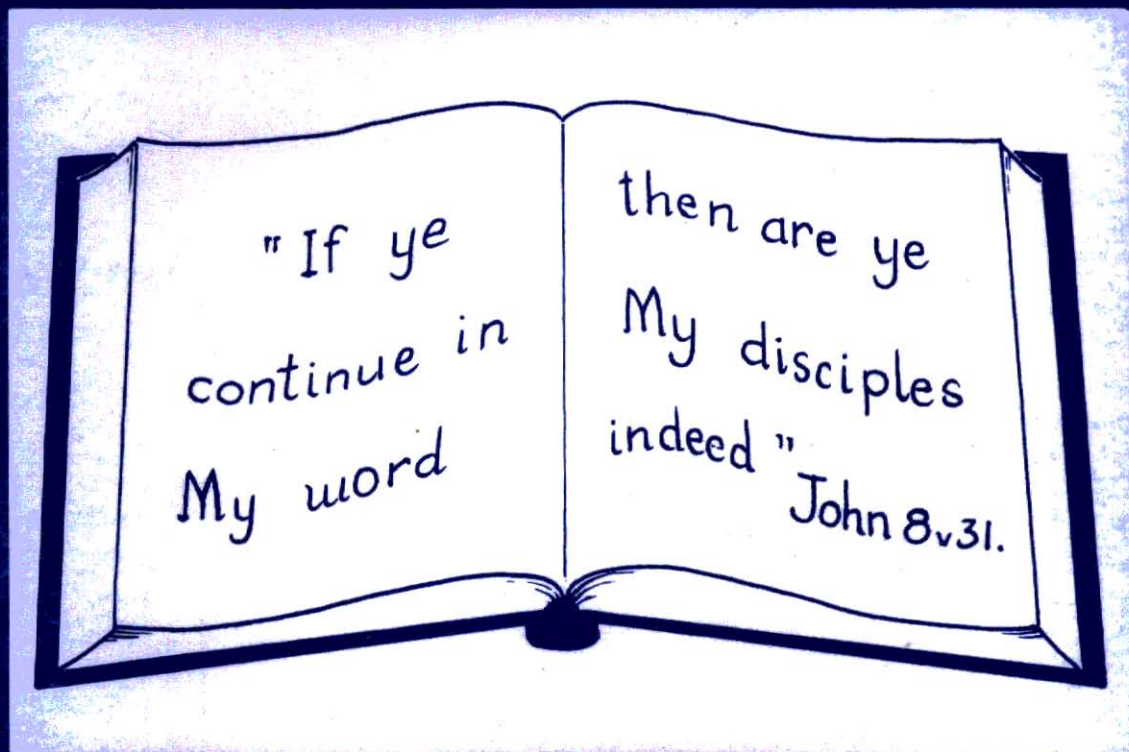


# HOW ARE THE MIGHTY FALLEN



A History of the Events Leading to the Downfall  
of the ELCA and Formation of the ELCR

by

Pastor Gavin L. Winter

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INTRODUCTION AND ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS.

Herewith we present the culmination of about eleven months work, a history of the formation of the Lutheran Church of Australia, in particular the union negotiations which led to amalgamation of the two former Lutheran groups (UELCA and ELCA). We do this for the purpose of answering the question, near and dear to our hearts: WHAT WERE THE EVENTS WHICH LEAD TO THE FORMATION OF THE ELCR? The author was requested by the ELCR to draw up this history in connection with the twentieth anniversary of our existence. Pentecost Sunday, May 29, 1966 was the day on which the Constituting Convention of the ELCR was held. This same date in 1986 will mark the end of twenty years in which the Lord has blessed our little Church with His pure Word. We look at this event, not with haughtiness or pride, but with hearts filled with sincere thankfulness to our God Who has so richly granted His Word in its truth and purity in our midst. As a token of our appreciation for His blessing this history has been drawn up explaining why we, the Evangelical Lutheran Congregations of the Reformation, exist as a separate Lutheran Church.

We look at this book as having a threefold aim in view.

In the first place, for the older ones in the ELCR who personally experienced the events herein recorded, it is a reminder of the difficult struggles and battles they underwent a generation ago. It should bring back to their memory that their church was formed in order that they could have for themselves, their children and other souls who desired it the pure water of life taught to them, without the corruption of false teaching. May this book renew their zeal to cling fervently to the age-old truths of the Scriptures and not to depart from them. To these founding fathers of the Federation we owe our thankfulness that they held to their opposition to error and were willing to take the monumental step of leaving their former church for the sake of their love to the Lord.

Secondly, our ELCR has a generation of young people growing up and entering the Confirmation classes who did not personally experience the church happenings of the 60's and otherwise would know nothing of the formation of their church. They have every right to ask the questions: "Why are we a separate church body? What is the difference between ourselves and other churches?" A knowledge of the history of the formation of the ELCR will help answer these questions. How can a layperson be expected to be a good member of his church, form sound Christian judgements and be loyal to the doctrines that it teaches on the basis of God's Word, if he knows little or nothing of its beginnings? The great danger facing the ELCR is that if its young people have no appreciation of the battles and difficulties their forefathers went through in order to retain for them the Lord's pure Word, they will not be filled with true zeal to retain this Word and will soon be found an



easy prey to Satan's snare of false doctrine. Once false teaching takes hold of a church, if the false teachers are not immediately dealt with and if they refuse to repent and retract their false teachings, avoided (Rom 16:17-18), that error will soon spread, corrupt other doctrines of Scripture (Gal 5:9; 2 Tim 2:17) and lead many souls away from their Lord. Therefore, if we of the ELCR are to remain true to the Lord, it is vital that we keep up the instruction, especially of our youth, so that they be filled with the same determination to hold fast to God's pure Word which has been passed on to them as were their spiritual fore-fathers. (Rev 3:11).

Finally, it is often asked of our Pastors and members: "Is there more than one Lutheran Church in Australia? You people of the ELCR, what do you stand for? Why are you a separate church and why don't you join together with the other Lutherans? You both bear the name of 'Lutheran', don't you?" Our aim is to point out both to our own members and also to others who are interested that there are serious doctrinal differences between ourselves and the LCA, differences which began already in the latter days of the ELCA. The ELCR was not formed because our members "couldn't get on with their former pastors" or "had personal enmity against the members of the UELCA." No, our stand was taken for conscience reasons, because we sincerely believed that this union was not based upon total acceptance of and adherence to the Word of God. We were simply following in the footsteps of Luther whose motto "SCRIPTURE ALONE" formed one of the foundation principles of the Reformation. Where Scripture speaks, there the loyal Christian must not compromise, not act against his conscience, but say: "God's Word has spoken, therefore I will obediently heed and obey". This booklet will clearly show that there were a number of doctrinal matters not settled in the uniting church, contrary to the Scripture principle that unity in doctrine and practice must prevail before any church fellowship or union can take place. (1 Cor 1:10).

The author has little personal experience of the events related in this book, as he was only seven years of age when the amalgamation took place. He therefore has relied heavily on deep study of the documents pertinent to this period, as well as personal articles, statements and reminiscences of those (especially Pastor Kleinig) who were involved in these events. The author has kept strictly to the documented facts of these events, as well quoting occasionally from statements and personal reminiscences of those involved. All rumour and heresy has been avoided. The judgements made about these events are those which the author sincerely believes are based on the Scriptures and the teachings of the orthodox Lutheran Church. If anyone is able to show that these facts or judgements are untrue or unscriptural, the author will gladly apologize and withdraw the erroneous point that has been stated. This book may be hard hitting but it is necessary so to confess God's Word when the truths of Scripture have been forsaken. This history has been written chiefly for the benefit of lay people, and so the author has tried to avoid theological language which is above their heads. Only

occasionally when it has been necessary to examine a point in detail has he strayed from this norm, for the sake of being precise, and laying all the facts on the table. At times he has abbreviated such often used names as U.E.L.C.A. and E.L.C.A. to UELCA and ELCA for the sake of convenience.

The author wishes to thank sincerely his sister, Lorelle Winter for many hours work in the typing of the manuscript, Pastor Bryce Winter for perusing and giving advice and help in connection with it, and Marie Winter, the ELCR typist for her work towards its printing. Above all, my sincere thanks to my dear wife Dale, for her co-operation during the many long hours it has taken to produce this work.

With these words we commend this history to the Lord, with the prayer that it will help the advancement, in hearts and lives, of God's precious Word, to the honour and glory of our dear Redeemer.

Written in Christ's Name,

Pastor Gavin Winter.

KEY

E.L.S.A. means The Evangelical Lutheran Synod in Australia.  
E.L.C.A. " The Evangelical Lutheran Church of Australia.  
U.E.L.C.A. " The United Evangelical Lutheran Church in Australia.  
E.L.C.R. " The Evangelical Lutheran Congregations of the Reformation.  
L.C.A. " The Lutheran Church of Australia.  
A.L.C. " The American Lutheran Church.

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CHAPTER I.

HISTORY OF THE LUTHERAN CHURCH IN AUSTRALIA

1838 - 1926

In order that the reader may obtain a proper understanding of the situation which led to the union negotiations between the two former Australian Lutheran Churches (ELCA and UELCA), we will first give a brief outline of their history. The main AIM of this will be to point out the two streams of Lutheranism in Australia since its beginning, their varied histories and especially the vital doctrinal differences that existed between the two.

The year 1838 is generally regarded as the beginning of the Australian Lutheran Church, though a number of Lutheran pastors and missionaries had already come to Australia. In this year Pastor August Ludwig Christian Kavel landed in South Australia and began to minister to his congregations arriving on his ship, as well as two subsequent boatloads, a total of about 570 people. Kavel and his people left Germany for reasons of conscience, brought about by their denial of religious liberty due to their refusal to join the union of the Lutheran and Reformed churches established by order of the King. Their grievance was not plain stubbornness, hot-headedness or petty in-fighting and squabbling. They could not join the new State Prussian Church because it was a union without unity, a joining together of two churches whose teachings (especially on the doctrine of the Lord's Supper) were miles apart. However, the King, Frederick William III had decided: "You must join; I will force you to join." After undergoing many hardships, they decided: "If we cannot freely worship in our own country, we must seek one where we can." Thus they undertook the hazardous journey to Australia. What an example to us of loyalty and obedience to God, even in the face of severe hardship!

Having established themselves in the settlements of Klemzig, Hahndorf and Glen Osmond in their new country, they set about their tasks giving first priority to the hearing and study of the Scriptures. Shortly after, in 1841, a fourth boatload of Lutherans arrived, bringing with them their pastor, Gotthard Daniel Fritzsche. These settled chiefly at Hahndorf, Lobethal and Bethany (Barossa Valley). For a number of years the two pastors worked well together, serving their congregations with glad and willing hearts. But sadly, a number of differences began to arise between the two men, not in

matters of earthly opinion, but in matters of doctrine, of God's Word. If it were simply differences in earthly ideas, both could still have lived together in peace and harmony. But because the Lord demands strict adherence to His Word in all matters (John 8: 31-32; Matt 28:20; "teaching them to keep strictly all things whatsoever I have commanded you; Acts 20:27), and because neither party was willing to budge in his position, this led to a split between the two parties at the Synod at Bethany in 1846.

But what were the differences? In brief they consisted of the following:

1. Pastor Kavel expressed his protest against a number of statements in the Lutheran Confessions claiming these were contrary to Scripture; while Fritzsche held to all the doctrinal content of the Confessions because they correctly explained the teachings of Scripture.
2. Pastor Kavel held to views about the antisciptural teaching of the millennium (visible 1000 year reign of Christ on earth), claiming that his position was "Biblical" chiliasm.
3. A final bone of contention was Kavel's "Apostolic Constitution" of which he demanded acceptance for him to recognize others as genuine Lutherans. This constitution adopted by Kavel's congregations went further than the Scriptures in giving undue emphasis to the office of elders.

Pastor Kavel and his people walked out of the historic Synod at Bethany over the rejection of his protestations, before the burning question of Chiliasm could be discussed. But it remained a difference between the two parties.

Any orthodox Lutheran will soon see that it was Pastor Fritzsche who fully stood four-square on the Scriptures and Pastor Kavel who had departed from the Word of God. Both men realized that their differing teachings could not but end in a division if God's commands to avoid false teachers (Amos 3:3; Matt 7:15,16) were to be adhered to.

Here began a split which eventuated in two streams of the Lutheran Church. The former ELCA (known until the 1940's as the ELSA) was the continuation of the pastors and congregations who gathered around Pastor Fritzsche. Pastor Kavel has always been regarded as the forefather of those churches which joined with others in 1921 to form the UELCA. Though they dropped Kavel's Apostolic Constitution, and

no longer held to his protests against the Lutheran Confessions, other doctrinal differences were placed into the category of "open questions" where each could believe and teach as he pleased. (The teachings of the UELCA and the differences between it and the ELSA will be looked at in Chapter 2).

After the deaths of Kavel and Fritzsche, the Kavel Group (known as the Langmeil-Light's Pass Synod) and the Fritzsche group (South Australian Synod) began negotiations towards union again of the two. The Langmeil Synod men (led by Auricht and Rechner) were willing to give way in other areas of Kavel's teachings, but not in the doctrine of the millennium. Sadly the South Australian Synod took a wrong and dangerous step by agreeing to a Confessional Union in 1864 by saying to the Langmeil Synod: "We will join with you. You may hold to your teachings on the millennium. We do not accept them. But let us not argue on these things, but join together as one." As well as this, there were a number of other doctrinal matters which were declared to be "open questions". This step almost led to the downfall of the Fritzsche group. Pastor Ey, in his "Mitteilungen" correctly calls the agreement a union in which "love, unfortunately did not in all respects rejoice in the truth". One of the chief purposes of this Confessional Union was to establish a mission amongst the Aborigines in Central Australia. The union (not an amalgamation but simply a declaration of fellowship) lasted for 10 years until 1874. In this year the Langmeil Synod went into fellowship with other Lutheran groups in South Australia and Victoria. These groups received pastors from the Basle Missionary Institute, a unionistic group which trained pastors for Reformed as well as Lutheran Churches. This was too much for the South Australian Synod and they left this union with sad hearts.

Around the 1880's the ELSA began to have contact with the Missouri Synod in America. This sound Lutheran group had as its leader Dr. Walther, an orthodox and courageous theologian, who not only taught in its seminary, but was president for many years and influenced this body much with his Scriptural teaching. At once the leading men of the ELSA were impressed with the solid Lutheran material (church papers) and letters which arrived from America. After seeing that this church held four square to the teachings of the orthodox Lutheran Church, they began to consider the chances of obtaining pastors from their Seminaries. A number of men were sent over for training and numerous men who became pastors and seminary professors left their home countries to come to Australia. Included amongst these were such ELSA stalwarts as Prof. G.C. Koch, Dr. Theodore Nickel, Dr. C.F. Graebner and Dr. J.W.C. Janzow. These men had a remarkable effect on their church in keeping it true to God's Word.

During the 1890's a storm broke over the ELSA which not only caused great controversy, but also led to several pastors and congregations being expelled from their midst. It all revolved around the doctrine of church fellowship, that doctrine which played such an

important part sixty years later in the downfall of the ELCA.

Several pastors of the ELSA, Pastors Heidenreich (Snr. and Jnr) were found to be supporting financially the Hermannsburg Mission Station in Central Australia, at that time owned by the Immanuel Synod. Clearly they were promoting the church work of a church with whom they were not in fellowship, contrary to the Bible Doctrine of Church Fellowship (Rom 16: 17-18; Amos 3:3; 2 John: 10,11). After many years of discussion and admonition, the matter came to a head in September 1902, at a Convention held at Eudunda, South Australia. Pastor Theodore Nickel (the following year elected General President of the ELSA) presented the Essay, an excellent and highly instructive exposition of Scripture on CHURCH FELLOWSHIP. (This essay has been translated by Pastor Kleinig and is available through the ELCR). When Heidenreich and his followers refused to accept that their action was un-Scriptural, the ELSA at this Convention voted that they could no longer be in fellowship with them. Though they were very sad to have to take this action, the members of the ELSA showed their loyalty to God's Word and obedience to His commands. The Heidenreich group called itself the ELSA, a.a.g. (- on old basis) and remained a separate body until uniting with the UELCA in 1926.

Up until World War I there were five smaller groups in Australia, apart from the ELSA. These churches were: The Immanuel Synod, the Immanuel Synod (on old basis), Synod of Victoria, Queensland Synod and the German and Scandinavian Synod. In 1921 these organized themselves into an organic union and were given the name the United Evangelical Lutheran Church of Australia (UELCA).

Most of these churches had received their pastors from overseas. The Immanuel Synod chiefly received many from Neuendettelsau Seminary, a pastoral training institute established by Wilhelm Loehe. It was infected with the false idea of "open questions". The Immanuel Synod (on old basis), as well as the Queensland and Victorian Synods received their pastors chiefly from the Basle Mission Institute and the State Prussian Church. Basle was a training institute for men of all denominations, giving their trainees a smattering of their "brand" of religion (in their case - the Lutheran Church) towards the end. The State Prussian Church was the same false teaching church which Pastors Kavel and Fritzsche and their followers for conscience reasons could not become members. Finally, the German and Scandinavian Synod received men from Hermannsburg Mission Society.

In 1926 one final smaller group joined the UELCA. This was the ELSA (on old basis) a smaller group formed when the Pastors Heidenreich were expelled from the ELSA for continued support of a heterodox Lutheran Church. They had remained separate for many years, and had grown in size, but finally were absorbed into the UELCA.

Thus we have a brief history of the Lutheran Church in Australia up until this time. It was composed of two groups, the UELCA and the ELSA. Now since we do not doubt the sincerity of the men on both sides, we can be sure that these two churches remained separate not because of personal differences (bitterness, hatred, squabbles, etc), but because there were deep differences between them, differences in matters of doctrine. Let us therefore examine what they were.



