trousers, pants and jeans is typical of the male, i.e. it distinguishes him as a man.

Therefore this principle applies to us today in that the man is not to wear dresses and other feminine attire. Likewise, the woman is not to wear slacks, jeans and pants, since these are articles of clothing that are typical of the man.

The LCA takes no stand on this issue, allowing many of their young people to dress and wear what they please.

For further reading, as well as a discussion of the practical application of this passage, see:-

-**Deuteronomy 22:5** by Pastor B. L. Winter;

-**What does the Bible Teach About the Distinction in Dress Between the Man and the Woman?** by Pastor G. L. Winter;

-**The Distinction in Dress Between the Man and the Woman** by Pastor Gavin Winter

11. ROCK MUSIC

Sad to say, this music popular amongst many young people today is not only degenerate, but directly contrary to the teachings of the Bible. This is seen from:

- a. the **Lyrics** of many Rock songs, promoting sexual sin and permissive lifestyles (Eph. 5:3,4; 1 Pt. 2:11; Gen. 39:9); homosexuality (Rom. 1:26-27; 1 Cor. 6:9-11; 1 Tim. 1:9-10); illicit drugs; eastern religion and mysticism; violence and rebellion; break-down of family; worldliness and despal of the Word of God. The Bible says, "Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth" (Eph.. 4:29).
- b. the **sinful lifestyles** of the people associated with Rock Music (Matt. 7:17-18; 1 Pt. 2:21; 1 Cor. 3:16).
- c. the **hypnotic effect** of the beat and rhythm of the music has the power to captivate and mesmerise the body and mind, making the mind susceptible to the message of the music.

From these points it is clearly evident that Rock Music is of the world, and therefore at enmity with God (James 4:4). The Christian therefore, being sober and vigilant to the attacks of the enemy Satan (1 Pt. 5:8-9), should avoid this form of entertainment, but rather listen to those forms of music that are pure and wholesome to the soul.

We also object to so-called "Christian" rock music, whereby many churches have adopted the degenerate style of the music of the world, by adding to it so-called "Christian" lyrics (1 Thess5:22; Rom 12:2).

The **LCA** today takes no stand in the matter of the evils of Rock Music. Rather Christian Young people are encouraged to listen to and be a part of it. Rock Music is being encouraged as a part of the worship services in the churches of the LCA.

For further reading see:-

-**What does the Bible Say- Rock Music?** by Pastor Gavin Winter (Steadfast, 1985, p. 39-44, 54-58).

12. GAMBLING

The Bible condemns all forms of gambling and betting on the following grounds:

- It is a form of stealing (Seventh Commandment), for it is seeking to get something from another without paying for it in money, goods or services.
- The underlying motive for gambling is covetousness (a wrong and strong wish to get the property of another). This is most emphatically forbidden by the Bible (Ninth and Tenth Commandments; Ex 20:17; Luke 12:15; Rom. 13:9).
- The gambler therefore becomes guilty of idolatry, since unjust gain replaces God as the first object of his affection (Eph. 5:5; 1 Tim. 6:9-10; Ps. 37:5).
- Gambling strikes at the Scriptural principle of stewardship of the possessions God has given to us (Matt. 25:14 ff.; Hag. 2:8; Ps. 50:10-12; Ps. 24:1; Gen. 14:19).
- It is contrary to the fourth petition (Phil. 4:6; Col. 3:17; 1 Cor. 10:31).
- It promotes the craze for the gaining of money and goods without work (2 Thess. 3:10).

The **LCA** permits its members to partake in various forms of gambling, failing to discipline those involved in it. As well gambling is promoted in LCA congregations as part of their fund raising activities.

For further reading see:-

-Gambling and Betting;

-What Does God's Word Say About Gambling and Betting? by Pastor B. L. Winter.

13. THE POSITION OF WOMEN IN THE CHURCH

According to the two passages of God's Word, 1 Tim. 2:11-15 and 1 Cor. 14:34-35, the Lord has laid down the following principles concerning the position of the woman in the church.

- a. The woman is **not to be a public teacher of male adults in the congregation** ie. she is not to be a public teacher of God's Word where male adults are present.
- b. The woman is not to usurp authority over the man by either speaking (expressing her will), or voting in the congregational meeting.
- c. The woman is not to be a leader of the worship service in the congregation where male adults are present, either as pastor or as lay reader.

The Bible does **not forbid the woman** from:

- being a Sunday School teacher where male adults are not present;
- witnessing to adult males on a private basis (1 Pet. 3:15; 1 Pet. 2:9; Acts 18:26);
- taking part in the worship services as a member of the congregation (general prayers, hymns, etc.);
- asking questions of the Pastor in a Bible Study;
- putting a matter before the congregational meeting either by letter or through a male representative.

However these principles of God's Word would **forbid the woman** from:

- leading the worship service of the congregation, by the reading of Scripture readings, distributing the Lord's Supper, or taking some other leading role in the service;
- becoming an elder, Chairman, Secretary or Treasurer of the congregation, or any other position which would require her to take an active part in the Voter's meetings of the congregation;
- voting or speaking (expressing her will) in the governmental or voter's meetings of the congregation;
- representing the congregation as a synodical representative at Synodical gatherings;
- being a public teacher of the congregation where male adults are present.