## CHAPTER II.

### DOCTRINAL DIFFERENCES BEFORE 1900.

There is nothing more pleasing to God than seeing Christians dwelling together in unity, worshipping and fellowshiping together as one. (Ps 133:1-3). But before such unity can be achieved, the Lord desires unity first in matters of doctrine and Scriptural practice (1 Cor 1:10; Amos 3:3). Yes, it would be a wonderful, yes, pleasing thing if all churches could be united! It is a great offence, both to Christians and to the world, to see the division within visible Christendom. But sadly, all such divisions occur because in one point or another, departures occur from God's pure Word. Such departures Scripture calls false doctrine.

Thus also the division between the former UELCA and ELSA was not because of the hot-headedness of the different parties, but because of REAL DOCTRINAL DIFFERENCES that existed between them. In various points the UELCA held to or tolerated in its midst teachings contrary to God's Word.

Already in 1846, one of the chief differences between the Fritzsche and Kavel groups was the teaching of the millennium. This is the false belief (backed up by the abuse of certain passages of the Bible) that at or before Judgement Day, Christ will come back into this world and rule for a period of 1000 years. Included in this are false ideas concerning several resurrections from the dead, the conversion of all Jewish people and a physical return to Israel of all Christians before the last day. Scriptures condemn the doctrine of the millennium as false and dangerous to a believer's faith (Acts 14:22; John 16:33; 1 Cor 15:19; Col 3:2; John 18:36; Gal 5:9). These ideas have never been accepted nor tolerated by the orthodox Lutheran Church. However, Kavel claimed that each may harbour his own opinion in these matters, even though this opinion may be contrary to Scripture.

Later, we see the confessional union between the South Australian Synod and the Kavel group (1864 - 1874) based on a compromise in the teaching of the millennium. This matter was said to be an OPEN QUESTION (a matter of doctrine where each is allowed to hold opinions, even though contrary to Bible Doctrine). Thus stemming from this time, the UELCA has always officially taught or tolerated in its midst anti-Scriptural ideas regarding the millennium.

### DOCTRINAL DISCUSSIONS - ELSA and IMMANUEL SYNOD

During the period 1887 to 1889 four conferences were held between

the ELSA and IMMANUEL SYNOD where doctrinal differences were discussed with the hope of resolving them. At the third conference held at Tanunda, South Australia, from February 29 to March 1, 1888, the Immanuel Synod demanded recognition of the "Open Questions" principle that difference in doctrine not affecting fundamental doctrines were not divisive of church fellowship. From a portion of the report we see that the Immanuel Synod wanted the "OPEN QUESTIONS" principle to be the basic foundation of further discussions.

Pastor G.J. Rechner, one of the best known Presidents of the Immanuel Synod, said the following to the Pastors of the ELSA:

"We are prepared to bear the opinions of others in the points under consideration, and demand the same from the pastors of the Australian Synod.... We regard it as essential that we accept as our authority St. Augustine's dictum: 'In necessariis unitas, in dubiis libertas, in omnibus charitas'. (In essentials unity, in doubtful things liberty, in all things charity). Except we regard our differences as 'Open Questions', how can we possibly hope to reach agreement in the matters that separate us, especially when we take notice of the fact that even the greatest Exegetes differ on these points? Who of us is going to decide as to who is in the right? Who is going to be the Pope that through his authoritative sentence is going to settle the dispute? You say this, we say that: who is going to decide as to who has the correct Scriptural exposition?"

(Taken from the official protocol of said Conference, and signed by Pastors G.J. Rechner, J.G. Auricht, P.T. Oster, K. Dorsch, underlining ours).

Concerning this supposed principle of the Church father St. Augustine, Pastor Kleinig writes:

"Note: It is quite uncertain whether the above statement 'In necessities etc.' was ever made by St. Augustine. G. Buchmann in 'Geflügelte Worte', 27th ed. 1925 p.444, remarks: 'To all appearances this statement is twelve hundred years younger than Augustine, to whom it is here and there ascribed!'"

(Pastor Kleinig in reply to Dr. Lohe's charges, Page 10)

Setting us a wonderful example of faithfulness to Scripture, the ELSA refused to accept the evil "Open Questions" principle.

At this meeting Pastor Dorsch stated:

"It is really the truth of which these people (the pastors of the Immanuel Synod) are enemies; but, because they are afraid that such a confession might do them harm, they throw sand into people's eyes."

(History of the UELCA, p. 107)

Because of the evil "Open Questions" principle, Pastor Dorsch (a sound, orthodox man called from the Missouri Synod to the ELSA) wrote:

"We see it is useless to hope for a union at present. Before we can hope to unite we must first of all reach agreement on the principles of Scripture interpretation".

(Pastor Kleinig, op. cit, p.6)

Pastor Kaibel, a pastor of the UELCA, states as much in an article entitled: "Why did the attempts to unite fail?" He wrote:

"We have a different conception of the prophetic word of the Old and New Testaments from them...But we did not make our conception a cause for severing church fellowship."

(Hebart. UELCA. p. 107-108)

At a conference at Bethany held on June 29-30, 1887, Pastor Rechner, President of the Immanuel Synod, pointed out that it could not be expected that both parties would reach complete agreement in all points of doctrine, particularly also in non-fundamentals. Then he asserted:

"In this latter case then love must rule, and each must bear the other in love".

But Pastor Dorsch correctly replied:

"Where doctrine is concerned, there the truth of Scripture alone counts, and nothing else; we cannot give anything away of Scripture. First comes Scripture, then love."

(Quoted in Pastor Kleinig's letter to T.D. Koch, Sept 3, 1962, p.6)

In reviewing the doctrinal position of the old Immanuel Synod, Dr. Hebart writes:

"The Kavel line is the one which throughout the hundred years practically kept a straight course. It did not lose its original characteristics. These are, besides a staunch adherence to the Lutheran Confessions, a firm stand against indifference, a pronounced rejection of dead orthodoxy, a definite conviction that among those who adhere to the Lutheran Confessions there may be differences of opinion (Open Questions) which do not necessitate severance of church fellowship. On these points the Kavel section remained loyal to itself throughout the ten decades."

(UELCA, p.157, underlining ours)

From this we see that from their beginnings, the evil "OPEN QUESTIONS" principle was a part and parcel of the UELCA and those church bodies which went to form it. In fact, the union in 1921 to form the UELCA was based on this very thing. It was recognized by both sides to be the chief difference between the two churches.

But for us fully to understand what this difference involved, let us deal with it in more detail.

CHAPTER III.

WHAT DO WE MEAN: OPEN QUESTIONS?  
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For many years, the old Immanuel Synod received its pastors from the Neuendettelsau Mission Society, in Germany. With these pastors came an antisciptural idea which was readily accepted by the synods which later formed the UELCA. This was the evil theory concerning OPEN QUESTIONS.

But let us make a distinction here. According to the Bible, there are true OPEN QUESTIONS. These are explained by Dr. W. Janzow, and his definition represents the official position of the old ELSA. He writes:

"Those questions in the domain of Christian doctrine may be termed open questions which Scripture answers either not at all or not clearly. Since Christian doctrine may not be augmented (added to GLW) or developed by men, in as much as all men are to continue in the Word and doctrine of Christ and His chosen Apostles, John 8:31-32; Acts 2:42; 2 Thess 2:15; open questions must remain open questions".

(Brief Statement of the Chief Doctrinal Differences Existing Between the ELSA and the UELCA, p6)

The Brief Statement of the Missouri Synod (1932) also takes this position. True OPEN QUESTIONS are matters in which the Bible has not given to us any or all of the information on a particular question. For example:

- a) We cannot answer the question how sin originated, since all creatures, including all the angels, were originally created "very good";
- b) Nor can we answer the question how, as the Formula of Concord puts it, "one is hardened, blinded, given over to a reprobate mind, while another, who is indeed in the same guilt, is converted again". (Triglotta, 1081, 57)

Concerning these matters, Dr. F. Peiper writes:

"Since Scripture furnishes no information on these open questions and theological problems, it is foolish to spend much time and energy on them."

(Christian Dogmatics, I, p95, underlining added)

Since Scripture does not answer these matters, such a one who

tries to give an answer is in danger of adding to the Word of God (Rev 22:18-19) and going contrary to other doctrines clearly revealed in the Bible.

All this is said of true OPEN QUESTIONS. When the term OPEN QUESTION was used by the old UELCA, it was used in an entirely different sense. This we refer to as the evil theory of OPEN QUESTIONS. We will let leading men from the UELCA explain what is meant by this use of the term.

Prof. Riedel defines their understanding of "OPEN QUESTIONS" as follows:

"Truths contained or indicated in Scripture, concerning which we as Lutherans who take their stand upon Scripture and Confessions have as yet not attained a unanimous understanding, which, moreover are not considered justifying severance of Church-fellowship for the very reason that combined and continuous efforts on the part of those of one faith are necessary in order to apprehend and define them according to the Analogy of Faith and Analogy of Scripture - such truths, in short, we denote as 'Open Questions'... 'Open Questions' is but another name for 'different opinions' regarding certain Scriptural teachings."

(Statement of Controversy, Riedel, p.16,20,21, emphasis added)

Another UELCA man, Schmetzer wrote:

"Open questions may be divided into two classes: Those belonging to the realms of hope, such as the millennium, anti-Christ, conversion of Israel as a nation, the passing away of the earth, and the hope that the Lord will deal with heathen and Jew at the judgement according to the same grace offered in the Gospel; and those belonging to the realms of faith, in which the things are acknowledged by all, but in which more the terms and definitions are in dispute. In this sense the following are open questions: the Church, the ministerial office, church government, predestination, kenosis, inspiration".

(Berechtigung, 3,4; emphasis added)

To summarize, we may define this idea as follows: those matters of doctrine in which there may be differences of opinion. So as not to cause dissension and argument, each is allowed to retain and publicly teach his own ideas, and retain fellowship, as long as this same right

is granted to the other fellow. Despite these differences in doctrine, all should live together with one another in peace and harmony. The motto "to agree to disagree, agreeably" sums the matter up well.

Now this all sounds very "loving" and "tolerant", but the important question is: Does it agree with Scripture? We therefore ask ourselves:

WHAT DOES THE BIBLE SAY ABOUT THIS EVIL OPEN QUESTIONS PRINCIPLE?

Pastor Bryce Winter in an excellent essay on this matter, answers this question:

"According to Scripture we reject this sinful theory because it is unionistic, indifferentistic and violates the Word of God. We cannot consider or treat any doctrine that is clearly taught in God's Word or that contradicts some clear Word of God as an 'Open Question', even though the doctrine may be a non-fundamental one. The evil modern theory of 'Open Questions' is condemned by Scripture as follows:

"1. Holy Scripture sternly commands all Christians to keep the WHOLE CHRISTIAN DOCTRINE pure and free from even the slightest error. 'Stand fast (Greek: be constantly standing firmly) and hold (Greek: be holding fast to) the TRADITIONS (Greek: teachings)' (2 Thess.2:15). 'That good thing which was committed (Greek: in trust) unto thee keep (Greek: guard and keep unadulterated)' (2 Tim 1:14). 'Continue (Greek: be remaining) thou in the things which thou hast learnt' (2 Tim 3:14). Doctrine is not kept in its purity when the evil modern theory of 'open Questions' rules. False teachers are tolerated so that error mingles with the truth.

"2. Such an evil theory militates against the office of 'rebuking', whereby false doctrines are reprovved and condemned, a duty which God has imposed upon all faithful teachers, Titus 1:9,13; 2 Tim 4:2; 3:16; Matt 5:12ff; 16:6.

"3. God's Word demands that there be no divisions in doctrine or practice and that all Christians in a church body be perfectly woven together in the same mind and the same judgement, 1 Cor.1:10.

"4. Such an evil theory is very dangerous, because when such errors are left unchecked and are not removed, they spread, strengthen the erring in their errors and eventually truth is completely put to death, Gal 5:9; 2 Tim 2:17,18.

"5. The evil modern Theory of 'Open Questions' militates against all those words of Scripture which command us to

rebuke and sever prayer and church fellowship with all persistent errorists, Rom 16:17; 2 Cor 6:14,17; Gal 1:8; 5:12; 2 Thess 3:6; 1 Tim 6:3; Titus 3:10; Amos 3:3; Matt 5:18-19.

"Who can read these Bible passages without realizing that Holy Writ clearly rejects the evil modern Theory of 'Open Questions'? What else is the use of this evil Theory than a flagrant contradiction of the words of the Holy Spirit? Is it not a terrible thing to declare that what the great God has decided is still undecided? to grant man freedom to contradict when the great God has spoken? Is it not truly terrible to sift what God has given us in His Word and say: 'THIS you must believe, confess and teach; THAT you may reject'?"

"Therefore with Dr. C.F.W. Walther we of the ELCR confess: (a) No error, nothing that is contradictory to the Word of God, may be granted the right of existence in the orthodox Church; (b) no-one in the orthodox Church has any permission to depart from the Word of God even in the smallest point, whether he does so negatively or positively or indirectly; (c) every departure from the clear Word of God within the Lutheran Church, even though it should consist in nothing more than denying that Balaam's ass spoke, demands that steps be taken to correct such departure; (d) finally, when all instruction, admonition, warning, threatening and manifested patience are fruitless and ineffective and the respective person or communion refuses to renounce the contradiction of the clear Word of God, EXPULSION OR A SCHISM WILL HAVE TO FOLLOW'. (Quoted in CTM, 1946, p497)"

(The Evil Modern Theory of Open Questions, p6)

From this it can be clearly seen that the UELCA taught contrary to the Word of God on this matter. It tolerated and condoned different opinions in all the following Scripture doctrines (as incidentally does the LCA today): the doctrines of Church and Ministry, the Office of the Keys, the future millennium, the doctrine of Sunday, the Antichrist, the first resurrection, conversion of Israel, church government, predestination, kenosis, inspiration, creation, the word 'day' in Genesis 1, position of women in the church, betrothal, and marriage with a deceased wife's sister.

In fact, in the Amalgamation Theses of 1926, drawn up as a basis for the union between the UELCA and the Heidenreich group (ELSA a.a.g.), a special article deals with this matter of "OPEN QUESTIONS", permitting differences in teaching where agreement had not been reached in matters



of doctrine. (See UELCA, Stolz p.152-153). Thus this principle was officially accepted by the UELCA and acknowledged as being one of the chief differences between the two churches.

We will be showing later on in this study that this evil "OPEN QUESTIONS" principle was at the basis of the union between the UELCA and ELCA in 1965. Many matters which should have been settled were allowed to remain open, with various opinions in doctrinal matters being tolerated in the new church. This is seen by:-

- a) the allowance of this theory of "Open Questions" in the Theses of Agreement (see paragraph I, 4(e) of Thesis on principles Governing Church Fellowship);
- b) No clear condemnation of the errors formerly taught and tolerated by the UELCA in the Theses of Agreement;
- c) Specific statements that differences still existed between the two churches by the Document of Union (LWF membership, Overseas connections); and by ELCA leaders (women voting in the congregation; attitude to modern dance; ministers fraternals and joint worship services with other denominations; LWF membership and overseas connections; attitude towards the Bible (its inspiration, inerrancy and authority; creation and evolution)). When these matters were raised, to all of them the response from the conservatives was given: "We will correct them!!" We ask the pointed question: "Who has been 'corrected'?" We give the victory to the former UELCA position.
- d) Evidence that these matters were not settled is shown by continuing debate about and the adoption of anti-Scriptural positions and toleration of errors in the LCA today in such matters as: modern dance; women voting and speaking in the congregation; attitude towards the Bible; Genesis I, Creation and evolution; Church discipline; minister's fraternals and joint worship services with heterodox church members; gambling.

This will then be the aim of our future chapters - to point out: HOW THE SCRIPTURAL POSITION OF THE FORMER ELSA WAS COMPROMISED FOR THE SAKE OF UNION.

CHAPTER IV.

DOCTRINAL NEGOTIATIONS IN THE 1920'S -  
A CLEAR INDICATION OF THE DIFFERENCES BETWEEN THE TWO CHURCHES.

During 1926 and 1927 men were appointed from both churches to meet together and discuss the doctrinal differences that separated the ELSA and UELCA. A number of meetings were held, in particular to establish the differences that existed. However, it did not take the men long to recognize that there was a wide gap in doctrine between them.

In The Australian Lutheran, March 17, 1928, the official organ of the ELSA, Dr. W. Janzow gave a concise report on the progress regarding the discussions with the UELCA. Special Theses used and adopted by the old Missouri Synod in America were used as a basis. These theses covered practically all the points at issue between the two parties here in Australia. These were called the "Chicago Theses". Dr. Janzow made the striking statement:

"If all Lutheran bodies in Australia would signify their adherence to this doctrinal statement, practically all the differences which now separate us from them would be removed. In spite of the fact, however, that the main Lutheran bodies represented here are affiliated with one or the other of these American Lutheran bodies, it is evident that much ground must still be covered before these theses are adopted by all without reservation or limitation". (Page 44)

As far as such discussions with the UELCA by the Queensland District of the ELSA were concerned, no progress was made either. The orthodox Lutheran Theologian of that District, Dr. Emil Darsow (then still a pastor), as District President made the following report to the Queensland District Convention assembled at Ropely in 1926:

"The Queensland District of the UELCA through its officials refuses to have any doctrinal discussion with us, unless we unite with them in prayer at all such meetings. Repeatedly we have pointed out to them that according to God's Word church bodies or representatives of different church bodies can only then unite in prayer when they are one in faith and doctrine. As we are not one with them in faith and doctrine, we cannot conscientiously pray together. Unity in faith and doctrine must precede united prayer. The District Synod of the UELCA persistently refuses

to acknowledge this position of ours, which is but Scriptural. In my last communication to Pres. Hiller, I again pointed out that we are ever willing to have doctrinal discussions without united prayer and united prayer after unity in faith and doctrine. HE AGAIN REFUSED. Our position is unchangeable. As to all matters not affecting God's Word, we are willing to yield, to compromise, but never as to God's Word. With God's help not one particle shall we yield or consent to have whittled down. Jesus says: 'If ye continue in My Word ye are My disciples indeed!'"

(Synodical Report, page 11; emphasis added)

From this it can be clearly seen that the ELSA took the correct Scriptural position: UNITY IN SCRIPTURE DOCTRINE AND PRACTICE BEFORE PRAYER AND CHURCH FELLOWSHIP. Their teaching was based on Paul's command in 1 Cor 1:10, "Now I beseech you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you; but that ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgement."

Together with Dr. Walther, they confessed:

"I will gladly forgive anyone who attacks my person; BUT ANYONE WHO ATTACKS MY GOD, HIS WORD AND HONOUR, LET HIM NOT HOPE FOR PEACE OR UNITY FROM ME. The first is mine and I can give it away; GOD'S WORD AND HONOUR, however, ARE NOT MINE. I can give none of that away."

(Epistle Sermons, p91; emphasis added)

Similarly, Pastor MacKenzie (ELSA) writes:

"They have coined and applied to us the term 'perfectionism'. They contend that Christians can no more claim to be perfect in doctrine than they can claim to be perfect in life. Yet, if anyone had asked Saint Paul, 'Do you think you are perfect in Christianity?', the great Apostle would unhesitatingly have answered, 'Not as though I had already attained, either were already perfect'; but if anyone had asked him whether his teachings, his doctrine, represented perfect truth, what would he have said? We think we can hear him reply, 'I kept back nothing that was profitable unto you, for I have not shunned to declare unto you all the counsel of God'. (Acts 20:20-27) If we were not certain that what we teach is absolutely in accordance with God's Word, then we could not say Amen at the conclusion of our sermons, for Amen means:

this is most certainly true."

(The Australian Lutheran: May 30, 1930 p 130)

The UELCA on the other hand taught, in fact insisted that prayer and church fellowship could be had while differences still existed in matters of doctrine. We will see later that the ELSA changed its official position on this matter in 1948, thereby compromising on a matter in which they had stood firm for many years.

That the UELCA was very lax in the matter of church fellowship is indicated by their thesis on this matter in the Amalgamation Theses of 1926. There it is stated:

"We know ourselves in church fellowship with all those Lutheran church bodies throughout the world who accept the Lutheran Confessions as norm in doctrine and practice, and with those only."

Since the great majority of "Lutheran" Churches, even today, claim to accept and abide by the Lutheran Confessions, this would have allowed the UELCA to have entered into fellowship with all manner of Lutheran Churches, even those that tolerate denials of fundamental doctrines of the Bible.

In spite of the attempts at doctrinal discussions between the ELSA and UELCA, because the doctrinal differences were so great and pronounced, they ended in 1927. Dr. C. Hoopmann, who was for many years after Dr. Janzow the President of the ELCA, stated in the Luther League Monitor (December 1965):

"Previous negotiations in 1927 had ended on a sad note...." (page 14)

Rev F.H. Schmidt, for many years President of the Qld District of the UELCA and later of the LCA states:

"But although discussions between the UELCA and the ELCA had been initiated, and the official reports of both churches expressed a desire for union, their discussions did not advance beyond the initial stage".

(A Monograph...., p2)

The Editor of The Australian Lutheran, September 1, 1927 made the very pertinent point:

"The foundation must first be laid. And the foundation of true organic church union is unity of faith and doctrine. This must first be established. This end,

however, will not be attained, unless both parties are agreed as to the basis of Christian doctrine, which is the inerrant Word of God ...." (page 197)

Undoubtedly this was the reason why doctrinal discussions on an official basis ceased for a time. The UELCA allowed in its midst false teachers, who attacked the verbal inspiration and absolute inerrancy of Holy Scripture. As well as that, the UELCA persisted in demanding that these discussions be opened with joint prayer. The ELSA refused. So how could these meetings continue in a God-pleasing way on that basis, especially when the UELCA were set in their wrong ways?

CHAPTER V.

REVEALING ESSAYS OUTLINE DIFFERENCES BETWEEN TWO CHURCHES

(1921 - 1936)

We now make mention of a number of essays from pastors of the UELCA and ELSA which clearly reveal the differences between the two churches. These were in the form of Pastoral Conference Essays or Church Paper articles and say a great deal about where the UELCA stood on doctrinal matters. (NOTE: Copies of these articles are available from the writer) These are the following:-

- A. "Die Berechtigung Offener Fragen" ("The Right of the Existence of Open Questions") by Pastor Schmetzer of the UELCA. This article was officially endorsed by the UELCA in an article in the "Lutheran Herald", the official organ of that church body, August 19th, 1929.
- B. In the following article taken from The Australian Lutheran (Oct 4, 1929, pp232-235), the official organ of the ELSA, Pastor (later Dr.) MacKenzie carefully analyses Schmetzer's essay, reveals and condemns its errors. (The underlined emphasis has been added by the writer). We quote this article to give our readers an idea where the UELCA stood on these matters.

THE U.E.L.C.A. AND PASTOR SCHMETZER.

In its issue of August 19th the "Lutheran Herald", the official organ of the U.E.L.C.A., has the following to say concerning Pastor W. Schmetzer and his essay, "Die Berechtigung Offener Fragen":

"As a paper compiled and read by Pastor Schmetzer on one of the Pastors' Conferences has been widely discussed, even outside our UELCA, and our attitude towards it been commented upon in a publication read beyond Australia, we wish to specially refer to this matter here. When Pastor Schmetzer read this paper it was regarded by all as a masterly exposition of our standpoint as regards the 'Open Question'. The parts dealing with the right to have 'open questions' and with the fact that in the Lutheran Church 'open questions' existed right from the beginning without being regarded as severing church fellowship, merited special credit. Even where we could not follow all the deductions in the paper--without deviating from the standpoint of our Church--and where we believed the exposition going beyond or remaining below the theme set--it provided occasion for fruitful discussion. We are thankful for the service rendered with this paper. In Pastor Schmetzer we had a co-labourer, who wanted nothing else than to preach Christ, the God-man in the state of humiliation and exaltation, the Saviour of a fallen race

and who dreaded nothing more than to deviate in his preaching from the Bible, the Word of God".

Thus does the UELCA adopt and put the official stamp of approval on Pastor Schmetzer's essay. The following points make it quite clear that Pastor Schmetzer does not stand alone, but that his position is the official doctrinal position of the whole UELCA:

(a) "When Pastor Schmetzer read this paper it was regarded by all as a masterly exposition of our standpoint as regards the 'Open Question!'"

(b) "The parts dealing with the right to have 'open questions' and with the fact that in the Lutheran Church 'open questions' existed right from the beginning without being regarded as severing church fellowship, merited special credit".

(c) "Even where we could not follow all the deductions in the paper--without deviating from the standpoint of our Church--and where we believed the exposition going beyond or remaining below the theme set--it provided occasion for fruitful discussion".

(d) "We are thankful for the service rendered with this paper".

(e) "Pastor Schmetzer . . . wanted nothing else than preach Christ, the God-man in the state of humiliation and exaltation, the Saviour of a fallen race and who dreaded nothing more than to deviate in his preaching from the Bible, the Word of God".

That Pastor Schmetzer's theory concerning "open questions" in matters of doctrine is the official position of the UELCA; and that this theory of "open questions", as held and defended by the UELCA, separated and still divides the Lutheran Church of Australia into two opposing camps, is admitted by the "Lutheran Herald", when it says: "Separation came along through eschatological questions concerning the Millenium, Anti-christ, etc. What keeps Lutherans apart in our days is that the UELCA takes up the standpoint of 'open questions', that is, it regards 'Truths contained in Scripture, concerning which Lutherans, who take their stand upon Scripture and Confession, have as yet not attained a unanimous understanding, as not justifying severance of Church fellowship'--and the Ev. Luth. Synod of Australia rejects it". . . . "We are convinced that our standpoint has been held by the Lutheran Church from the times of Luther". (May 9, 1927).

Let us return to Pastor Schmetzer and his essay to note the doctrines he places on the free list, or which he relegates into the category of "open questions". Pastor Schmetzer says, in effect: Open questions may be divided into two classes: (1) Those belonging to the realms of hope, such as the millennium, Antichrist, restoration and conversion of Israel as a nation, the passing away of the earth, the

hope that the Lord will deal with heathen and Jew at the Judgment according to the same grace now offered in the Gospel; (2) Those belonging to the realms of faith, such as the Church, the ministerial office, church, government, predestination, kenosis, inspiration.

It is not the intention or the purpose of this article to enter into a lengthy discussion of these doctrines, but a little individual attention is in place, inasmuch as the official but unscriptural theory of "open questions", as held by the UELCA, and by Pastor Schmetzer, is to be repudiated, rejected and condemned.

THE MILLENNIUM. -- The UELCA claims faithful adherence to the Confessions, but, as in the days of Kavel, chiliasm, the theory of an earthly glory to come, is still believed, tolerated, taught and maintained in its midst. Scripture, however, leaves no room for a millennium; and the Confessions say: "They (the Lutherans) condemn others also, who now scatter Jewish opinions, that, before the resurrection of the dead, the godly shall occupy the kingdom of the world, the wicked being everywhere suppressed ...."

ANTICHRIST. -- Luther, the old Lutheran theologians, and the Confessions clearly teach that the Pope is the Antichrist; but Pastor Schmetzer says, "as if by silent consent the present-day church has freed itself from the opinion that the Pope is the Antichrist". The Confessions say: "The marks of Antichrist plainly agree with the kingdom of the Pope and his adherents"; and, "This article clearly shows that the Pope is the very Antichrist...."

ISRAEL. -- Pastor Schmetzer teaches and the UELCA tolerates the opinion that Israel as a nation will be converted; this idea embraces Israel's reconciliation and restoration. To expect a RESTORATION of Israel as a nation is vain, inasmuch as it is anti-scriptural. To expect a further RECONCILIATION of Israel as a nation with God is needless, inasmuch as "God was in Christ, reconciling the WORLD unto Himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them". To expect the CONVERSION of Israel as a nation presupposes a first resurrection of all departed Israelites, the restoration of their kingdom and the temple worship, which is antiscritural. The conversion of living Israelites can come about now, if they will heed the words of St. Paul: "Now, then, we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us: we pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God".

PASSING AWAY OF THE EARTH. -- Pastor Schmetzer is concerned as to whether the earth will pass away according to its substance or its form; but he comes to the conclusion that to speak of the destruction of the earth is not correct. Scripture, however, is clear as to certain FACTS of doctrine: "Heaven and earth shall pass away"; "They shall perish"; "they shall be changed" -- Luke 21:33; Hebr. 1:10-12. Heaven and earth shall pass away, perish, be changed, as against God, Who remains, and as against Christ's Words, which shall not pass away.



We leave it to God, with Whom "nothing shall be impossible", to reconcile the terms "pass away" and "perish" with the statement "they shall be changed".

HEATHEN AND JEW AT THE JUDGEMENT. -- Pastor Schmetzer says: "A part of the Church is of the opinion concerning the position of heathen and Jew at the Judgment that they will be lost, or, that nothing is known of this matter; we on the other hand are open to the thought of Paul, Rom 2:16, that the Lord will deal with them according to the same grace now offered in the Gospel". However, St. Paul says, Rom 2: 6-12, "Who (God) will render to every man according to his deeds ... Tribulation and anguish, upon every soul of man that doeth evil, of the Jew first, and also of the Gentile; ... For there is no respect of persons with God. For as many as have sinned without law shall also perish without law: and as many as have sinned in the law shall be judged by the law". It is anti-scriptural to teach that there is salvation for some WITHOUT faith in the Gospel.

THE CHURCH. -- Pastor Schmetzer says: "Missouri upholds the old Lutheran position, but by doing so endangers the ministerial office, yielding too much to the congregation, and permitting even every local congregation to be the Church ... We quite agree with the Confessions, but for us 'Gemeinde', congregation, means the organised congregation, that is, the Church connected with the (ministerial) office". -- However, Scripture terms every local congregation the "Church". Matt 18:17, "... tell it unto the Church: but if he neglect to hear the Church", that is, the local congregation, 1 Cor 1:2 "... the Church of God which is at Corinth..", Gal 1:2 "the Churches of Galatia", 1 Thess 1:1 "the Church of the Thessalonians..". For Pastor Schmetzer a congregation of believers is not the "Church" when without a pastor, nor is such a congregation capable of performing valid acts without the presence and co-operation of a pastor. However, both Scripture and the Confessions know nothing of "the two constituent parts of the Church, i.e., the laity and the ministry", but they permit the Church to be constituted by one class only, that is, Christians.

THE MINISTRY AND CHURCH GOVERNMENT. -- With the UELCA, Pastor Schmetzer holds the "view" that the two constituent parts of the organised Church, i.e., the laity and the ministry, co-operate at the assignment to office". -- According to this a congregation without a pastor cannot proceed to elect and call a pastor without the presence, co-operation, and consent of the other "constituent part of the organised Church", that is, unless the ministry be represented. This "view", and the theory of "two constituent parts of the organised Church", robs the local congregation of its rights and powers and does not agree with Scripture and Confession. The Confessions say: "Wherefore it is necessary for the Church (local congregation) to retain the authority to call, elect and ordain ministers". The ELSA teaches that the ministerial office is conferred upon men by God, THROUGH THE CONGREG-

ATIONS, who delegate or transfer to these men the PUBLIC exercise of the functions of the priesthood of all believers; and, that the local congregation possesses all spiritual rights, privileges and powers, and not the hierarchy.

PREDESTINATION. -- Pastor Schmetzer says: "We teach an election with faith as a condition, the intuitu fidei (in view of faith) correctly understood...God does not elect without any consideration of man's attitude; else He could save all, or He does not want to do this .. God has elected all humanity and every individual from the beginning in Christ.. But His election cannot become effective in all, because not all fulfil the condition He makes, namely, to believe on Christ". -- The cause of Pastor Schmetzer's error in this doctrine is his dissatisfaction with the clear STATEMENT OF FACT in the Word and his desire to get behind the mystery, why some are saved and others are lost; and therefore he ascribes to UNCONVERTED man the power to decide "IN his will" for or against the reception of the grace working upon him through the Word. -- However, Scripture knows nothing of an election in view of faith, or, on account of foreseen faith - man's goodness in coming to faith, or unconverted man's correct attitude to grace; but Scripture knows only of an ETERNAL ELECTION OF GRACE IN CHRIST.

Eph 1:4: "According as He hath chosen us in Him (Christ) before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love".

Eph 3:11: "According to the eternal purpose which He purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord".

2 Tim 1:9: "Who (God) hath saved us, and called us with an holy calling, not according to our works, but according to His own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began".

Acts 13:48: "And as many as were ordained to eternal life believed"

Scripture knows nothing of an election of "all humanity", inasmuch as Scripture teaches that all the elect will be assuredly saved. Mark 13:20-22: "And except that the Lord had shortened those days, no flesh should be saved: but for the elect's sake, whom He hath chosen, He hath shortened the days. (22) For false Christs and false prophets shall rise, and shall show signs and wonders, to seduce, IF IT WERE POSSIBLE, even the elect".

The Confessions says: "The predestination or eternal election of God, however, is occupied only with the godly, beloved children of God, and this is a cause of their salvation, which He also provides as well as disposes what belongs thereto. Upon this our salvation is founded so firmly that the gates of hell cannot overcome it. This is not to be investigated in the secret counsel of God, but to be sought in the Word of God, where it is also revealed. But the Word of God leads us to Christ, Who is the Book of Life, in Whom all are written and elected that are to be saved, as it is written (Eph 1:4): 'He hath chosen us in

Him (Christ) before the foundation of the world... Therefore we reject the following errors: Also, that not only the mercy of God and the most holy merit of Christ, but also in us is a cause of God's election, on account of which God has elected us to everlasting life".

KENOSIS, OR HUMILIATION OF CHRIST. -- Pastor Schmetzer teaches that the Son of God IN and BY His becoming man humbled His DIVINE nature, restricting His POSSESSION of certain divine attributes, such as omniscience, omnipotence, and omnipresence. -- The kenosis of Christ does not consist in His BECOMING man, inasmuch as His exaltation would then consist in His CEASING to be man. Scripture nowhere teaches that Christ, IN and BY His BECOMING MAN, humbled His DIVINE nature, divesting it of all or any of its attributes; but, even as it calls Him "man" after His incarnation, so it also calls Him "God", leaving Him as the GOD-MAN in the full possession of all the divine attributes, and permitting Him to perform the works of God in His own right and power.

The kenosis or humiliation of Christ consists in this, that Christ "being in the form of God", a CONDITION or STATE proper to Him even after His assumption of the human nature, "took upon Him the form of a servant", a CONDITION or STATE in which He, according to His human nature, did not always and fully USE the divine majesty communicated to His human nature at His conception.

Isaiah 9: 6,7: "For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace. Of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end, upon the throne of David, and upon his kingdom, to order it, and to establish it with judgment and with justice from henceforth even for ever".

Luke 1: 35: "That holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God".

Luke 2:11: "For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord".

Phil. 2:6,7: "Who, being in the FORM OF GOD, thought it not robbery to be EQUAL WITH GOD; but made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the FORM OF A SERVANT, and was made in the likeness of men".