All of the above situations occur and are condoned and encouraged in the congregations of the LCA. As well, the **LCA** has recently debated the matter as to whether women should be ordained and accepted as pastors in their congregations. Though this was defeated because it did not gain the required majority vote, a matter that God's Word clearly settles is allowed to remain open. Time will reveal whether the official position of the LCA on this matter will change.

For further reading see:-

- Does Holy Scripture Give Women the Right to Vote or Speak in Congregational Meetings**, by Pastor B. L. Winter (Steadfast, 1989, p. 8);
- Scripture on the Woman Question**, by W.H.T. Dau, (The Lutheran Witness, 1898, p. 132);
- The Position of Women in the Church**, by Pastor G Winter

14. GENESIS, CREATION AND EVOLUTION

The Bible teaches that God, by His divine command, created or made from nothing the earth and the heavens (the universe) and all that is in them. This took place during a period of six 24 hour days, as recorded in Gen. 1-2, which is the divinely-inspired, literal historical record of the events of the beginning of the world. Adam and Eve were true historical persons who lived in the Garden of Eden. Sadly they fell away from God by disobeying God's command not to eat of the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil. Through this act, sin has come upon the whole human race, so that all men are born into this world sinful. God has given to us the account of these happenings in the Book of Genesis, given under inspiration through the prophet Moses.

In the LCA today, the following false teachings are condoned, tolerated and allowed to be taught:-

- that God did not create the heavens and the earth in six 24 hour days, but may have taken thousands or millions of years;
- that the word "day" in Genesis 1 could mean long periods of thousands or millions of years;
- that the events, places and persons mentioned in Genesis 1-3 were not literal events places or persons, but may be taken in a figurative or pictorial sense (e.g. there was not a literal Garden of Eden; there was not a literal snake; Adam and Eve are only creatures of myth and legend);
- that Moses did not write the first five books of the Bible, but that they were written many years later by men around the time of the Babylonian captivity (JEDP Theory);
- that there are two accounts of Creation (Gen. 1:1-2:3 and Gen. 2:4-25). These accounts, it is claimed contradict each other;
- that God may have used evolution as His means of "creating" the world.

Even officially adopted statements of the LCA allow for these errors to be taught.

For example, as a way of allowing for Gen. 1-3 to be taken up in a figurative sense, it is claimed,

"Within this framework (of the Gen. 1-3 Creation Account, GLW), **figurative elements are no doubt to be found.**"

Again, the evil JEDP theory (that Moses was not the author of the Creation account) is clearly allowed by the following statement,

"**Sources of one kind or another** undoubtedly lie behind the material of the Pentateuch, and the endeavour to isolate and examine these is part of the work of the Old Testament scholar. So also he must reckon with the fact or the **possibility of the post-Mosaic developments or additions.**"

Finally, those members of the LCA who hold evolutionary beliefs, would be happy to see the following statement,

"If in such areas Christian thinkers suggest the possibility of **some forms or aspects of evolution as God's means of creating**, then differences of opinion about such views should be treated as non-doctrinal and therefore not divisive of church fellowship."

(Quoted from Genesis 1-3, A Doctrinal Statement, Adopted by the General Synod of the LCA, 1972 Convention, Horsham, emphasis added).

In all these matters of Genesis, since God speaks clearly, it is not a matter of differing interpretations, but of obedient acceptance of the statements of God's Word (1 Cor 1:10; John 8:31-32).

For further reading see **Gen. 1-3**, a series of Bible Studies, by Pastor F.G. Kleinig.

15. CHURCH FELLOWSHIP AND UNIONISM

VISIBLE AND INVISIBLE CHURCHES

When in the Apostles' Creed we confess, "I believe in the Holy Christian Church, the communion of saints," we are referring to the **Invisible Church**, the true Christians as they are scattered throughout the world. This Church, though one (Gal 3:28), is invisible, since only God can see who belongs to it (2 Tim. 2:19). It cannot be seen by the eyes of men, since only those who believe in Jesus as their Saviour belong to it. Faith is invisible to the eyes of men.

However Scripture also refers to a **visible church**, which is composed of the sum total of those who claim to be true Christians and gather around the Word of God. To this visible church belongs not only true believers, but also sham-Christians or hypocrites. Of this the Lord spoke when he told the Parable of the wheat (true believers) and the tares (unbelievers), Matt. 13:24-26, 47-50. So within every local Christian congregation, there are not only true Christians, but there also may be false Christians or hypocrites.

The visible Christian church is composed of various divisions (eg. Roman Catholic, Greek Orthodox, Lutheran, Reformed, etc.). Even within these divisions there are denominations. True Christians are to be found wherever at least something of the Word of God (particularly the Gospel) is proclaimed, where the way to salvation is found. If any church teaches that it is the only saving church, such a teaching is absolutely contrary to Scripture. It bases a person's salvation on the good work of joining a visible church body.

THE DEADLY NATURE OF FALSE DOCTRINE

The Bible warns against false doctrine as being a poison to the soul. Once error has found its way into a church, it will spread like a cancer and affect other doctrines of the Word of God (Gal 5:9; 2 Tim. 2:17-18). Just as a rotten apple will soon make the other apples in the case rotten, so false teaching is like corruption that will spread from one teaching to another. It is Satan's aim through false teaching to destroy the central doctrine of the Bible, salvation by faith in Christ. Therefore God has given clear commands that we are to obey in order to protect our souls from false doctrine. God has commanded us concerning which churches we are to join and which we are to avoid.