In opposition to the above testimonies of Scripture Pastor Schmetzer has the effrontery to say: "What theologian and preacher still proclaims in all earnestness that Christ as a child was omniscient (all-wise); that lying in the manger He at the same time ruled with almighty power in heaven and on earth?" -- We, however, rest our faith on the Scripture passages above, and not on the rationalism of Pastor Schmetzer.

INSPIRATION OF SCRIPTURE. -- Pastor Schmetzer says in effect:

THAT inspiration is accepted which the inspiration of notions and thoughts demands, because also the term belongs to the notion. He and his fellows cannot bow to any authority, be it that of the Church, or that of the Scripture, merely on account of its power and greatness, but they want an authority whose power they have experienced inwardly. Word-inspiration does not explain the dissimilarity "Verschiedenheit" in the Scriptures caused by the individuality of the writers. Scripture has a human and a divine side.

What Pastor Schmetzer means is this: The Scriptures are problematic in their origin, uncertain in their transmission and preservation, secondary in their authority, unreliable in their truth, insufficient in their power; and at best, they are a semi-divine record with many human blemishes. -- However, we have Christ's command to preach the Gospel, and His promise that His Words shall not pass away. Therefore the Word of God is a PERMANENT POSSESSION of the Christian Church. John 10:35: "The Scripture cannot be broken". 1 Peter 1:25: "The Word of the Lord endureth forever. And this is the Word which by the Gospel is preached unto you".

THE CONFESSIONS. -- Pastor Schmetzer says in effect, that he views the Confessions in the historic sense, as signs and testimonies as to how Scripture was understood and false doctrine rejected in times past. They are capable of expansion, completion, and improvement; errors are not excluded; and when he finds anything in them which cannot be made to agree with Scripture, he is open and honest enough to admit the existence of an error, or at least a deficiency in knowledge, and so he would not hesitate to go beyond the Confessions exactly in Luther's sense to that better knowledge which Scripture gives. The Confessions are of value to him not according to the letter, but according to the spirit and the faith which they express.

To this we reply: In her Confessions the Lutheran Church does not confess doctrines OUTSIDE or ALONGSIDE of Scripture, but the very doctrines themselves which are clearly revealed IN THE SCRIPTURES. Inasmuch as the Lutheran Church does not hold the Confessions to be a second norm or rule alongside of Scripture, she demands the subscription with "quia" (because) NOT because the doctrines are in the Confessions, but because they are IN THE SCRIPTURES. The Confessions are binding in respect to all their DOCTRINES, whether taught directly, in proof of any other doctrine, in passing, or by implication, inasmuch as they teach no DOCTRINE for which they do not furnish sufficient Scripture proof. Inasmuch as the subscription with "quia" demands acceptance of EVERY DOCTRINE in the Confessions, no teacher is permitted to place any doctrine on the free list, cast doubt on any FACT of doctrine, deny what the Confessions affirm, or affirm what they reject and condemn. The Confessions are not to be subscribed to according to the "spirit" merely, while rejecting the "letter", inasmuch as this leaves room for the enthusiast (Schwaermer) and the rationalist.

The REAL OBJECTION to the binding character of the Confessions, is that they are a CHECK upon the liberty of the modern theologian, and a RULE in the hands of our Christians whereby they may judge whether their pastors measure up to the old Lutheran standard and faith. Just for these reasons, however, the orthodox Lutheran Church must hold fast to her Confessions, and demand of her teachers that they remain on the old paths.

Pastor Schmetzer's essay is a "masterly exposition" of the chief doctrine of the UELCA, the official, but unscriptural, theory of "open questions" in respect to clearly revealed Scripture doctrine, which places all doctrines on the free list, inasmuch as it begins with the very Scriptures themselves. It DISCOUNTS CERTAINTY in matters of faith and doctrine, makes UNCERTAINTY and SEARCHING FOR TRUTH a MERIT and a VIRTUE, and brings DOUBT into everything dear to the Christian and the Christian Church. A God-pleasing union of the Lutheran Church can never be attained on the basis of "open questions", as held and defended by Pastor Schmetzer and the UELCA, but only on the basis of true unity in the faith and Gospel of Christ. "He that hath My Word, let him speak My Word FAITHFULLY. What is the CHAFF to the WHEAT saith the Lord" (Jeremiah 23:28)

- C. In an article entitled "'SECONDARY POINTS' AND 'OPEN QUESTIONS'" (The Australian Lutheran, Nov 1, 1929), Pastor MacKenzie stated the Scriptural position over against the evil "Open Questions" principle which was the basic guiding principle of the UELCA. Though we do not have room to quote this article, it is vital in order to realize that this was one of the CHIEF doctrinal differences not settled before the Union.
- D. In the Australasian Theological Review, (1930 p.121), the theological magazine of the ELSA begun in 1930 by the ELSA, Dr. C.F. Graebner (a professor at Concordia Seminary, Adelaide) dealt with the evil open questions principle of the UELCA in an article entitled, "Are we at Liberty to agree to disagree?"
- E. In a fine series of articles from 1931 to 1933, Dr. Wm. Janzow (General President of the ELSA) dealt in German with the topic "Worum noch die Trennung?" (Why still the difference?) Dr. Janzow himself describes this as "an essay which endeavours to point out the real differences separating the two Lutheran Church bodies of Australia". (ATR 1932 p1) Over 150 pages were spent in this essay (ATR 1931 pp101ff, 1932 pp1ff, pp79ff; 1933 pp25ff) outlining his case.
- F. Dr. Janzow deals in a masterly fashion with the same topic in a series of articles printed in The Australian Lutheran

during the latter half of 1932. Here he replies to false charges levelled against the ELSA by leading men in the UELCA. The articles are entitled SPURIOUS FICTION AND SOLID FACT.

- G. In 1936, Dr. William Janzow and Dr. A. MacKenzie analysed the doctrinal differences between the ELSA and UELCA. In order properly to indoctrinate the members of our former church, especially the pastors, so that they would faithfully teach the lay people, the "BRIEF STATEMENT OF THE CHIEF DOCTRINAL DIFFERENCES EXISTING BETWEEN THE ELSA AND THE UELCA" was drawn up. It was published in The Australasian Theological Review (1936 pp 69-96).

(NOTE: Since these differences were never settled by the Theses of Agreement at the time of the amalgamation, they still represent the chief differences in doctrine between the ELCR and the Lutheran Church of Australia (LCA). Sadly, since 1966 the rift between the ELCR and the LCA has widened as further errors have crept into the LCA).

The following is the first few pages of this excellent document:

#### DOCTRINAL DIFFERENCES.

##### THE FACT.

The Kavel-Fritzsche controversy was caused by Kavel's teaching concerning the theory of a millennium, a yet to be expected personal antichrist, the hoped-for conversion and restoration of Israel as a nation, his protests against certain points in the Confessions, and his attitude towards the Confessions in general. (Cp. Fritzsche, Beleuchtung, Ey, Mitteilungen.)

"Mr ... mentions Pastor Kavel as the founder of the Evangelical Lutheran Synod of Australia. This was Pastor Fritzsche, whilst Pastor Kavel is the father of those bodies that were the forerunners of the present United Evangelical Lutheran Church in Australia.

"Separation came along through eschatological questions concerning the millennium, antichrist, etc. What keeps Lutherans apart in our days is that the UELCA takes up the standpoint of 'open questions', that is, it regards 'Truths contained in Scripture, concerning which Lutherans who take their stand upon Scripture and Confession, have as yet not attained a unanimous understanding, as not justifying severance of church fellowship' - and the Evangelical Lutheran Synod of Australia rejects it." (Luth. Herald, 1927, 147; Cp. Amalgamation Thesis VI.)

"The following are the differences in doctrine -- Doctrine of Election or Predestination; Open Questions; Eschatological Questions; Chiliasm or Millenarianism; Antichrist; First Resurrection; Conversion of Israel; Office of the Ministry; Sunday. Questions of Practice:

Joint Prayer; Betrothal; Marriage with a deceased wife's sister; Lutheran Marriage Ceremony; Excommunication." (Wienske, Statement of Differences)

Comment. It is a fact that doctrinal differences exist between the ELSA and the UELCA. The former affirms, and the latter denies, that these differences preclude a God-pleasing union.

The ELSA, however, while affirming the fact that doctrinal differences preclude a God-pleasing union, does not deny the Christian and Lutheran name to members of the UELCA.

"What, then, is the true situation? Do we consider only those Christians with whom we have complete agreement in doctrine? Not so. We acknowledge the presence of Christians in the Catholic Church, in the Episcopal, Presbyterian, Methodist, and Baptist churches. In every Lutheran body on the five continents.

"To withhold fellowship relations is not the same as announcing a judgement upon the personal Christianity of any man. The relation of the individual Christian to God is one thing, and the relation of the individual Christian to other Christians is another thing. The first is established by faith in the heart. The other is established by the profession of the lips. With God nothing counts but personal faith. For us nothing counts but the personal testimony and profession of the truth. God can read the hearts; we cannot. If we had to demand absolute proof of an applicant's personal faith in Christ, we could not receive a single member into our churches; that is something each man knows only about himself. But what is demanded of us as a condition of fellowship is the profession of the entire truth of God's revelation. As Theo. Schmauck once said: 'God can receive unto Himself many a one whom we cannot acknowledge as brother.'

"Does it, then, matter whether we believe all of God's truth? It does greatly matter; but what concerns us here is the simple duty that we live up to the light which God has given us. We do that by calling brothers only those with whom we have agreement in doctrine. But that is not the same as denying the Christian or also the Lutheran name to those of other synods ... We gladly, yes, eagerly, welcome every witness to sound Scriptural truth, no matter in what synod or in what denomination he may hold membership." (Lutheran Witness, 1934, 272.)

#### THE HOLY SCRIPTURES.

ELSA - The Holy Scriptures are the Word of God because the holy men of God who wrote them wrote only those words which the Holy Ghost communicated to them by inspiration. The verbal inspiration of the Scriptures is taught by the direct statements of the Scriptures,

2 Tim 3:16; 2 Pet 1:21; John 10:35; Rom 3:2; 1 Cor 2:13.

The Holy Scriptures contain no errors or contradictions, but they are in all their parts and words the infallible truth, also in those parts which treat of historical geographical and other secular matters. John 10:35.

The Holy Scriptures are given for the foundation of faith, Eph 2:20; hence they are the sole source from which all doctrines must be taken; and they are the sole rule and norm by which all teachers and doctrines must be examined and judged.

The "rule of faith", according to which the Holy Scriptures are to be understood, are the clear passages of the Scriptures themselves which set forth the individual doctrines. (Cp. Missouri, Brief Statement.)

We receive "the Prophetic and Apostolic Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments as the pure, clear fountain of Israel, which is the only true standard by which all teachers and doctrines are to be judged."  
(Form. Conc. 851.1)

....

UELCA - "The UELCA professes the Holy Scriptures of the Old and New Testament to be God's revealed Word and the sole rule and norm of faith and life". (Constitution, 11,2) "The Bible is the written Word of God". (Exposition of Small Catechism, 1934). "We firmly hold that the entire Holy Scripture as to contents and word was written on the impulse and by the inspiration of the Holy Ghost". (Amal. Thesis I)

"(1) For us, as for the believing congregation generally, God's Word is the Scripture, as we now have it in hand.

"(2) Inspiration by the Holy Spirit quite evidently precludes errors in the originally inspired Word.

"(3) This does not exclude unevennesses, 'Unebenheiten', in the external form of the Word of God, caused by the fact that the Holy Ghost spoke through holy men, and in consequence of the permission, 'Zulassung' of the Holy Ghost. The latter is especially true of the present-day text, corrupted by copyists and adverse circumstances, and of the translations made from such copies.

"(4) The doctrine that the inspiration of Scripture denotes the impulse to write and the suggestion of matter and words, is also our doctrine.

"(5) In respect to the apprehension of the relation between the divine and human factors in the origin of Scripture the Church still has problems to face; and to work at solving these problems is an earnest duty.

"(6) While acknowledging problems in the doctrine of inspiration, and while hoping for a yet better apprehension and definition of this doctrine, all development 'Weiterban' is to be rejected as an error,



which would in any way alter the Church's certainty of possessing the inspired, infallible source of divine truth.

"We add Thesis I, Bethany, 1926, which briefly and precisely states the position of the UELCA - We firmly hold that the entire Holy Scripture was written on the impulse and by the inspiration of the Holy Ghost". (Saetze neber die Inspiration.)

"Whereon does faith rest? Merely on authority, be it of the Church or of the Holy Scriptures? The Roman Church says so....We cannot bow to an authority merely on account of its power and greatness, but we want an authority whose power we have experienced inwardly. For us faith rests upon the blissful experience of the living Christ; awakened faith thereupon lays hold on Christ and with Him on salvation; at the same time faith accepts the written record of faith, the Scripture. Therefore our position from the inception of Christian life is different than that of a faith based on mere authority, 'Autoritaetsglauben'. We have to do with a living Christ and He with us. Here everything is inception, growth, life. Now faith commences to examine its treasure, and to lay hold on itself, and this, especially by means of the Holy Scripture". (Schmetzer, Berechtigung, 1)

Certain "differences" were not only "entirely possible, but even quite unavoidable with a book, whose separate sections were gathered by hundreds of hands in thousands of years. And yet, not one of the authors departs from the great fundamental articles, 'Grunddogmen'".  
(K. blatt, 1927.72.)

Comment. The ELSA does not hold inspiration to be the same as mere revelation: it makes no distinction between the word communicated by the Holy Ghost to the holy writers, and the word actually written by them, inasmuch as the Holy Spirit exercised a special influence by which He guided His chosen instruments to speak the things He desired them to speak, and to write the things He desired them to write, in the precise manner and in the very words in which He desired these things to be spoken or written. This does not apply to copyists and translators.

The relation between the Holy Spirit and the penmen whom He employed is expressed in the Nicene Creed by the phrase "Who spake by the Prophets". This phrase exactly summarizes not only the comparison between such texts as 1 Cor 5:9 and 1 John 1:4 with that numerous group represented by Matt 2:17 and 24:15; but is found as to its very terms in Rom 1:2: "Which He had promised by His prophets in the Holy Scriptures."

The UELCA confesses that the "originally inspired word" contains no errors, and yet holds that the original writings of the Prophets and Apostles, despite the "suggestion of matter and words", are not free from blemishes or discrepancies in their "external form", through permission of the Holy Ghost and the human frailty of the holy writers;

and that this applies with even greater force to the copies of the original writings, and to the translations made from the copies.

Thus a distinction is made between the word communicated by the Holy Ghost, and the word actually written by the holy writers; while the making of copies and translations has no bearing whatsoever on the doctrine of inspiration.

Moreover, the fact of inspiration as taught by Scripture, does not completely satisfy; there are still "problems" for the Church to face in the doctrine of inspiration.

The UELCA tolerates it to be held and taught that Scripture is not the supreme authority, but that the supreme authority is a power experienced inwardly: that the Scripture is not the foundation and object of faith, but that faith rests upon the blissful experience of the living Christ.

#### OPEN QUESTIONS.

ELSA - Those questions in the domain of Christian doctrine may be termed open questions which Scripture answers either not at all or not clearly. Since Christian doctrine may not be augmented or developed by men, inasmuch as all are to continue in the Word and doctrine of Christ and His chosen Apostles, John 8:31,32; Acts 2:42; 2 Thess 2:15, open questions must remain open questions.

"The Christian Church has not the power to establish Articles of faith; this she has never done, and never will." - Luther 19, 958)

The doctrine of the Church and the Ministry, of Sunday, of Chiliasm, and of Antichrist are not open questions because they are clearly defined in Scripture, which does not leave them open to the opinions and speculations of men; and they are also clearly stated in our Confessions. (Cp Missouri, Brief Statement)

UELCA - "The term is used by our friends of the ELSA as well as by us. They themselves acknowledge open questions. But as the saying is: 'If two persons do the same thing, it is not the same'. What they mean thereby is vastly different from what we mean.

"What we mean by the term 'open questions' we have briefly expressed in our amalgamation theses of 1926 in a sentence which is somewhat hard to understand.

"It reads: 'Truths, contained or indicated in Scripture concerning which we as Lutherans who take their stand upon Scripture and Confessions have as yet not attained a unanimous understanding, which, moreover, are not considered justifying severance of Church-fellowship for the very reason that combined and continuous efforts on the part of

those of one faith are necessary in order to apprehend and define them in accordance with the Analogy of Faith and the Analogy of Scripture - such truths, in short, we denote as 'Open Questions'....

"Far be it from us to say that it is the ideal thing to have such open questions. It can never be the ideal state of things that we are as yet unable fully to understand the Word of our heavenly Father, graciously given for our salvation and instruction. 'Open questions' is but another name for 'different opinions' regarding certain Scriptural teachings". (Riedel, Statement of Controversy, 16,20,21.)

Open questions are : "Chiliasm or Millenarianism; Antichrist; First resurrection; Conversion of Israel; Office of the Ministry; Sunday". (Wiencke, Statement of Differences.)

Open questions may be divided into two classes: Those belonging to the realms of hope, such as the millennium, antichrist, conversion of Israel as a nation, the passing away of the earth, and the hope that the Lord will deal with heathen and Jew at the judgment according to the same grace now offered in the Gospel; and those belonging to the realms of faith, in which the things are acknowledged by all, but in which more the terms and definitions are in dispute. In this sense the following are open questions: The Church, the ministerial office, church government, predestination, kenosis, inspiration. (Cp. Schmetzer, Berechtigung, 3,4.)

Comment. The UELCA demands that recognized "truths, contained or indicated in Scripture", must be treated as open questions until a "unanimous understanding" has been attained, or until all agree as to the things themselves, or the terms and definitions. This means that the clear statements of Scripture with respect to the controverted doctrines are rejected, and that they must yield to the varying opinions of men. Thus the authority of the Scriptures is set aside to be superseded by the authority of the Church which is the authority of men.

"The Word of God shall establish articles of faith and no one else not even an angel." (Smalc Art. 407,15).

(emphasis added)

This article goes on to list other differences between the two churches, both providing evidence from the official writings of the UELCA and outlining the Scriptural position of the ELSA. It deals with the following false teachings of the UELCA:-

Chiliasm; First Resurrection; Conversion of Israel; Antichrist; Sunday; Church; Church Government; Public Ministry; Conversion; Election of Grace; Christ's State of Humiliation - Kenosis; Rule of Faith - Analogia Fidei; The Symbols (Confession, GLW) and

Church Fellowship (ATR, 1936 pp69-75).

Let us not think that because of these great differences, the ELSA refused to discuss matters with the UELCA. Rather Dr. Wm Janzow relates

"We would have preferred intersynodical discussions to the controversy in our papers and publications, because we believe that personal contact and exchange of views is more conducive to real peace, provided all concerned are really willing to yield to God's Word in absolute submission. However, we found it difficult to inaugurate such discussion with the United Church; we found it more difficult to continue those discussions, because our opponents found so many excuses for putting them off again and again, and, finally, those discussions were made impossible altogether by the refusal of the representatives of the United Church to hold further discussions with us. We pleaded with their representatives, our Synod passed resolutions favouring such discussions, our Districts did the same. All these facts are on record."

(The Australian Lutheran, August 19, 1932, pp194-196)

Our readers may be asking the question: "WHY SHOULD THE DOCTRINAL DIFFERENCES EXISTING BETWEEN THE UELCA AND ELSA BE STRESSED SO THOROUGHLY?"

We do this for a number of reasons:-

1. To show how firm was the stand of the ELSA on Scripture over against the errors of the UELCA during the 1920's and late 30's.
2. To point out what the differences were between the two churches and how vast was the rift between them at this stage.
3. To show, on the basis of this, how a weakening in position gradually began to overtake the ELSA, culminating in a change in its official doctrinal position in 1948. (See the next chapters).
4. To indicate what matters should have been thoroughly discussed and settled in a God-pleasing manner by the intersynodical committee meetings held from 1942 - 1965.

These and other excellent articles outlining the position of the ELCA should have formed the basis for the discussions of the ELCA with the UELCA. Papers should have been produced by the ELCA outlining further its Scriptural position together with a thorough explanation of the Scriptural teachings on these matters. The question should then have been asked of the UELCA: Do you still hold to the doctrinal errors upheld by your church in its official documents? If the answer was: Yes; or if it was seen by their statements in the meetings, or official writings that they still held to their errors, the ELCA committee should

have said: I'm sorry, your position is different from ours and since the Scriptures require complete unity in doctrine and practice before fellowship, we must deny the hand of fellowship to you. (Jn 8:31-32; 1 Cor 1:10). If the UELCA committee gave the answer: "Yes, we have changed our position and agree with you totally in the matters you present", a number of points should have been required:

1. A detailed statement drawn up, not only positively outlining the Scriptural position, but also negatively condemning the errors on the matters held by the Visible Church, especially dealing with those formerly held by the UELCA.
2. An official retraction by the UELCA of the errors it formerly held to.
3. Evidence in the UELCA's official writings, as well as in their pastors' teaching and practice that a change had taken place in its teaching and that it now stood totally on the doctrines of Scripture.

We will point out in later chapters that sadly this was not done, but rather

- a compromise document (Theses of Agreement) was drawn up not settling the differences but allowing both sides to retain their former teachings.
- no condemnation was given of many errors held formerly by the UELCA.
- official writings of the UELCA, as well as teaching and practice of its pastors after socalled "agreement" had been reached showed that the UELCA still held to its former false teachings.

(See Chapter X for a thorough analysis of the Theses of Agreement and their adoption).

CHAPTER VI.

DANGER SIGNS IN THE ELSA - (1926 to 1941)

We have already mentioned in our study that during the 1940's a change took place in this orthodox Lutheran stand taken by the ELSA. But already for a number of years prior to this, several warning signs became evident which raised the danger signal.

HYMNBOOK.

With the increase in English services, English hymnbooks had become essential. At first these were imported from America. After some detailed work, an Australian hymnal appeared in 1925. This was certainly an excellent production and one that was sorely needed by the Lutheran Church. Unfortunately however, the co-operation of the UELCA was involved and it was a joint effort of the two churches.

Here was a mistake that was later repeated by the ELSA with grave consequences. There is an old saying which reads: "Cooperation in externals soon leads to cooperation in internals". Even though there was no direct prayer fellowship involved, the danger was that the men involved would become close friends and overlook their doctrinal differences, or at least fail to bear testimony over against error. When churches who are divided in doctrine participate jointly even in secular activities, the tendency is that it won't be long before they work together in matters which are strictly forbidden by God's Word.

Also there was the danger that the lay people, not as deeply instructed in the differences between the two churches as they should, said to themselves, "What difference is there really between us? We have a similar liturgy. We use the same hymnbook. Our services are similar. What is stopping us from joining together?" Thus they become inclined towards union without first settling the vital differences in doctrine.

HAMANN SNR. COMES TO AUSTRALIA.

In the year 1926, the need was seen for another professor to teach at the Seminary of the ELSA, Concordia Seminary in Adelaide. He was asked to join the four men now instructing the future pastors, Dr. C.F. Graebner, Professors G.C. Koch, M.T. Winkler and Wm Zschech. All of these men had been trained in the seminaries of the Missouri Synod, the latter an Australian who had travelled to America for his studies.

Already in 1926, Prof. George Koch, the "king pin" of the faculty there became seriously ill. He had an incurable disease. Something was wrong with his liver and it was realized that extra help was needed. Although Koch continued teaching when he was able, eventually his illness caused him to cease his work completely. Sad to say, this outstandingly gifted orthodox teacher of the ELSA was called Home to Eternal Life on October 25, 1929.

A call for a fifth professor was sent to Pastor H.P.A. Hamann (M.A.), then pastor of "St John's", Pittston, USA. Professor Hamann had not only trained at Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, spent many years as a pastor and in a special ministry in India in the field of education, but also obtained his Master's Diploma in Education from Columbia University. While in America, Hamann had been close friends with Doctors Wm. Arndt and Th. Graebner who later in 1945 were among the men who worked towards the change in the doctrine of Church fellowship in the Missouri Synod. Their erroneous position is outlined in The Statement of the 44. The signers of this notorious Statement "destroyed the Bible doctrine of 'Church Fellowship', declaring amongst other things that true unity was not necessary for church-fellowship, and that the Scriptural injunction 'avoid them' (Rom 16: 17) was applicable only to non-Christians." (Letter of Pastor Kleinig to Pastor F.W. Noack, then of Swan Reach, S.A., dated Aug 8, 1972).

(NOTE: A later chapter will deal with this PARALLEL SITUATION IN AMERICA).

Dr. Hamann Snr. had apparently accepted this antisciptural idea while in America and brought it to Australia with him. As Pastor Kleinig has stated concerning The Statement of the 44: "I have no doubt that had Hamann Snr. been there (America, GLW), it would have been '45' instead of '44'" (ibid).

Cunningly Dr. Hamann privately sought to gain followers for his false views on Church Fellowship. For the start he was very careful, because the ELSA, like old Missouri, faithfully taught that the words, 'avoid them' (Rom 16:17) apply to severing church fellowship with all persistent errorists, whether they can be proven to be Christians or not. In due course he found support for the start amongst some of the younger men. Pastor (later doctor) John Darsow was an especially vigorous supporter of his. This is later shown by his essay on Rom 16:17-18 in 1948. Pastor G. Kuechle who nearly destroyed Dr. Janzow's Adelaide congregation while Janzow was away recovering from a nervous breakdown, and whom Janzow referred to as follows: "A billy-goat was appointed as my gardener", was also a supporter of Hamann. For a time Kuechle taught at Concordia College. As a matter of fact, Kuechle returned later to America in time to put his signature to the Statement of the 44.

Hamann was definitely, in his own right, a brilliant man, not only in his great learning (he came to Australia with a Master of Arts degree and later obtained the Doctor of Divinity (D.D.) degree), but also in his practical abilities, as some of his many excellent essays and articles in the early Australasian Theological Review's show. Without realizing the long term effects which his actions might have, Dr. Janzow asked Hamann to deliver essays and talks at Synodical Conventions and Pastoral Conferences. Of course Janzow did not know

at the time of Hamann's false views. Janzow really believed that Hamann could teach the ELSA pastors and lay-people something, and wanted to make use of his excellent talents. Unfortunately, gradually the attitude developed among many pastors and lay people, "How can such a learned man be wrong?"

In his lectures on The History of the Lutheran Church in Australia (Part V, Lecture 9, page 8) Pastor Kleinig sums this up as follows:

"Hamann being an educated and influential man became the leading figure in the Faculty at Concordia Seminary. The pastors began to respect him highly. He was certainly a highly educated man. At South Australian Pastoral Conferences they very often put Hamann Snr. on for the Essay. He delivered some excellent Essays. The pastors in general began to look upon him as the leading light. So 'Prof Hamann could teach and say no wrong', was the attitude that developed. It was due to that man's influence that a change came over the doctrine of church fellowship."

#### A STRIKING COMMENT.

Pastor Kleinig relates a striking comment made to him on one occasion in passing through Adelaide in 1930 on his way to Ceduna. The comment was made by his old professor, Prof. Zschech, no longer a young man:

"We vividly remember a conversation we had with the late Professor W. Zschech in his study way back in January 1930. This is what he said: 'We are no longer what we were; a different spirit is beginning to enter our Church'" (STEADFAST, 1968, No 11 p.6)

What did the Professor mean by this comment? Pastor Kleinig comments that he was too young to understand fully what was meant by this statement. However, many years later, he realized that Prof. Zschech had noticed a dangerous spirit entering the ELSA, a spirit determined only for union, a spirit leaning towards the UELCA and willing to unite despite the doctrinal differences.

Dr. Janzow, then the General President of the ELSA, also started to notice this dangerous trend and in several ways attempted to strengthen the knowledge of the members of the ELSA. In the first place he very thoroughly dealt with the doctrinal differences between the two churches. Our previous chapter has noted the powerful articles he wrote on this matter. Secondly, he emphasized the Scripture doctrine of church fellowship. While Janzow was the General President, those who supported the wrong teaching on church fellowship cleverly increased their following, only bringing their false views into public when they felt they were strong enough in numbers. When Janzow was voted out from the General Presidency in 1941, they really had no-one to fear, for there was no-one who would take the lead to discipline them.



AUSTRALIAN LUTHERAN ASSOCIATION, 1938.

Another rather dangerous sign for the old ELSA, was the formation of the Australian Lutheran Association, a movement amongst the laymen of both churches. The aim was to begin discussions amongst the laymen of both churches who were keenly interested in union.

Dr. Wm. Janzow explains this movement:

"In this connection we feel in duty bound to make reference to a layman's movement which was inaugurated in February last by a circular issued by one of our South Australian laymen, in which he endeavoured to interest laymen of both synods of such intersynodical discussions. Subsequently, a notice calling a laymen's meeting to be held at a convenient time, for the purpose of furthering intersynodical negotiations and bringing about a union of the churches of the Lutheran persuasion in our land, was published and broadcast. We have studied the circular and notice and have also interviewed the writer." (The Australian Lutheran, 1938, July 22).

Though it was heartening to see the interest of lay people in church matters, such intersynodical discussions between men not deeply instructed in the doctrines of their churches was extremely dangerous. Not having a deep knowledge of where the differences between the churches lay, with the ELSA laymen thus not able to in depth stand up for orthodox Lutheran teaching, the danger was that they would become confused in debate, be misled and be tempted to compromise on Scriptural teaching. It is hard enough at times for a pastor or theologian to debate deep matters of doctrine, let alone to entrust this job to lay people.

Further, such a layman's movement promoted the idea: UNION AT ANY COST. The lay people tended to feel: "After all, what is it that divides us?" Each became friendly and pally with the other. They said: "These UELCA people are really trust-worthy, sincere Christians. What wonderful people they are! All this argument about doctrine is pointless. Can't you see that the best thing to do would be to unite with them?" It is easy to see how the devil used this mutual friendship to promote the idea of UNION. But union cannot be based on mutual friendship, or understanding or trust. According to God's Word, union must be based upon COMPLETE AGREEMENT ON MATTERS OF SCRIPTURE.

Dr. Wm. Janzow also saw the great danger of the Australian Lutheran Association, and therefore sounded the following note of warning and disapproval:

"Much as we welcome the keen interest of our laymen in this important matter and recognize their, no doubt, good intentions,

we cannot countenance, endorse or support this movement. We are guided in our decision by the following considerations:

- "1. In view of the information supplied in the first portion of this article the laymen's meeting to urge the resumption of intersynodical negotiations in the manner contemplated is not necessary. (Dr. Janzow is here referring to the decision of the UELCA to accept the ELSA's offer to resume discussions, GLW
- "2. The circular sent out in February contains many statements which are directly contrary to fact and also passes judgements which are manifestly unjust. The blessings of God cannot rest on a foundation of that nature.
- "3. The aims and objects of this laymen's movement are not clearly defined and, judging from our discussions, may be contrary to our doctrinal position and therefore fraught with danger to our Church and its individual members.
- "4. The organization contemplated is to consist of laymen only and makes no provision for full cooperation with, and supervision by, the divinely called teachers of the Word and servants of the Church, and that in matters of the gravest import to the Church. This procedure we regard as being in disharmony with the universal practice of our Church, 1 Cor 14:10; but, what is more, we fear that the plan underlying the movement is in conflict with the spirit of the Gospel, which describes the pastors as overseers, watchmen, stewards, etc., and makes it their duty to teach the truth and warn against error, etc. (Compare 1 Cor 4:1; 14:10; Acts 20:28; Titus 1:9; Heb 13:17; Jas 3:1; Mal 2:7).

"We have always urged the participation of the laymen of both church-bodies in the intersynodical discussions; but we cannot see our way clear to give our support or endorsement to this movement, nor can we advise our congregations and church-members to do so.

Wm. Janzow, General President".

(The Australian Lutheran, 1938, July 22).

How sad it is for the ELSA that the warnings put forward by this faithful Lutheran Confessor of God's truth were not heeded.

#### INTERSYNODICAL NEGOTIATIONS OPEN FOR RESUMPTION.

As has previously been mentioned, the UELCA had, for many years, refused intersynodical discussions, demanding that such discussions begin with joint prayer, a demand that the ELSA could not observe. In 1930 the UELCA had adopted a resolution that they would no longer enter into discussions with the ELSA regarding church union while the ELSA refused "FIRST TO FELLOWSHIP WITH THEM IN PRAYER". (The Australian

Lutheran, April 4, 1930, p81). In refusing prayer fellowship with the UELCA while there was still disagreement in doctrine and practice, the ELSA was taking its stand on an unbreakable rule of Scripture as taught by John 8:31-32; Matt 7:15; Titus 3:10-11; Amos 3:3, and was abiding by the position of the orthodox Lutheran Church. This remained the ELSA's position until it was changed in 1948, when it altered its position on church fellowship to a false one. While the ELSA stood firm on this Scriptural position no agreement whatsoever with the UELCA was reached.

Let Dr. Janzow relate how the UELCA agreed to restart discussions, without joint prayer to begin. He writes in the Australian Lutheran (July 22, 1938):

"Intersynodical negotiations, which have the purpose of removing doctrinal differences and establishing unity, have again become possible since the chief obstacle, which for years prevented such negotiations, has been removed by the United Evangelical Lutheran Church of Australia. When, prior to his departure for the Brisbane General Convention of the UELCA in September 1937, I personally approached the President of the UELCA with the request to work towards the removal of the Walla Walla resolution of the UELCA, which, some eight or nine years ago, stopped intersynodical discussions, I found him very willing to do his best in this matter. After his return from that Convention he informed me that his Synod had declared the Walla Walla resolution 'inoperative' and had thus cleared the way for the resumption of intersynodical negotiations. In a letter dated February 8, 1938, President Stolz confirmed this information, supplying me with a copy of the official report of the UELCA. According to this information their Committee for Intersynodical Negotiations had received free hand as to the time and the manner of the reopening of the discussions. He also stated that such discussions could only take place after the printed reply to our pamphlet, The Differences, had been placed on the market and that, when the time came, discussions by correspondence would most likely be preferred.

"Hence we may look forward with anticipation to the resumption of these negotiations which we on our part have never ceased to desire and to urge. We also believe, and always have advocated, that discussions of this nature would be most profitable if they were held in public, in the presence of lay members of our respective churches."

(Emphasis added)

The South Brisbane General Synod of the UELCA in 1937 had instructed its committee "to take any steps it deems necessary, advisable, or practicable to attain the desired goal of union in spirit and in truth with our fellow Lutherans in the ELSA."

It was several years however before this resumption took place.

## THE GREAT PUSH FOR UNION.

As the decade of the 1930's neared its end, some members of both churches began to become more vocal in their desire that a union between the two churches be consummated. This desire was brought about by a number of causes, amongst these being:-

1. the Australian Lutheran Association, a movement amongst the laymen of the Lutheran Churches pushing for union.
2. the attempts which were being made for union with the ALC by the Missouri Synod, American theologians hoping for similar 'progress' in Australian church relations.
3. a growing laxity as regards doctrinal instruction in the ELSA on the part of its pastors, especially as regards the doctrinal differences between the two churches. This resulted in the opinion amongst many lay people: "If there is so little that divides us, why don't we join together?"