CHURCH FELLOWSHIP

The visible churches in the world can be divided into two groups. They are:-

-Orthodox or Right-teaching churches. These are such as teach and practise God's Word in its truth and purity, leaving no room whatsoever for false doctrine.

-Heterodox or false-teaching churches. These are such as teach and practise otherwise than God's Word teaches. False teaching is taught or permitted to be taught (tolerated) within such churches.

Has God left it to a matter of our own choice which church we are to join and which to avoid? By no means. He has given us clear commands in this matter.

God commands us to join an orthodox church, such as teaches and practises His Word purely. "If ye continue in My Word," the Lord says, "then are ye My disciples indeed; And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free" (John 8:31,32). See also Isaiah 8:20; 1 Pt. 4:11. God also wants us to remain members of such an orthodox church, to support it (Christian giving), and to help to extend it (true Christian mission work).

On the other hand, **God commands us to avoid, to sever our connection with and to have no church fellowship with heterodox churches**, such as teach and practice otherwise than God's Word teaches. "Beware of false prophets which come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravaging wolves" (Matt. 7:15). "Mark those teaching contrary to the doctrines ye have learned, and avoid them" (Rom. 16:17). See also 1 Tim. 6:5 and Amos 3:3.

If the church to which we belong begins to teach error and keeps on teaching it, we are in duty bound immediately to speak up and to endeavour to remove that error. But if that church will not listen but simply continues in its error, then God's Word teaches us that we are to sever our connection from them and have no church fellowship with them. God's Word forbids us to have church fellowship with such as teach otherwise than His Word teaches. Our first loyalty must not be to the church organization, nor to our congregation, nor our relatives in the heterodox church, but to the Lord and His Word.

Why do many people today not care whether they belong to a false teaching church or not? Why do many remain in a false teaching church even though they know better? Many are simply poorly indoctrinated in the Word of God and are ignorant of what God's Word teaches. Others place their main loyalty into the organization to which they belong and put loyalty to God's Word second place. Others fear friction with their family in the church if they make a move (Matt. 10:32-38).

CHURCH UNION

According to Scripture (Eph. 4:3,4; 1 Cor. 1:10), when two churches unite together or declare fellowship with each other, each church thereby declares that it accepts fully and completely what the other church teaches and practices. Therefore before two churches join together, God has commanded that there be complete unity in doctrine and practice based on God's Word (1 Cor. 1:10; Amos 3:3).

Sadly, the church union of 1966 between the ELCA and UELCA to form the LCA, was not in harmony with the Word of God, because there were still many doctrinal differences between the two churches which were not properly settled (See point 22, Matters not settled before the Union of the UELCA and ELCA).

This church union, like many today, took place on the basis that each church was allowed to retain its own teachings, without full agreement occurring in matters of doctrine (Evil Open Questions Principle). Such compromise in matters of God's Word is directly forbidden by the Scriptures (1 Cor. 1:10).

UNIONISM

This is a term that is used to describe the sin where **a person or a church body practices church fellowship with those with whom they are not united in matters of God's Word**. In other words, the appearance of unity is given where no true unity exists. Since God's Word commands that we are only to practice fellowship with those who agree with us in matters of God's Word, we are sinning if we fellowship with those who do not teach God's pure Word. The Bible says, "Neither be partaker of other men's sins" (1 Tim. 5:22). "Mark, ... and avoid them" (Rom. 16:17-18).

Providing we do not join in their prayer or worship, there is nothing wrong in attending a heterodox church out of respect (weddings, funerals, etc.) or in order to hear a particular preacher. In the latter case, do not go too often or you may give the appearance of unity where there is no unity.

Examples of Unionism:-

- All prayer, worship and communion attendance with the heterodox (those who belong to a church which teaches contrary to God's Word);
- Heterodox pastors officiating at our services, or together with orthodox pastors, e.g. allowing heterodox pastors to perform weddings and funerals; or heterodox pastors jointly participating with us in the same;
- Singing solos or in choirs, or playing an organ in heterodox churches, or allowing the heterodox to do the same in our church;
- Supporting financially the heterodox;
- Participating in joint church work with the heterodox;
- Accepting sponsors from the heterodox or being sponsors for the heterodox;
- Joining in prayer with the heterodox in their private devotions.

The Bible does not forbid us from taking part in secular fellowship (e.g. business transactions, buying and selling) with the heterodox. This was the principle denied by a number who left the ELCR in 1983 over the matter of the hiring of a Catholic Camp Facility at Laidley.

The doctrine of Church Fellowship was one that was corrupted in the former ELCA already in the 1940's. Up until that time, the ELCA had remained faithful to God's Word in this matter. In 1948, at a Pastoral Conference at Jindera in NSW, the false position was officially adopted that joint prayer fellowship could be conducted with the UELCA before full unity in matters of doctrine had been reached. The statements on Church Fellowship contained in the Theses of Agreement (the document that was supposed to settle the differences between the two churches) are therefore riddled through with errors and loopholes.