Speaking on the desire for union, Dr. Hamann Snr. wrote,

"There is the scandal and offence of a divided Christendom and a divided Lutheranism. Australian Lutherans feel uncomfortable when they see, in many a tiny settlement, a church of the UELCA on one side of the road, and a church of the ELSA on the other; they know what heartburnings, what misery and wretchedness are caused in many a family by this state of affairs. There is the foreign mission field. We wish that we could send all those armchair critics who speak slightingly of the present movement into the foreign field for a term so that they might see with their own eyes the shock of pained surprise in converts who learn that there are many Christian churches and that there are various Lutheran bodies not in communion with each other."

We agree, that it is sad to see such divisions existing within the Visible Church, but according to Scripture they cannot be overcome by compromising on the teachings of God's Word.

How many UELCA people looked at the division between the two churches is well described by Rev. F.H. Schmidt, (former President of Qld District UELCA, and for many years President of the Qld District LCA) in his description of the 1937 General Convention of the UELCA held at South Brisbane.

He writes:

"The record merely gives a hint of the keenness of the debate, of the impatience expressed by some and the frustration felt by many that in union negotiations so little progress seemed to

be evident. Finding it difficult to understand or to appreciate the difference, there were those who believed it could be removed by the stroke of a pen, by a popular vote. They found it hard to understand why the division should be continuing almost a century after the rift had occurred especially when, as it seemed, both Churches had so much in common. How many felt, is well illustrated by a remark reputed to have been made by a layman, when asked about the difference between the two Lutheran Churches: 'Oh', he said, 'that is like two magpies, one is black and white, the other is white and black'. While this may by some be regarded as being facetious, it does, also, it would appear, reveal something of the frustration which was being felt by many."

(A Monograph - the Events Leading to The Formation of the LCA, page 3).

Thus the 1930's ended with no further progress towards union, but with a very strong movement within both churches pushing for union at any cost. Any perceptive onlooker with an orthodox Lutheran background would, no doubt, as Dr. Janzow, have been very concerned as to the direction the ELSA was headed.

## CHAPTER VII.

### A PARALLEL SITUATION IN AMERICA (1926-1950).

Studying through the history of the Lutheran Church over the past fifty years, we are amazed as to the many coinciding events between the downfall of the old ELSA and that of the old Missouri Synod. Since these events were so similar in nature, and since the position in the Missouri Synod so influenced that within the ELSA, we will spend a chapter examining a number of striking but sad events in the Missouri Synod.

The old Missouri Synod was organized in 1847. Because of his outstanding theological qualities, Pastor (later Doctor) C.F.W. Walther was elected their first President. Over the years he built the Missouri Synod into one of the most outstanding orthodox Lutheran groups that has ever existed. Due to its most faithful adherence to Scripture and the Lutheran Confessions, the Old Missouri Synod firmly held its ground against all the bitter assaults of Satan. Many are the names of those like Sihler, Wyneken, Fuerbringer, F. Pieper, A.L. Graebner, Engelder, Zorn, Dau and Bente, who during their day kept Missouri four-square on Scripture.

But Satan never sleeps. Because of its staunch orthodoxy his eyes were firmly fastened on the old Missouri Synod. With the help of the Lord, Missouri had successfully weathered controversies on the doctrines of the Church and Ministry, the Office of the Keys, Unionism, Election, Inspiration of Bible, Free Will and Conversion, the Analogy of Faith, binding force of Confessions, the Millennium and the observance of Sunday. But now they were to face another struggle which in the end lead to their downfall. It all revolved around the doctrine of Church Fellowship.

#### "ROUND TABLE" MEETINGS.

During World War I, large numbers of Missouri Synod young men were called up for service in the armed forces. In order to provide for the spiritual welfare of these men, camp pastors were sent with them. The majority of Missouri Synod camp pastors remained faithful to the Scripture doctrine of church fellowship and refused to commune those of heterodox Lutheran groups even though this caused them many difficult problems. However, a small number of these camp pastors permitted servicemen who belonged to heterodox Lutheran Church bodies to commune at Missouri Synod altars, as well as having Church and Prayer fellowship with other heterodox Lutheran chaplains. These unionistic practices were encouraged by many camp pastors when they came back from the services at the end of the war and began to cause people to question the orthodox doctrine of Church fellowship.

A number of Missouri Synod men, among them foreign missionaries, pastors and even theological professors, began to meet together secretly to discuss their common ideas. One of their very influential leaders was Dr. Theodore Graebner, a son of the orthodox Lutheran teacher Dr. A.L. Graebner, and a seminary professor and editor of "The Lutheran Witness." He states that a number of pastors, professors and synodical officials had their first so-called "Round Table" meeting in Chicago in 1926. They discussed what they regarded as a too strict application of Scripture, especially Rom 16:17 and began gradually to take steps to change the Scriptural doctrine of fellowship. These discussions were very private and were by invitation only. The "invited ones" were such concerning whom hopes were entertained that they might be won for the cause.

#### BRIEF STATEMENT.

Dr. F. Pieper, that giant of orthodox Lutheranism, died in 1931. Before he died, Dr. Pieper was instrumental in drawing up the "Brief Statement of the Doctrinal Position of the Missouri Synod". It was adopted in 1932. Please note the two paragraphs on CHURCH FELLOWSHIP:

"Since God ordained that His Word only, without the admixture of human doctrine, be taught and believed in the Christian Church, 1 Pet 4:11; John 8:31,32; 1 Tim 6:3,4, all Christians are required by God to discriminate between orthodox and heterodox church bodies, Matt 7:15, to have church fellowship only with orthodox church-bodies, and, in case they have strayed into heterodox church-bodies, to leave them, Rom 16:17. We repudiate unionism, that is, church fellowship with the adherents of false doctrine, as disobedience to God's command, as causing divisions in the church, Rom 16:17; 2 John 9,10, and as involving the constant danger of losing the Word of God entirely, 2 Tim 2:17-21.

"The orthodox character of a church is established not by its mere name nor by its outward acceptance of and subscription to, an orthodox creed, but by the doctrine which is actually taught in its pulpits, in its theological seminaries, and in its publications. On the other hand, a church does not forfeit its orthodox character through the casual intrusion of errors, provided these are combated and eventually removed by means of doctrinal discipline, Act 20:30; 1 Tim 1:3"

Though various voices warned against the intrusion of doctrinal laxity (e.g. Dr. P.E. Kretzmann, cf CTM 1934 p4), those with the "new interpretation" became bolder and gradually gained a following.

It is interesting that during the 1930's, doctrinal laxity began

to show itself in Missouri by a corruption in the doctrine of RIGHTFUL ENGAGEMENT being tantamount to marriage (Gen 29:21; Deut 22:22-24; Matt 1:18-20). Sadly this was the little leaven (Gal 5:9) that led to the corruption of the doctrine of Church Fellowship.

### UNION NEGOTIATIONS.

In 1935, the ALC, a church body at that time in fellowship with, and similar in doctrinal position to the UELCA, extended an invitation to the Missouri Synod for discussions towards the establishment of fellowship. This invitation was accepted.

It was also during this year that Dr. Pfothner, for many years a sound and powerful leader of the Missouri Synod, was not reelected to his position. He was replaced by Dr. Behnken, a MIDDLE-OF-THE-ROADER. Although he knew the orthodox Scripture teaching on church fellowship and even later expounded it, yet because of the danger of a split in the church he refused to discipline errorists.

During the period between 1935 - 1938 Missouri's Union Committee had met six times with the ALC's committee. At the 1938 Convention of the Missouri Synod, the Missouri Committee reported that the ALC Committee pleaded for toleration in connection with the doctrines of the Church and of the Last things (Antichrist, Conversion of Israel, Physical Resurrection of Israel, Thousand years of Rev 20) and asked the Missouri Synod to declare that these points "are not disruptive of church fellowship".

Unfortunately the Missouri Committee recommended that "until church fellowship has been officially established, the pastors of both church bodies meet in smaller circles....to discuss both the doctrinal basis for union and the questions of church practice". (LW, 1938, p233,234). By this action many of the Missouri pastors became friendly with the ALC pastors and very soon it occurred that they began to tolerate the false teachings of the errorists.

At this Convention the above recommendation was approved and, worse still, Missouri now gave official "tolerance to certain teachings and interpretations" that had been rejected by Missouri in the past and resolved that these did not need to be divisive of church fellowship. Besides the "Brief Statement" of Missouri it was decided that the "Declaration" of the ALC be accepted as "the doctrinal basis for future church-fellowship between the Missouri Synod and the American Lutheran Church". But what was not realized was that the language of the "Declaration" consisted of "Yes-No" double-talk statements. It is from this Convention that Missouri officially tolerated error and false practice.

A number of men voiced warnings to Missouri on the dangerous step it was taking. Rev W. Oesch wrote from London in January, 1939:



"Plainly our church is at the parting of ways."

Despite official disapproval, a small group began publishing "The Confessional Lutheran" in January, 1940, with Pastor H. Burgdorf as editor.

Warnings came repeatedly from sister synods, the ELS (Evangelical Lutheran Synod) and WELS (Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod), all to no avail. Pastor John Moldstad of the ELS wrote in 1944:

"The future does not look bright. We are few and we have the unpopular side of all questions; but God lives and rules; and one with God is always a majority. So let us be faithful and free from worry".

(A City Set on a Hill, Aaberg, p. 154)

#### VIGOROUS MISSION PROGRAMME.

During the late 1930's, 1940's and 1950's, the Missouri Synod undertook a massive mission programme under the slogan, "Each one win one". Instead of keeping in mind that the chief aim of mission work is to bring the Word of God, Law and Gospel rightly divided, to the sinner, in order to bring him to the true Christian faith, the false idea arose equating mission work with church membership. Faithfulness to Scripture as the mark of the faithful pastor now gradually faded away. A pastor was now judged by how quickly and by how many he could increase the numbers in his congregations. Because of this desire to grow in numbers, many pastors lowered the quality of their instruction and no longer required those wishing to join their congregations to accept everything in DOCTRINE AND PRACTICE which God's Word teaches.

#### ALTERATION OF POSITION REGARDING PRAYER FELLOWSHIP.

At Missouri's 1944 Convention it further departed from its original position on prayer fellowship permitting joint prayer with the heterodox at intersynodical conferences. A false distinction was made between joint prayer and prayer fellowship. Scripture, however, maintains that these are simply different expressions of the same fellowship concerning which God's Word demands that there must be full agreement in doctrine and practice before it can occur, 1 Cor 1:10; Rom 16:17; Matt 7:15.

A change also took place at this Convention concerning the Boy Scouts Movement. Whereas old Missouri had previously consistently opposed it because of its religious unionism, because it taught work righteousness, rejected Christ as the Saviour, and required false oaths, now it took a more lax position and left it up to the individual congregation to decide whether membership should be permitted or not.

There soon followed a rewriting of Missouri's definition of unionism. Where previous to this, certain acts in themselves had been called unionistic, now it was not the act itself which constituted unionism, but whether or not it was done in such a way as to imply denial of truth or support of error. This erroneous addition found its way into the 1945 edition of Fritz's Pastoral Theology. Compare the two definitions for yourself:

1932: "Joining in religious worship, or in religious work or in both by such as are not in doctrinal agreement is religious unionism."

1945: "Joining in religious worship or in religious work or in both by such as are not in doctrinal agreement, or, in other words, joint work or worship by which the truth is either denied or the appearance of a denial, or at least of indifferentism, is given, is religious unionism."

The Open Questions principle comes in when the question is asked: Does everyone agree just as to exactly what acts and on which occasions these acts constitute a denial of the truth or the appearance of a denial or indifferentism?

#### STATEMENT OF THE 44 (1945).

Since 1937 the secret plotters, intent in overthrowing the Scripture doctrine of church fellowship, met on two further occasions for their closed-door meetings -- 1940 and 1941. These meetings were attended by an influential group of men consisting of pastors, professors and synodical officers. These errorists claimed that up to 1941 their false ideas "were never given wider circulation".

So in 1945 the Missouri Synod experienced a period of convulsion. It was shaken by a document entitled "A Statement" which was drawn up in Chicago after a group of pastors and professors had met from September 6 to 7, 1945. It was originally signed by 44 prominent men, amongst whom the names Theodore Graebner, Oswald Hoffmann, George Kuechle C.J. Friedrich and W.G. Polack were found. The "Statement of the 44" (also known as the "Chicago Statement") was circularized throughout Synod.

"A Statement" claimed that Rom 16:17-18 only applied to errorists who could be proven to be unbelievers, and not as a Scriptural directive against the sin of unionism. It also favoured altar, pulpit and prayer fellowship with heterodox Lutheran Churches. The signers of this statement issued an accompanying pamphlet of supporting essays entitled "Speaking the Truth in Love". The ALC were quite happy to accept the false teachings this statement contained.

When the President, Dr. Behnken, received a copy of this statement, he immediately telephoned and requested them to postpone issuing of the Statement. The request was declined and the Statement mailed to all of Synod's pastors. Thereafter a telegram was sent from the President protesting the public issue of "A Statement". Like white ants which have been at work secretly and unobserved now came out of the woodwork, liberals who supported the signers of "A Statement" by the hundreds rallied behind them.

The President met with a committee representing the signers on two occasions, December 1945 and February 1946, and on both occasions requested the signers to withdraw what they had written. Both requests were refused. At the second meeting, it was decided that the issues involved be examined, and, if possible, resolved, by a joint committee - 10 men from the signers and 10 to be appointed by Behnken to represent the Scriptural position. This joint committee became known as the "Ten and Ten". Amongst the ten men appointed by Behnken were P.F. Bente, Theo Laetsch, W.H. McLaughlan and H.W. Romoser.

Three meetings between the committees took place in 1946. The signer's position was examined carefully and every effort was made by the President's committee to convince them of their errors and get them to retract their position. The conservative pastors had the liberal theologians on the very verge of retraction. On September 25, 1946 Theodore Graebner, a member of the signer's committee moved a motion to adopt the correct understanding of Rom 16:17,18, namely that it applies "to any and all who persistently teach contrary to Apostolic doctrine and not merely to such as teach subverting errors." But this was never adopted. When this stage had been reached, Behnken, fearing a split in the Missouri Synod, discontinued the meetings of the "Ten-Ten" and declared that "A Statement" was withdrawn as a basis for discussion.

On December 10, 1946 the President's committee delivered their report on their meetings with the signer's representatives. They condemned the many errors and stated that unless these false teachers were disciplined, the whole unity of Missouri would be disrupted. On January 11, 1947, Behnken informed the representatives of the President's committee that the signers agreed to withdraw their statement as a basis for further discussion. Pastors would be selected to draw up a series of special study documents to deal with the issues involved. The following was also made clear:

"Nothing has developed, however, which is divisive of church fellowship."

This is amazing, because on July 1, 1947 Behnken claimed that the doctrinal errors of the signers "are in themselves potentially divisive of fellowship". It was also made clear on January 11, 1947 that the withdrawal of "A Statement" did not mean a RETRACTION of it,

nor an apology for the error of its contents. To "withdraw" a statement means that the statement is removed from public eye, but that the person who subscribes to the statement still retains the views contained therein and may promote them privately. Satan certainly won the day in this battle and his victory can be seen by the later events in the Missouri Synod, and especially its heterodox position today. Error was granted official toleration. Those of the liberals who were once on the verge of changing their position were now "set" in their erroneous position. The confusion and error spread as the liberals now publicly spread their false doctrines.

Instead of the signers being disciplined, the President even allowed some of them to be elevated to more prominent positions. Through the President's action, the Missouri Synod adopted an official policy of toleration of error, in which Truth and error are given equal rights.

This then paved the way for the acceptance in 1950 of the "Common Confession" with the American Lutheran Church in the Synod's Convention at Milwaukee. This was really a masterpiece of "double talk" and at compromising Truth with error. The Common Confession could be accepted by both sides, each retaining his own previous views. There were no NEGATIVE statements condemning and denouncing the false doctrine which was taught in the liberal ALC. An errorist in the ALC could read this "Common Confession" and a conservative Lutheran in the Missouri Synod could read his Scriptural position in the same words. It was simply an agreement to disagree and to tolerate error in doctrine and practice. The spirit of compromise with error was the guiding spirit which led the Missouri Synod to adopt "The Common Confession" -- the same spirit which tolerated the errors of the signers of "A Statement" and permitted those errors to persist and grow.

In 1950 the Missouri Synod recognized "The Common Confession" as "a statement of agreement on those doctrines between us and the American Lutheran Church". Both the Wisconsin Synod and the ELS objected strongly to this action by Missouri, but to no avail. Eventually this lead to WELS and ELS leaving the Synodical Conference and severing fellowship with Missouri in the early 60's.

Because of Missouri's heterodoxy, a small new group was formed on September 26, 1951 calling themselves the "Orthodox Lutheran Conference". They were led by Dr. P.E. Kretzmann and nine other pastors including their congregations, who withdrew from Missouri because of its error. From this group was formed a number of years later the Lutheran Churches of the Reformation (LCR) and the Concordia Lutheran Conference (CLC).

Sadly since this time the Missouri Synod (LCMS), although later cutting off fellowship with the liberal ALC, has continued its doctrinal decline. In 1974 a substantial number of liberals left the LCMS to form the AELC, but still unionism is rampant throughout Missouri,

little is done to combat gross error and liberals rejecting major teachings of the Bible are tolerated with no discipline. Unless in Missouri there is a complete turning back to the Bible doctrine of Church Fellowship, unless those who depart from God's Word are Scripturally disciplined, unless in all points of doctrine Scripture is heeded and obeyed, LCMS will continue its decline, and soon lose any last vestiges of Lutheranism it still retains.

CHAPTER VIII.

A SAD DAY FOR THE ELSA:

CHANGE IN THE DOCTRINE OF CHURCH FELLOWSHIP. (1940-1948)

Let us now compare this corruption of the Doctrine of Church Fellowship in Missouri with a similar corruption of this Scriptural teaching in the old ELSA.

JANZOW NOT REELECTED AS PRESIDENT.

Dr. Janzow had been a faithful and orthodox leader of the ELSA since 1922, spending 19 years as General President. During this time he started to notice the dangerous trend in the ELSA and attempted to strengthen the knowledge of the members of the ELSA in two ways. In the first place he very thoroughly dealt with the doctrinal differences between the two Churches. In the second place, he emphasized the Scripture doctrine of church fellowship. These things can be seen by the articles mentioned in Chapter V. However in 1941 he was voted out of his position and replaced with Dr. Cl. Hoopmann. The ELSA thus lost the direct influence of a faithful confessor of God's Word and one who was not afraid of speaking out against and disciplining those who taught contrary to the Word of God. Sadly, Dr. Janzow's absence permitted those who supported a wrong teaching on church fellowship to increase their following, only to bring their false views into public view when they felt they were strong enough.

Dr. Hoopmann's message, oft repeated, was to show love to the members of the UELCA; not to do anything or say anything that might offend them, or endanger progress of union negotiations. Sadly this "love" was not one which always rejoiced in the truth of God's Word and its defence against false doctrine.

UNION NEGOTIATIONS RECOMMENCE.

Upon official resolution of both churches, union negotiations began again in 1941.

Of these, the editor of the Australasian Theological Review writes in 1944:

"Of the 'official' meetings it may be said that the representatives of the two bodies learned to know one another, that a friendly spirit prevailed and manifested itself in mutual recognition and esteem, and that in some instances at least seeming differences were found to be due to a different theological terminology. Besides that, little or no progress

has been made. When the discussions were resumed a few years ago--after a lapse of close to fifteen years, we believe--it was agreed by both parties that nothing was to be published except by mutual consent."

(ATR 1944, p60, emphasis added).

We can see a great danger in the agreement mentioned at the end of this quote. This was only to publish matter which was mutually agreed to by both parties. The UELCA certainly would not agree to any statement which portrayed it in a bad light. How could the ELSA in its totality confess the truth of God's Word, and especially speak out fully against the errors of which the UELCA held? The danger was that the lay people and pastors of the ELSA were kept ignorant as to the results of the discussions taking place. How were they to express their happiness or concern with the discussions, if the ELSA committee was not allowed to give its regular individual reports of the happenings in Intersynodical meetings? Surely the ELSA committee was responsible to the whole of its church and therefore should have revealed everything that took place. One of the complaints of many at the time of the union was: "We were kept in the dark. We did not know fully what was going on. We were asked to trust the assurances of our leaders that everything had been settled". If regular published detailed reports of the meetings had been given by the ELSA committee, this situation would have been avoided. The impression is given that the committee members were concerned about the reaction ELSA members might have had when they saw the contents and results of discussions. If a unified God-pleasing settlement was to be reached, everything should have been done to keep things out in the open before the eyes of all church members.

For a start union negotiations were slow. Many discussions were held in which the differences between the two churches were outlined but little progress was made. The chief differences between the two churches, as outlined in Chapters 3 to 5 revolved around the evil OPEN QUESTIONS principle of the UELCA, with their subsequent toleration of errors contrary to Scripture in many doctrines. Sadly the ELSA committee did not go back to previous papers outlining its doctrinal position and particularly the errors of the UELCA, and use these as a basis for convincing the UELCA men that their previous position was not based upon God's Word, but had their theologians draw up new papers on these matters. The danger was that the old differences would be forgotten and overlooked in the efforts to bring about union.

The first matter to be discussed by the Intersynodical committees was MINIMUM REQUIREMENTS FOR CHURCH FELLOWSHIP. Here the chief question asked was: How much agreement is required for the two churches to join together with one another? or rephrased: Are two churches able to join together or fellowship while there is still disagreement in matters of doctrine? The ELSA answered: Definitely not! All forms of church fellowship, whether they be united prayer, altar fellowship or pulpit

fellowship are forbidden until complete agreement in doctrine and practice is reached. The UELCA however answered: Yes. On the basis of the evil open questions principle, they believed that two churches could coexist together while doctrinal differences remained. We will thoroughly examine the Theses of Agreement, the Theses which were drawn up on each point, in a future chapter. Here we will show that although each side agreed with its contents, it cleverly allowed each side to retain their beliefs on the matters of difference between them.

One of the chief matters holding up discussions was that the ELSA committee refused to begin the discussions with joint prayer. Each group would separately have their private prayer to begin, and then join together for their discussions. This attitude of the ELSA was that outlined by Dr. O. Nichterlein:

"We believe that public fellowship in prayer is expressive of unity of faith. That is why we uphold the principle that FIRST UNITY OF FAITH MUST BE ESTABLISHED BEFORE THERE CAN BE UNITED PRAYER....Our attitude is: First let us agree as to the truth that we are going to proclaim, and when we have reached agreement we will make that manifest by fellowship in prayer."

(A.L. 1930 p.81)

The ELSA here was taking its stand on the unbreakable rule of Scripture as taught by John 8:31-32; Rom 16:17; Matt 7:15; Titus 3: 10,11; Amos 3:3 and was abiding by the position of the orthodox Lutheran Church.

The UELCA maintained that Lutherans could join together in prayer and worship without first settling matters of doctrine. Their committee therefore pleaded with their counterparts: "Can't you see your way clear at least to open our meetings with a prayer? Surely we could do this since we recognize one another as Christians." The claim was even made: "Fruitful negotiations cannot be expected while joint prayer is refused." (CTM. 1950 p778).

Sadly the ELCA (as it was then known) in 1948 compromised their position and the UELCA won the day. We now answer the question: HOW DID THIS HAPPEN?

#### HAMANN SNR.'S NEW POSITION ON CHURCH FELLOWSHIP.

Dr. Hamann Snr. had come to the ELSA in 1926, and apparently already then held his private views on church fellowship contrary to the official teaching of his church body. Up until the early 1940's he was able privately to gain supporters, not only through introducing his views to others, but also through the respect he obtained through his otherwise great learning. However in the early 1940's he started to come out publicly with his false ideas.



As well as other brief references to matters connected with Church Fellowship, two articles appeared in the Australasian Theological Review, the pastors magazine of the old ELSA, in which Hamann brought forth his new views on church fellowship. These articles were entitled:-

- "WHAT CONSTITUTES UNIONISM" (ATR, 1940, July - September, pp.70-83)
- "ROMANS 16: 17,18" (ATR, 1941, Oct - Dec., pp108-114)

From the comment of the writer, "this article embodies convictions long held by the writer", (ATR 1940 p70), we may presume that Hamann Snr. had held these views for many years, even from his arrival many years before in Australia.

We read of Hamann Snr:

"When the controversial 'Statement of the Forty-four in Chicago appeared in 1945, Henry Hamann Snr., found no great difficulty in accepting the points listed."

(When the Murray meets the Mississippi, p. 235)

In fact if Hamann had been in America still, he would have been one of the signers of this notorious document. The views brought forth in the above articles are the same as those put forth, contrary to the official position of the Missouri Synod, by the 44.

In summary, these articles proposed the following errors:-

1. Not all joint prayer with Christians belonging to heterodox churches can be regarded as unionism, and therefore sinful and contrary to the Scripture passages forbidding such fellowship with the Heterodox. Thus Christians of different Churches are privately permitted to pray with one another in certain situations.
2. Rom 16:17-18 (Now I beseech you, brethren, mark them which cause divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned; and avoid them. For they that are such serve not our Lord Jesus Christ, but their own belly; and by good words and fair speeches deceive the hearts of the simple) can only be applied to false teachers who can be proven to be UNBELIEVERS, and cannot be applied directly to those who, though still Christians, in one point or the other stubbornly hold to teachings contrary to the Word of God.

He claimed, amongst other things: "In the eyes of the apostle these errorists were not weak, erring Christians, but enemies of Christ and of Christians; they were heretics in the true sense of the term;

they were to him extra ecclesiam." (Extra ecclesiam means 'outside the church', i.e. 'non-Christian').

These two essays must have caused quite a deal of discussion within the ELSA because they proposed false teachings clearly contrary to its official position.

#### WHAT WAS THE TEACHING OF THE ELSA ON THESE MATTERS?

Let us bring a number of quotes from the old ELSA to show the orthodox Lutheran stand it had taken on these matters.

##### I. PRAYER FELLOWSHIP.

Dr. O. Nichterlein, the Editor of the Australian Lutheran, defended the ELSA's position as follows (as before quoted):

"We believe that public fellowship in prayer is expressive of unity of faith. That is why we uphold the principle that FIRST UNITY OF FAITH MUST BE ESTABLISHED BEFORE THERE CAN BE UNITED PRAYER .... Our attitude is: FIRST LET US AGREE AS TO THE TRUTH THAT WE ARE GOING TO PROCLAIM, AND WHEN WE HAVE REACHED AGREEMENT WE WILL MAKE THAT MANIFEST BY FELLOWSHIP IN PRAYER." (A.L. 1930 p81).

The orthodox Lutheran theologian of the QLD DISTRICT of the ELSA, Dr. E. DARSOW wrote in 1926:

"The Queensland District of the UELCA through its officials refuses to have any doctrinal discussion with us, unless we unite with them in prayer at all such meetings. Repeatedly we have pointed out to them that according to God's Word church bodies or representatives of different church bodies can only then unite in prayer when they are one in faith and doctrine. As we are not one with them in faith and doctrine we cannot conscientiously pray together. Unity in faith and doctrine must precede united prayer. The District Synod of the UELCA persistently refuses to acknowledge this position of ours, which is but Scriptural." (Synodical Report of Qld District of ELSA, 1926, p11).

The Australian Lutheran of April 27, 1924 reprinted a very instructive article written by the late Theo. Lutze entitled, "MARK THEM...AND AVOID THEM." (Romans 16:17). Amongst other things, he writes

"And 'avoid them' does not mean that we are to avoid all intercourse, for example, civil and commercial intercourse, with those who teach falsely. But spiritual intercourse, fellowship, joining them in worship and prayer we must carefully and diligently avoid, no matter how difficult it may be, no matter how uncharitable it may seem, no matter what abuse and censure we may incur. Rather obedience to the Lord and

the enjoyment of His gracious favour than the open-armed, God-displeasing welcome of men who refuse to abide by the truth of Scripture."

This same position was outlined in an Essay to 1923 Convention of the ELSA (Qld District) by Dr. Emil Darsow entitled "UNITED PRAYER". Here he wrote:

"Now you have perhaps heard members of the other Synod say: As we pray with a heathen and with anyone, how is it that your pastors could not pray with our pastors at the pastoral Conference held at Toowoomba? ...

"It is true, we, the pastors of that other church body and our pastors had conferences together for discussing the doctrine, and it is true that we declined to pray with them, with the pastors of the other church body. How could we do this? Should not Christians pray together? ...

"Because we shall pray for that which God has taught in His Word, therefore we cannot pray with such who deny what God has said in His Word. For the same reason we cannot pray with other church-bodies which profess erroneous doctrines, for they contradict the Word of God in this or that respect ...

"It is clear that communion of prayer is communion of worship and religion, and is admissable only where all other exercises of religion, and acts of worship might be performed in common. Communion of prayer with those who adhere to and profess erroneous doctrine in this and that respect is taking away with one hand what is offered with the other, namely, the hallowing of God's name. If we would have prayed with them, as they asked us to do, then we would have acknowledged that we are united in one faith, in one doctrine, in one confession. That we could not do, because it was not the truth."

(1923 Convention Proceedings, ELSA Qld District, pp35,36).

## II. ROMANS 16: 17-18.

Dr. Theo. Lutze wrote in the same article quoted previously:

"There really should be no need to mention that in 'mark them' we are not asked to pass judgement upon persons. Neither are we asked to judge the personal faith of those who differ from us. Nevertheless, note it carefully, dear reader, we cannot read the heart; God alone can do that. 'Mark them' asks us to ascertain and note those who teach contrary to Holy Writ and to judge the doctrines they hold and teach. 'Beloved, believe not

every spirit, but try the spirits', - that is, test, examine their teachings in the light of Scripture - 'whether they are of God'. (1 John 4:1). If the doctrines they teach are in conflict with the Word of God, they that teach them are to be avoided."

The former application of this passage was very clearly stated by Dr. Theodore Nickel in his fine essay on Church Fellowship delivered at the Special Convention held at Eudunda, S.A., September 14 - 19, 1902 (This fine essay has been translated by Pastor Kleinig and is available through the ELCR). There he declared the following:

"Should now a congregation desire to join a Synod, then the question which comes into consideration is this one, and this one only: Is the Synod orthodox or not? If it is not, then the congregation must not enter into any kind of church-fellowship with that Synod. And furthermore: Should it become clear to a Christian that the congregation or the Synod to which he has hitherto belonged is not orthodox, that is, teaches otherwise than God's Word teaches, he must not, if he values his soul's salvation, remain a member there. And the same applies to every congregation over against a heterodox Synod. For what does the Lord say? He admonishes us in Rom. 16:17: "But I beseech you, brethren, mark them which cause divisions and offences contrary to (Luther's translation: alongside) the doctrine which ye have learned, and avoid them!" It must be carefully noted here that the Apostle does not say: Avoid them which bring a new doctrine; oh no! they claim to have the same doctrine as we have; but alongside that doctrine they bring their own teachings, and thereby cause division. And from such we must turn away."

Finally, Dr. W. Janzow writes:

"In Romans 16:17 we read God's direction: 'Now I beseech you, brethren, mark them which cause divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned and avoid them!' This requires separation, spiritual separation from every persistent errorist within the church. It expressly forbids the fellowship in faith with such." (A.L. 1932 p194-196).

In summary, the official position of the ELSA, as also that of old Missouri on these matters was:

- I. The passages of the Bible forbidding Church fellowship with the heterodox forbid all spiritual fellowship whether of prayer, worship or attendance at the same altar. Also joint prayer of church representatives or individuals is included here.
- II. Rom 16:17,18, (which is really the most definite passage

of the Bible dealing with Church Fellowship), forbids all church fellowship with false teachers, whether they can be proven to be Christians or not.

This position is backed up by the same taken by past theologians of the Missouri Synod, Walther, Sihler, Stoeckhardt, Laetsch, Engelder and Fritz (1932).

So Dr. Hamann was, through his essays, proposing something entirely new to the orthodox Lutheran Church in Australia.

Between the years 1941 - 1948 Dr. Hamann both publicly and privately gained supporters for his views which in essence were the same as those of "the Statement of the 44". When this American statement arrived in 1945, it was readily accepted in Australia, and fueled the fire of false teaching which spread throughout the church. Dr. Hamann (Snr) and others wrote further essays on their new position, which gradually took a hold on the ELCA. It was only a matter of time before this matter came up at a pastoral conference of the ELCA. Since it involved the burning question of joint prayer at Intersynodical Conferences, the supporters of the "New Interpretation" decided it was time to have their position officially adopted.

#### GENERAL PASTORAL CONFERENCE, JINDERA, N.S.W. 1948.

Sadly, these few days marked a great turning point of the old ELCA from orthodoxy to the toleration and adoption of error, for it was here that the change took place in the doctrine of church fellowship.

Dr. Cl. Hoopmann speaks of this with the words:

"One matter which had caused considerable friction and heart-ache at intersynodical meetings was the fact that we did not begin our meetings with joint prayer. This was not due to personal animosity on the part of any member of our committee but to the fear that we would be anticipating union and could be acting contrary to Romans 16:17,18. We therefore decided to give special consideration to this matter at a General Pastoral Conference. This conference was held at Jindera in New South Wales. As a result of this conference we were able to reach an agreement with the UELCA intersynodical committee on 'Joint Prayer and Worship', and were able to begin our meetings with prayer. This was another step forward."

(Luther League Monitor, Dec 1965, p 14)

We allow Pastor F.H. Schmidt (former President of the Qld District of the UELCA, and later LCA) to describe this sad event. Note: this man was not from the ELCA but from UELCA background and therefore has

nothing to hide about this black day for the ELCA. He writes:

"The ELCA had always held and taught that Joint Prayer was possible only when there was complete agreement in doctrine; that even to open an intersynodical meeting with prayer was not permissible for it would be unionism. The UELCA could not understand and did not share this view and had ever and again asked for a relaxation of this attitude. While respecting the ELCA's conscientious objection, this nevertheless was seen as an offence, perhaps especially to the laymembers of the Church. The change came following on the Pastoral Conference of the ELCA held at Jindera, N.S.W. (May 1948) on the basis of papers read by Dr. Hamann on 'Prayer Fellowship', Dr. A. McKenzie on 'Romans 16:17-18, An Examination' and by Dr. J. Darsow 'A Doctrinal Treatise on Romans 16:17-18.' In the Theses on Joint Prayer and Worship careful provision is made to guard against unionism but it is acknowledged 'that on the basis of Scripture and of the Confessions joint prayer cannot under all circumstances be identified with unionistic prayer or church fellowship.'"

(A Monograph ... p5)

The author comments regarding this change:

"Conversely, one can understand that those who opposed and still oppose Lutheran Union contend and deplore that the Jindera Pastoral Conference of 1948 marked the beginning of the ELCA departing from its traditional position." (Monograph, p6)

To this remark we reply: Thank you, Sir; at least you realize how the ELCA contributed to the formation of the LCA - by compromising its confessional position for the sake of union. What a pity a few more in the former ELCA did not show spiritual insight, take a stand on God's Word and show backbone by remaining separate from this unionistic merger.

Of the events of that notorious Pastoral Conference we relate the following. On Friday, May 21, 1948, Drs. Mackenzie, Darsow and Hamann presented their papers (previously mentioned) in that order. Most of the day was spent discussing them. The first two papers urged the adoption of the new interpretation on Romans 16:17-18 (that this passage only apply to unbelievers). Dr. Hamann's paper urged the Conference to permit their intersynodical committee to begin their deliberations with joint prayer. The following day a committee was appointed to make recommendations to the Conference on Prayer Fellowship.