The following is a summary of the departures from God's Word in the LCA today in matters of Church Fellowship:-

- Fellowship and union is allowed between churches that are not united in matters of doctrine;
 - Pastors join in and fellowship with the heterodox in minister's fraternals with the heterodox;
 - Ecumenical services are conducted with LCA ministers participating with heterodox pastors;
 - Heterodox ministers are allowed into LCA churches to conduct and participate in church services;
 - LCA pastors and lay members participate in joint prayer and worship with the heterodox;
 - Open communion is effectively allowed in LCA churches to those belonging to other heterodox churches;
 - Sponsors are accepted from heterodox churches, as well as LCA members being allowed to be sponsors for persons in heterodox churches;
 - Financial support is given to the heterodox;
 - Joint church work takes place between the LCA and other heterodox church bodies;
 - Many statements have been adopted claiming agreement in matters of doctrine with the Roman Catholic Church;
 - The LCA is a member of the LWF, as well as other false ecumenical church bodies.
- (Many examples of the above are readily available in the official publications of the LCA).

For further reading see:-

- Church Fellowship**, by Dr. T. Nickel;
- The Distinction between Orthodox and Heterodox Churches**, by Dr. F. Pieper;
- The Bible doctrine of Church Fellowship**, by Pastor K. G. Kleinig;
- Answers to Questions on Church Fellowship and Other Matters**, by Pastor F. G. Kleinig;
- Numerous articles and essays in *Steadfast*, and by Pastor Kleinig.
- How are the Mighty Fallen**, by Pastor G L Winter
- **Satan Again Attacks the ELCR – Another Small Group Leaves our Midst**, by Pastor Gavin L Winter
(Supplement to *Steadfast*, 1984, No. 2,3,4).

16. THE EVIL OPEN QUESTIONS PRINCIPLE

The term “Open Questions” is used today in both a right (Scriptural) and in a wrong (unscriptural) sense.

According to the Bible, there are **true Open Questions**. In our study of the doctrines of the Bible, questions or problems may arise. Sometimes those questions the Scriptures do not answer, or at least do not answer clearly. Since God's Word does not answer them, the Christian must not endeavour to answer them.

For example, the Bible does not tell us what God was doing before He created the world. Nor are we told why God permitted sin to come into the world, since all creatures, including the angels, were created by God “very good.” Since the Christian is not to add anything to the Bible where God has not spoken (Deut. 4:2; 12:32; Prov. 30:6; Rev. 22:18), such questions must remain unanswered. The Christian must cling alone to the clear statements of the Scriptures (John 8:31,32; Jer. 23:16).

However the term “**Open Questions**” is used in an **evil sense** in a way which is quite contrary to the Bible. This false teaching claims that certain doctrines taught by the Bible may be declared “free” or “open.” Each person can then please himself what he believes, teaches or practises. The claim is made that in these matters of Scripture doctrine, there need not be unity in a church. People may unite together outwardly, and yet disagree with one another in matters of doctrine. Put simply, they “agree to disagree” with one another.

This **evil “Open Questions” principle** was held to by the former UELCA. It placed the following doctrines in the evil “Open Questions” basket: Church and Ministry, the Millenium, the doctrine of Sunday, the Papacy as Antichrist, the First Resurrection, the Conversion of Israel, Church Government, Predestination, Inspiration and Inerrancy of the Bible and the word “day” in Genesis 1.

Sadly, at the time of the union between the ELCA and UELCA (1966), many of the differences between the two churches were declared to be Open Questions. Teachings were allowed to be taught in the LCA which were contrary to the clear Word of God. In this way the differences were not truly settled on the basis of Scriptures. This union took place on the basis of a compromise in Scripture teaching.

The **evil “Open Questions” principle** can be seen clearly from Para. I, 4, (e), of the THESES OF AGREEMENT, the document which supposedly brought agreement in doctrine in the LCA. It states,

“(e) In case of differences in exegesis (explaining of Scripture, GLW) that affect doctrine, ...divergent views (differences in doctrine, GLW) arising from such differences in interpretation are not divisive of church fellowship (they need not stop church fellowship, GLW).”

This evil Open Questions principle could allow fellowship and union between churches that are far apart in matters of doctrine. It is a highly dangerous error through which Satan has been able to destroy formerly sound Lutheran church bodies.

However, the **Bible condemns the evil “Open Questions” principle**. Christians are commanded steadfastly to hold to ALL THE TEACHINGS OF THE BIBLE, without the slightest error (2 Thess. 2:15; 2 Tim. 1:14; 2 Tim. 3:14). False teachers are to be admonished, and false teachings to be opposed and condemned (Titus 1:9,13; 2 Tim. 4:2; 3:16; Matt. 5:12 ff; 16:16). God's Word requires complete unity in doctrine (1 Cor. 1:10), not one teaching this and another that. If error is not removed, it will spread, and eventually put to death the truth (Gal. 5:9; 2 Tim. 2:17-18). With persistent errorists, after they have been admonished, church fellowship is to be severed.

For further reading see:-

-**The Evil Modern Theory of Open Questions**, by Pastor Bryce L. Winter;

-**The False Arguments For the Modern Theory of Open Questions**, by Dr. C.F.W. Walther.

-**The Devil's Hook in the Theses of Agreement**, by Pastor B. L. Winter, (Steadfast, 1980, No. 1)

17. DOCTRINAL DISCIPLINE

God has commanded that in a church body, there is to be complete unity in matters of Scripture Doctrine and practice (1 Cor. 1:10; Eph. 4:3-6). All are to adhere steadfastly to the teachings of the Word of God, not only to believe and practise them, but also to see that they are taught in their truth and purity (Deut. 27:10; John 2:5; 2 Thess. 2:5; Jude 3; Acts 2:42; John 8:31,32).

However if there is one who teaches contrary to the doctrines of God's Word, he is first to be patiently admonished and instructed in the Word of God. The aim of this admonition is to encourage him to accept the teachings of God's Word. If he refuses to listen to this patient instruction and continues to hold steadfastly to error, especially if he begins to make propaganda for his error and teach it to others, then God's Word commands separation from such a stubborn errorist (Jer. 23:31,32; Gal. 1:9; Matt. 7:15,16; Titus 3:10,11; 2 John 10,11; Rom. 16:17-18).

It is to be noted that when church fellowship is severed, we make no final judgement as to their faith but leave that matter to the Lord. It is simply stated that because of false doctrine, the persistent errorist cannot be regarded as a brother in the faith (i.e. one who is a true believer and at the same time holds to the same doctrine as we do).

In the LCA, the principles of Doctrinal Discipline are not practiced. Stubborn false teachers are not disciplined, but are allowed to remain members of the church in good standing. Thus their error is condoned and false teaching is allowed to spread and grow.

For further reading see:-

-**How the Congregation is to Deal with the Weak, as well as the Persistent Errorists in its Midst**, by Pastor B L Winter

18. CHURCH DISCIPLINE

When a fellow Christian has fallen into sin and has thus fallen from or is endangering his faith, God's Word gives clear instructions as to what is to be done to try to bring such a one back to the Lord.

The motive is always love for that person's soul, the aim to save their soul and keep them from eternally perishing.

Matt 18:15-18 points out what is to be done.

Firstly, the sinner is to be admonished privately in a tactful yet firm manner, through the Law shown his sin and its consequences and urged to repent, then through the Gospel urged to trust in Jesus for forgiveness. If he heeds the admonition, the brother is gained and the matter is to remain private.

If he refuses to heed this admonition, secondly, one or two more are to be taken that they may state all that they can from the Word of God in order to urge him to repent. Also the two or three are witnesses to the meeting, who may later report to the congregation what has happened.

Finally, if he refuses to heed them, the matter is to be placed before the congregation, who also are to make every attempt to admonish him from the Word of God. If he neglects to hear them, then the congregation is to practise the final step of Church Discipline, excommunication. It is to be announced that because of the sinner's stubborn hard-hearted impenitence, despite all reproof, he is an unbeliever, and the door of heaven is shut to him by God until he repents.

Such a one can no longer be regarded as a fellow-Christian; he cannot be given the privileges of membership in the congregation (the Lord's Supper, Sponsorship, a Christian Burial). If however he repents of his sin, he should be welcomed back into the faith and as a member of the congregation.

In the LCA there is a notable lack of true Scriptural Church Discipline. Members are allowed all the privileges of church membership, while living openly in public sin without repentance. The steps of Matt. 18 are not followed in regard to their sin.

For further reading see:-

-A Christian Congregation and Church Discipline by Pastor F. G. Kleinig.

19. CHRISTIAN GIVING

The Bible teaches that all people have been given their possessions as a gracious gift from God. We are the stewards or managers of these gifts here in this world (Luke 16:1-9). God requires us to use these gifts wisely, for the honour and glory of God and for the welfare of our neighbour. Since our possessions belong to God, He wants us also to support His Kingdom with our gifts and offerings.

The true motive for Christian Giving is not for custom's sake, nor to make a name for ourselves, nor to beat the other fellow, nor just because others do it, nor to earn our way to heaven, nor any other outward reason (Amos 5:22). Rather Christian Giving is a fruit of the faith that lives in the heart of the Christian. Gratitude and love to the Lord and Saviour urges the Christian to support the Lord's Kingdom. (Luke 7:36-38).

Christian Giving:

- is an act of worship, whereby we offer our first-fruits to the Lord (Prov. 3:9);
- should be secret, being a matter between ourselves and God (Matt. 6:3,4);
- should be voluntary, with no pressure exerted from outside (2 Cor. 9:7; 8:12);
- should be on a regular weekly basis according to the means with which the Lord has blessed us (1 Cor. 16:2; 2 Cor. 8:12);
- could be on a percentage basis according to that with which the Lord has blessed us. The Old Testament Church Law commanded the tithe (Lev. 27:30). This could serve as a guide to New Testament Christians;
- could also involve a pledge which the Christian voluntarily, between himself and God, makes to the Lord (e.g. Abraham, Jacob, David).

People oftentimes rob themselves of the blessings of God, and even bring upon themselves hard times because they neglect their responsibilities to the Lord (Haggai 1:5-9; Mal. 3:7-9). Rather the Lord has promised to bless richly those who are rich to the Lord in His Kingdom (Mal. 3:10-12; Prov. 3:9; Luke 6:38; 2 Cor. 9:8; 2 Cor. 9:6).

The LCA acts contrary to the Word of God in the following areas:-

- not impressing upon their members the important Scriptural principles of Christian Giving;
- allowing various fund-raising methods which are in themselves contrary to the Word of God (e.g. Raffles, Gambling);
- soliciting money through means that do not agree with the principles of Scripture (e.g. fetes, stalls, etc.)

For further reading see:-

-Christian Giving by Pastor F.G. Kleinig.

20. CHURCH AND MINISTRY. THE CALL

CHURCH

The word "church" in the Bible is used to describe firstly the Invisible Church, the true Christians scattered throughout the world. It refers to the whole number of true believers on earth, wherever they may be (Matt. 16:18; Eph. 1:22; 5:23,27).

It is also used to refer to the local congregation, the group of Christians in one area, who believe and teach the same doctrine and regularly gather themselves around the Word of God (1 Cor. 1:2; 1 Thess. 1:1; Acts 2:47; Phil. 1:1).

The word "church" in the Bible is not used to describe any other grouping of Christians.

That the establishment of local congregations has been commanded by God, is clear from the following proofs:

- the practice of the Apostles of forming local congregations wherever people were brought to the Lord (Acts 2:47; 1 Cor. 1:2; Rom. 1:2; Gal. 1:2; Eph 1:1; Acts 20:28);
- the command for these divinely established congregations to call for themselves pastors (Titus 1:5; Acts 14:22,23);
- the duty given to the congregation to use publicly the Office of the Keys (Matt. 16:18-19; John 20:22,23), especially the duty of Excommunication (Matt. 18:15-18);
- the other jobs given to the local congregation, (to celebrate the Lord's Supper, baptize, etc.).

All other groupings of Christians (e.g. Synod, Convention, Pastoral Conference, Sunday School Teachers' Conference) are not divinely commanded and are of human arrangement only.

MINISTRY

To all Christians, God has given the command to preach and confess the Word of God to others. This is called the Priesthood of all believers (1 Pt. 2:9; 3:15; Col. 3:16). However God has established a special office, separate and distinct from this, the Office of the Public Ministry. The man called to this office, the Pastor, performs the duties of the Office of the Keys publicly, on behalf of the congregation.

God has commanded the local congregation to establish this office in its midst, and to call a man to perform this job, to proclaim God's Word, administer Baptism and the Lord's Supper, care for souls, and perform the other functions God has assigned to him through the congregation. All other offices in the congregation (e.g. elder, Chairman, Sunday School Teacher etc.), are by human arrangement and not commanded by God.

That this office is established by God is shown by:

- the practice of the Apostles, according to God's command, who saw to it that the office of the ministry was established wherever congregations were established (Acts 14:22-23; Titus 1:5; Acts 20:28);
- the personal qualifications which God establishes for those who wish to enter this office (1 Tim 3:1-6; Titus 1:6-9);
- the functions and duties of the office of the ministry (1Pt. 5:1-3; Eph 4:11-12; 2 Cor 4:5; 2 Cor 5:20; 1 Cor 4:1);
- the honour and dignity to be given to pastors (Heb 13:7,17; 1 Thess 5:12-13; 1 Tim 5:17; 1 Pet 5:4);
- the method that pastors are to be supported by their congregations (Gal 6:6; 1 Cor 9:14).

ERRORS OF OTHER LUTHERAN CHURCHES

The LCA teaches contrary to the Word of God in this doctrine in the following matters:

- the Congregation is regarded as having no greater authority than Synod, with no God-given power and authority of its own;
- the Synod, District, and its officials are looked upon as having the authority to over-rule the congregation in its decisions;
- other offices in the church (eg. President, District President, Seminary Professor), are looked upon as the Office of the Ministry established by God;
- the District President is regarded as a "Pastor of Pastors" of the Synod.

The Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod (WELS), Evangelical Lutheran Synod (ELS), as well as the Evangelical Lutheran Synod of Australia (ELSA) teach contrary to the Word of God in the doctrines of the Church and Ministry. They erroneously claim:

-that the office of the public ministry is of human arrangement, not being established by God. They therefore believe that there are no essential differences between it and other offices in the church (Chairman, Sunday School Teacher, Day School Teacher);

-that the congregation has not been divinely commanded by God, but is merely by human arrangement. Other groupings of Christians (e.g. the Synod, Pastoral Conference, Family group), it is claimed, are essentially the same as the local Congregation, and possess to the same extent the Office of the Keys. Any group of Christians, it is claimed, may call pastors, perform the functions of the local congregation, excommunicate etc.

It is vital that this important doctrine of God's Word be maintained and preserved. The rights and obligations of the local congregation are divinely given. The Office and duties of the Pastor have been established by God. Let us never allow man with his sinful human reason to take away something so valuable that the Lord has given to us.

THE CALL

God's way of giving pastors to His church is by means of the regular call. No man can appoint himself as a Pastor. He must receive a regular call through the local congregation. No one has the right to impose upon a congregation a Pastor, nor to interfere with the calling of a Pastor to a congregation. God has given the right to the local congregation to call its own Pastor.

The Lord calls a minister to this office through the local congregation. A Pastor is to serve in his congregation until the Lord Himself indicates that he is to go elsewhere. According to God's Word a call is to be VALID, it is to be extended by those who have been given the right to call, the local congregation. As well the call must be LEGITIMATE; it must not be obtained through wire-pulling, deceit, greed and selfishness, or other dishonest or crooked means.

It is not the Ordination, but the call that makes a man a Pastor. Ordination is merely the public announcement and ratification of the call already extended to the Pastor by a Congregation.

To be condemned also is the Temporary Call, where a Pastor is called to serve a congregation for a specified period of time. It is the Lord who calls a pastor through the congregation. Therefore a pastor must serve his congregation until the Lord determines he is to serve elsewhere.

According to God's Word, a congregation may only depose its Pastor for the following reasons:

- a. persistent teaching of false doctrine;
- b. manifest godless and sinful life;
- c. wilful neglect of duty.

The LCA has taught and practised contrary to the Scriptural Doctrine of the Call by:

- allowing Synod and synodical Officials to dictate to the Congregation in the calling and deposing of its Pastor;
- allowing Synod and synodical officials to interfere in the responsibilities of a Pastor over his congregation;
- allowing temporary calls to be extended to a Pastor;
- looking upon ordination as making a man a Pastor, and not the divine call extended through the congregation.

For further reading on these vital doctrines see:-

-The Doctrine of the Church and Ministry and Its Importance to the Christian Pastor and His Congregation, Parts I, II and III by Pastor G. L. Winter;

-The Call to the Ministry in the Church in Doctrine and Practice by Pastor H. E. Temme.

21. CLOSE COMMUNION

The Lord's Supper is a very precious Sacrament of the Lord. Through the true Body and Blood of our Lord, given through the bread and the wine, the Lord offers and bestows to the believing Christian the forgiveness of sins, life and salvation. Since it is such a valuable thing given to the Christian, to be administered publicly through the congregation, the Pastor must see to it that its administration is respected and honoured.

The Lord has given His holy Supper for His "disciples," i.e. to Christians, and Christians only. Therefore the Lord's Supper must be denied:

- a. to those who are known to be ungodly and impenitent (1 Cor 11:29);
- b. to those who have given offence and not removed it (Matt 5:23-24);
- c. to those who are not able to examine themselves such as children, adults who have not been sufficiently instructed in the Word of God, and persons who are unconscious or insane (1 Cor 11:28);
- d. to those who are not one with us in doctrine and practice, ie. are of a different faith (1 Cor 10:14; Acts 2:42; Rom 16:17-18). Attendance at the Lord's Supper is a testimony of unity in faith. Here the principle of the Scriptures applies: **ORTHODOX LUTHERAN ALTARS FOR ORTHODOX LUTHERANS ONLY.**

The LCA teaches contrary to Scripture doctrine in the following areas:-

- it allows manifest impenitent sinners to attend the Lord's Supper;
- children are allowed to come to the Lord's Supper, doubt being as to their ability to properly examine themselves for a worthy attendance at the Lord's Supper;
- open Communion is practiced where people are allowed to attend the Lord's Supper who belong to other denominations and are not united in doctrine and practice. True unity in doctrine and practice is not necessary before attendance at LCA communion altars.

For further reading see:-

- The Doctrine of Suspension From Communion** by Pastor B. L. Winter;
- Theses on Communion Fellowship** by Dr CFW Walther

22. MATTERS NOT SETTLED BEFORE THE UNION OF THE UELCA AND ELCA

In 1966 the merger took place between the UELCA and the ELCA. The THESES OF AGREEMENT and the DOCUMENT OF UNION, it was claimed, settled the doctrinal differences that formerly existed between the two churches. However, although statements were drawn up and adopted by both churches, and though it was claimed that these settled the differences between the two churches, true unity was not obtained.

The LCA, even at the time of the union of 1966, was a divided church so far as doctrine was concerned. The Theses of Agreement and the Document of Union were compromises, which allowed differences to exist in their church in matters of doctrine. **The evil "Open Questions" principle is part and parcel of the Theses of Agreement, and thus the LCA.** Numerous loopholes are contained in it, as well as the Document of Union which allow for errors in Scripture doctrine to be taught, while at the same time a profession made that these statements are being adhered to. Thus the Theses of Agreement and the Document of Union must be rejected as not only contrary to the clear teachings of God's Word, but also as evil, dangerous, cunning and compromising double-speak statements.

The following matters were clear differences between the two churches that were not settled on the basis of God's Word.

a. **The Holy Scriptures.** In the UELCA it was allowed for it to be held that there were errors and mistakes, so-called "unevenness," "differences," etc. in the Holy Scriptures. This was rejected by the ELCA. The fact that differences remained in the LCA over this matter is shown by the many debates which have occurred and compromise statements drawn up to supposedly "settle" the matter since the Union.

b. **Open Questions.** The UELCA held to the evil Open Questions Theory, claiming that different teachings could be tolerated in the church in matters where God's Word had decided the matter. The ELCA had taught that the Lord required total unity in matters of Scripture doctrine.

c. **Millenium, First Resurrection, Conversion of Israel.** In the UELCA, the false teaching was tolerated that God intended to establish a future 1000 year long earthly kingdom in the world (a millenium) either before or after Judgement Day. Also some openly held that there would be two bodily resurrections, the first referring to the believers when Christ first came, and a second referring to all people when the millenium was complete. Finally, connected with this was the error that all the people who are Jews by birth would be converted before Judgement Day. All these teachings were rejected by the ELCA as unscriptural.

d. **Antichrist.** Many in the UELCA could not accept the statement, “The Papacy is the Antichrist.” The teaching that the Antichrist was yet to be revealed was tolerated. The ELCA held to the Scriptural teaching (2 Thess. 2) that the Papacy is the Antichrist. The Theses of Agreement declare this matter to be an Open Question.

e. **Sunday.** The UELCA allowed it to be taught that the Sunday was the continuation of the Sabbath Day of the Old Testament, and that Christians are commanded to observe the Sunday as the day of worship in the New Testament. The ELCA on the basis of God's Word taught that the Old Testament Jewish Sabbath has been abolished, and that God has not established any particular day as the day of worship in the New Testament and that of its own free will the Christian Church of the New Testament could choose whatever day it decided on which to worship as long as regular public worship was not despised.

f. **Church, Church Government and Public Ministry.** In the UELCA the view was taught that the Pastor held power of himself, outside the local congregation. In practice, the Pastor was held to have power to rule over the congregation in earthly matters. This was rejected by the ELCA.

g. **Conversion.** The UELCA held that man, before his conversion, was able to decide of his own will to accept or reject God's grace. Thus man's conversion becomes an act of man which he contributes for his salvation. The ELCA taught that conversion was totally an act of God upon the human heart, that man cannot cooperate even in the least amount towards his salvation because of the wicked state of the natural unconverted heart.

h. **Election of Grace.** In the UELCA, the teaching was held that God elected men on the condition of their acceptance of the grace of God, in view of their faith. Thus it is claimed that there is a cause in man which has brought about his salvation. This dangerous teaching has the effect of teaching that man can cooperate in his conversion, that his good works can contribute to salvation. The ELCA taught that God from eternity has elected to salvation certain ones, not because of any cause in them, but solely out of His wonderful grace and mercy. Man's election is not because God foresaw that he would accept the Gospel in faith.

i. **Christ's State of Humiliation.** The UELCA held that Christ laid aside His glory as true God when He became man. In claiming that this could be “more fully ... developed,” room was allowed for the teaching that Christ put off His nature as true God when He became man. The ELCA upheld the Scriptural teaching that Christ fully remained true God when He became man. However, during His State of Humiliation, He did not according to His human nature, always and fully use His power and might that He possessed as true God and which was communicated to His human nature (Phil. 2:6,7).

j. **The Lutheran Confessions.** The UELCA held that only that could be regarded as truth in the Lutheran Confessions, which the Lutheran Confessors “meant to confess,” or “intended to lay down.” As to what teachings it was their intention to confess, was left to man to decide. Therefore the UELCA refused to bind itself fully to the doctrinal content of the Lutheran Confessions. The ELCA accepted the doctrinal content of the Lutheran Confessions, because it is in accordance with the Word of God.

k. **Church Fellowship.** The UELCA taught that fellowship could be declared and outward unity established, without agreement in matters of Scripture doctrine. Their idea was that people within the one church may “agree to disagree” in matters of doctrine, for the sake of outward unity. The ELCA taught that before union or fellowship, complete unity must be obtained in matters of doctrine (1Cor. 1:10).

Undoubtedly, the evil “Open Questions” theory was applied to many other areas of doctrine. Even matters such as the Doctrine of Marriage and Engagement, Marriage With a Deceased Wife's Sister, as well the attitude to the Lodge Question, were regarded as “Open Questions.” All of these matters were not Scripturally settled in the Union agreement between the two churches.

For further reading see:-

-**Brief Statement of the Chief Doctrinal Differences Existing Between The Evangelical Lutheran Synod in Australia and the United Evangelical Lutheran Church in Australia**, by Dr. W. Janzow and Dr. A. Mackenzie, published originally in the Australasian Theological Review, 1936;

-**How Are The Mighty Fallen, A History of the Events Leading To the Downfall of the ELCA and the Formation of the ELCR**, by Pastor Gavin Winter;

-**The Devil's Hook in the Theses of Agreement**, by Pastor B. L. Winter, (Steadfast 1980, No. 1).

APPENDIX

A. As well as the above, the **LCA** is party to the following dangerous errors:-

- (i) The adoption of the following joint statements with the Roman Catholic Church which compromise Scripture doctrine
 - ◆ Sacrament and Sacrifice (dealing with the Lord's Supper)
 - ◆ Joint Declaration on the Doctrine of Justification
 - ◆ Pastor and Priest
 - ◆ Mutual recognition of Baptism;
- (ii) Becoming a member of the National Council of Churches (NCC) in Australia (1998);
- (iii) In regard to Capital Punishment it is claimed that, "The Church can only say that capital punishment is not contrary to the will of God, but is not demanded by God" (Doctrinal Statements, Vol 1, H14);
- (iv) Becoming an associate member of the Lutheran World Federation (LWF);
- (v) The Queensland District of the LCA becoming a part of Queensland Churches Together (QCT) (1992);
- (vi) Dialog resulting in compromise statements with the Uniting Church of Australia.

B. The ELCR differs from the **AELC** (Australian Evangelical Lutheran Church) in the following areas:

- ◆ Church Fellowship
- ◆ Attitude to the Theses of Agreement
- ◆ Head Covering
- ◆ Distinction in Dress
- ◆ Bible Translations

C. The ELCR differs from the **ELSA** (Evangelical Lutheran Synod of Australia) in the following areas:

- ◆ Church and Ministry
- ◆ Church Fellowship
- ◆ Head Covering
- ◆ Distinction in Dress
- ◆ Bible Translations

Pastor Gavin L Winter

OTHER BOOKS BY THE SAME AUTHOR:-

- HOW ARE THE MIGHTY FALLEN (A History of the Events Leading to the Downfall of the ELCA and Formation of the ELCR)
- History of the ELCR (1966-1996)