On the Monday, Pastor E. Appelt read a brief paper on Rom 16:17,18 in which he claimed that this passage did not deal with matters of doctrine at all, but Christian life (laughable, if it was not so serious, GLW). He made the following godless remark:

"We should be prepared to accept any legitimate interpretation which would make it easier to bring about union with the UELCA." (Minutes)

Finally the resolution was passed:

"3. that on the basis of Scripture and of the Confessions we acknowledge that joint prayer cannot under all circumstances be identified with unionistic prayer or church fellowship ....

"5. that the question whether joint prayer may be offered at a joint Intersynodical Conference should be decided by our representatives in accordance with the particular circumstances, under which that conference is held. If the marks of unionism are present, there should be no joint prayer; where these are absent, however, such a prayer may be offered.

"7. This recommendation was adopted in this amended form--  
We express the hope that it would be possible in accordance with Matt 18:19-20 and the above-mentioned principles to establish a better relation and understanding between the negotiating committees if the Inter-Synodical discussions could be opened with prayer for divine guidance."

It appears that one of the chief causes of this alteration in the position on Rom 16:17-18 was the lack of deep knowledge of the Greek language. If the pastors of the ELCA really knew their Greek thoroughly, would they have been "hoodwinked" into accepting the "new" interpretation of this passage? We answer: Definitely not!

The only one reported to have raised any objection to this whole sordid affair was poor old Dr. Janzow, of whom it is stated:

"Dr. Janzow was given an opportunity to state his views. He warned against what might be termed as unwarranted retreat from our previous stand."

This dear gentleman, who for years had stood firm on the doctrines of the orthodox Lutheran Church, could see the way things were heading. Sad to say, as one pastor who was present at the Conference wrote to Pastor Kleinig, "The unionists won the day."

The beginning of the joint meetings with joint prayer had the desired effect of quickening the pace. A number of Theses were very quickly adopted. As Dr. Stolz, President of the UELCA related:

"With this point of difference overcome even the most pessimistic among the committee members became hopeful of the goal of Lutheran unity eventually being reached."

We will deal with the Theses of Agreement in Chapter X, but first, since it played such an important role in the downfall of the ELCA, we will deal with this vital passage, Romans 16:17-18.



CHAPTER IX.

THE SCRIPTURAL POSITION ON ROMANS 16:17-18.

Romans 16:17-18 has been described as the seat of the Doctrine of Church Fellowship. There are many passages of the Bible that deal with this same subject, but few as forcefully and as vividly as this one. But Satan too has realized this, and in order to corrupt the doctrine of Church Fellowship, over the last 60 years he has worked with might and main to corrupt the Scriptural understanding of this passage. The devil realizes that if the doctrine of church fellowship falls, the floodgates will be opened to error, which will soon spread and place many souls in great danger. So has come the "new" interpretation of Rom 16:17,18, only of relatively recent origin.

Much has not only been written by liberal Lutherans, but also by sound confessional Lutherans on this subject. Among the sound material we may include the following:

- A Grammatical Study of Rom 16:17 by Dr. R.G. Hoerber
- Notes on Romans 16:17,18 by Pastor H.W. Romoser

Both of these are deep exegetical papers, in many ways above the heads of the average lay person. It would defeat the purpose of this book to give such a deep exegetical analysis of this passage, with many Greek words and meanings, as well as many theological terms. It is our aim to present a simple explanation of the Scriptural exposition of this passage which in language readable to the lay-person reveals how the "new" interpretation is ungrammatical and therefore unbiblical.

Pastor Kleinig writes:

"In previous years, up to about 1940, this text was, in orthodox Lutheran circles, applied to all who kept on causing divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine of the Scriptures and who refused to be corrected. It made no difference who these people were, whether Lutherans or others. Nor did it matter whether the teaching they erred in was fundamental or non-fundamental, as long as it was a clear teaching of the Bible. And according to the grammatical construction of the Greek text, this application is correct. The unalterable rule reads: Theology must conform to the rules of grammar!

"In more recent years, however, due to the terrific spread of unionism in the visible church, things changed. In 1945 a Statement was issued by a group of professors and other prominent men in the Missouri Synod claiming that the text Romans 16:17,18 applied only to non-Christian false teachers, that is, only to such as erred in the great fundamental doctrines of the Bible, and hence of the true Christian faith. This statement became

known as the 'Statement of the 44'..."

(Answers to Questions on Church fellowship, F.G. Kleinig, p6)

This incidentally was also the "new" interpretation adopted by Hamann Snr. and his followers and unofficially adopted by the ELCA pastoral conference in 1948. (cf. Aspects of the Problem of Church Fellowship, GPC, Adelaide, 1963).

Since the Lord Himself says, "Thy Word is a lamp unto my feet and a light unto my path" (Ps 119: 105), it does not require a deep knowledge of theology or the Greek language to grasp the meaning of Paul's words given by inspiration. In fact Dr. Pieper writes: "The entire Christian doctrine is revealed and set forth in Scripture passages so clear that the learned and unlearned alike can understand them; they do not stand in need of 'exegesis' for explanation" (Christian Dogmatics, I p359). All that it needs to understand this passage is a simple study of the words in the English translation and their meaning will soon become clear. Sadly, it is when false teachers, claiming to be Scripture expositors, put their own meaning into clear passages of God's Word, that they soon befuddle the minds of simple lay folk. The Greek decisively condemns these false ideas and therefore it is important for us to be clear on what the original Greek says, in order that we may not be beclouded by the deceitful ideas of false teachers.

Let us therefore look at the meaning of these words in the original Greek, and see how the "new" interpretation is exposed for what it is - a devilish corruption of the Word of God. Romans 16:17-18 reads

"NOW I BESEECH YOU, BRETHREN, MARK THEM WHICH CAUSE DIVISIONS AND OFFENCES CONTRARY TO THE DOCTRINE WHICH YE HAVE LEARNED; AND AVOID THEM."

"FOR THEY THAT ARE SUCH SERVE NOT OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST, BUT THEIR OWN BELLY; AND BY GOOD WORDS AND FAIR SPEECHES DECEIVE THE HEARTS OF THE SIMPLE."

We will take this text word by word and explain its meaning; and then expose the false "new" interpretation of this passage.

NOW I BESEECH YOU, BRETHREN: Gk: "I beg of you, entreat you" - an appeal to the Christians at Rome, from the Gospel out of love to the Saviour to follow a command.

MARK: Gk: "to be on the lookout for, to be on guard for". The Lord places the duty of being on guard against false doctrine upon every individual lay person of the congregation.

THE ONES CAUSING - The Lord here is describing a general class of people i.e. the ones (whoever they may be) who are teaching false doctrine. The word CAUSE is in the durative; The Lord says to mark and avoid those who keep on (despite admonition) teaching false doctrine.

DIVISIONS - Gk: "a standing apart, division" from verb "to cut apart". It refers to the divisions which occur when a false teacher

teaches contrary to the Word of God. All such divisions occur, also within visible Christendom, not because faithful Christians cling to God's pure Word, but because there are those who refuse to teach in accordance with Scripture.

AND OFFENCES - GK: from verb "to cast a stumbling block in front of someone, to cause them to be snared". It refers to anything we may say or do whereby we cause another either to fall from the faith, to be led away from the Word of God or to have his faith endangered. All false teaching, whether it be great or small, is a danger to faith and may cause us to stumble on the pathway to eternal life (Gal 5:9). Those who teach such false doctrine, whether they be Christians or not, are endangering the faith of others. All false teaching therefore should be abhorrent to the Christian and should be avoided for the sake of his soul's salvation.

CONTRARY TO: The English word gives the impression that such false doctrine is completely opposite to the doctrine of Scripture, diametrically opposed to.

diametrically  
opposed to



alongside (para)





The Greek word is para which means "beside, alongside of". In many points such false teachers may be teaching in accordance with God's Word. But in one point or more they have departed from Scripture. Their teaching is not exactly the same as Scripture, but alongside of it.

THE DOCTRINE WHICH YE HAVE LEARNED: This refers to the DOCTRINE (teaching) which had been placed before them by the Apostles and other true teachers of God's Word. It was the teachings of the Scriptures that they were to cling to in all points.

AND AVOID THEM: Finally this powerful command of God over against those who propagate false doctrine.

Pastor Kleinig explains:

"Since the 'eye-gate' is a good 'heart-gate', to make the matter quite clear we shall draw the following little diagrams: The Greek sentence 'Ekklinete ap' autoon' (avoid them, GLW) means not only this:  that is: Lean out and away from them, namely protest and speak against their unscriptural ideas and practices, yet at the same time remain one of them (Compare 1 Timothy 5,22; Ephesians 5,7; Revelations 18,4); on the contrary, this is what it means:  that is, Completely separate yourselves from them and 'have nothing more to do with them, because you know such a man is set in his wrong way and is a sinner who condemns himself'. (Titus 3,10.11; Beck's Translation)."

(Answers to Questions on Church Fellowship, Pastor F.G. Kleinig)

Paul has made it quite clear in the context that he is dealing with spiritual, churchly matters and not with earthly, day to day association with other people. Therefore he here forbids all forms of church fellowship (altar, pulpit, prayer etc) with those belonging to false teaching churches, not everyday worldly intercourse which must take place because we exist in this world.

Now we turn to VERSE 18.

FOR: This is only a simple word in the Greek but has been greatly misunderstood. The word FOR (gar) "adduces the cause or gives the reason of a preceding statement or opinion.....3. To sentences in which something is commanded or forbidden gar annexes the reason why the thing must either be done or avoided". (Thayer)

So v.18 does not further describe those errorists of v.17 that must be avoided, but simply gives God's reason for the command previously given.

Let us now hear the reason the Lord wants us to avoid all false teachers:

FOR THEY THAT ARE SUCH SERVE NOT OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST: The word SERVE means "to serve or be subject to, to obey." One who is a slave serves his master unquestionably. The Lord here describes such false teachers in so far as such ones cause divisions and offences (verse 17). If He was making a judgement upon their Christianity, and said to us "AVOID...THOSE WHO ARE UNBELIEVERS", who would be able to follow this command because none of us can see into the other's heart to see whether he is a true Christian or not? No, the Lord is not asking us to determine whether faith is present; but is simply pronouncing His judgement upon the false teachers mentioned in v.17.

And about these He says: THEY SERVE NOT THE LORD JESUS CHRIST. In so far as they proclaim false doctrine, since such false teaching comes from Satan, they are serving him and not the Lord. Such a one may remain a true Christian, but according to his old adam he is also serving the devil. Even Paul, the greatest of the Apostles admitted that he had within himself a divided allegiance, servicing (same word as in v.18 Christ according to his spiritual nature and sin according to his carnal nature (Rom 7:25). Therefore such, though they may be true believers (it is not for the Christian to judge), are still serving sin and Satan by propogating doctrines contrary to the Word of God. Only in so far as they by their faith subverting confession or sinful way of life reveal themselves to be non-Christian can we treat them as such.

BUT THEIR OWN BELLY: Some have said: "There you are, such ones do not serve God but their own belly, i.e. they are in it simply for the money. Therefore they must be unbelievers".

But in the New Testament the word BELLY is used only three times where the context does not specify something physical, John 7:38, Phil 3:19 and the present passage. In both of these other passages the term

in a metaphorical sense refers to the innermost thought and emotional life, ones coarse and base desires. So such false teachers are serving their own sinful corrupt human reason, placing their own wicked earthly opinions above the Word of God.

If we were only to avoid the most coarse and gross false teachers (those who are in it for the money), fellowship could even be had with the likes of Arius (the false teacher in the early church who denied Christ was true God), because noone can doubt that he sincerely believed he was acting as God's servant and certainly did not propagate his false views just for the sake of filling his own stomach.

AND BY GOOD WORDS AND FAIR SPEECHES DECEIVE THE HEARTS OF THE SIMPLE: What an apt description this is of the false teacher, outwardly claiming that he is coming in the name of Christ, but by his deceptive words leading others astray from God's Word.

Surely, even to the eye of a child in the faith this text can be seen to condemn and demand separation from all false teachers, whether they be Christian or not, whether they have faith in their hearts or not.

But Satan, since he knows how important this passage is to the doctrine of Church Fellowship, has done his utmost to twist and distort it so as to agree with the thoughts of human reason. Since sinful human nature loves to compromise God's Word to give equal time to error, it is also willing to corrupt those passages which decidedly forbid fellowship with false teachers. So also with Rom 16:17,18.

The claim has been made, begun by those who took the position of the '44' in America, and supported by the views in Australia of Hamann (Snr) and the notorious papers presented at the Jindera Pastoral Conference in 1948: The command of Rom 16:17-18 can only be applied to false teachers that can be proven to be unbelievers. We therefore cannot apply it to those dear Christians in the UELCA. In order to back up their claims, they have gone to the Greek of this passage and ignoring the rules of Greek grammar made a number of false claims.

Before we look at these distortions of Scripture, it is important that we remember a vital rule of Scripture exposition. THEOLOGY MUST CONFORM TO THE RULES OF GRAMMAR. In order properly to expound the message of God to us in His Word, it is vital that we follow the rules of the Greek language in which the New Testament was originally written. Luther said: Whoever blunders in his Greek grammar, must also of necessity blunder in his theology.

The reason why the following erroneous claims have been made is because of serious blunders in Greek grammar.

A. It is claimed that the definite articles in verse 17, (Tous, Tas, and Ta) infer that these errorists were "well known" to Paul and

the congregation 'the well-known divisions and offences'. It is then presumed that Paul was referring to some well-known unbelieving false teachers (antagonistic Jews, Gnostics). Therefore, it is claimed, since Paul was speaking about unbelieving false teachers, we must apply it to such today.

To this we reply:

(a) According to Greek grammar, "The context alone can give the added connotation of the 'well-known'" (Hoerber, A Grammatical Study of Romans 16:17, p25). There is no evidence in the immediate or remote context that the article should be taken as such. Therefore it is adding to Scripture to make this claim.

(b) The definite articles (the divisions and the offences) simply place the divisions and offences into a group. It is the false teachers who cause these such divisions and offences that are to be avoided. Nowhere does Paul say that it was one specific well-known group of false teachers, set apart from other false teachers, the first false teachers to be avoided, but of all others we may remain in fellowship.

(c) All Scripture explanation based on presumption and guesswork is false and to be condemned. To presume that Paul was referring to a particular group of false teachers is taking liberties where Scripture does not speak. This is putting your own meaning into Scripture; not expounding the meaning of Scripture itself.

B. It is also claimed that verse 18 gives a further description of the false teachers to be avoided, a description which we must now use to determine who God wants us to "mark...and avoid". Since these people "serve not the Lord Jesus Christ, but their own belly" (it is presumed this means such are unbelievers), the conclusion is drawn that we are only to mark and avoid false teachers who are unbelievers.

We reply: To make such a preposterous claim completely ignores the grammar of verse 18, especially the little word FOR (gar) at the beginning of the verse. This word (FOR) gives the reason for the command given in the previous verse. It tells us why we are to mark and avoid false teachers. It does not give to us a further description of the false teachers whereby we are to determine whether they are Christian or not and should be avoided or not.

To illustrate: A farmer is speaking to his son. He gives a command, and then gives the reason.

v.17: Command: Please son, Go and chip the weeds out of the crop,  
v.18: Reason: because they are causing great damage to the plants.

The father tells his son to do something, and then gives his reason for the command.

Is the son to say: "Yes, I am to chip out the weeds, but only the ones that are causing great damage to the plants; the others I may leave"? Definitely not! V.18 does not give the son a further description of the weeds to be chipped out, but only the father's reason for the command. The son is to chip the weeds out, all the weeds; he is not to ask: "Will this weed cause great damage; will this one not?"

So the Lord simply gives to us a command in Romans 16:17, "Mark... and avoid" false teachers. This is quite simple to do, for the Lord determines what we are to look for with the words "the ones causing divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine ye have learned". We are to examine their teaching, and if they stubbornly cling to teachings contrary to God's Word, they are to be avoided. It is left to God in the final analysis in verse 18 to make His judgement upon such ones whether they have the Christian faith in the heart. This is of great interest to us for it gives the reason for the previous commands, but does not enlighten us further as to the criterion we are to use to judge those to be marked and avoided.

So the antisciptural claim that the command of verse 17 applies only to those who are described by v.18 (unbelievers), ignores the rules of Greek grammar and involves a dangerous blunder in expounding of Scripture. Such who deliberately twist the Word of God are in danger of the condemnation of the Lord (Rev 22:18-19).

C. Finally, it is claimed: the words "to serve not the Lord Jesus Christ, but their own belly" surely could only apply to unbelievers. Surely Christians in other false teaching churches could not be said to "serve not the Lord Jesus Christ", nor be termed "belly worshippers".

We reply:

(a) In the first place, we do not make this judgement over against false teachers in other churches (whether they be Christians or not); God does. Surely He is wiser than us and is able to make any such judgement, since He alone knows whether faith exists in the heart.

(b) As already stated, the word SERVE means "to serve or be subject to, to obey". The word is used elsewhere in Scripture as a noun to describe a slave, who serves his master unquestionably. Can false teachers, who propagate false doctrines be said to be giving slavlike obedience to Christ? Is God highly pleased with their flouting of His Word? Definitely not! In so far as they teach false doctrine they are serving the devil. But that such false teachers may be still true Christians in their hearts, though misled by false doctrine, is made clear by the Apostle Paul (Rom 7:25), when he describes himself as having a divided allegiance, serving (same word as in Rom 16:18) Christ according to his spiritual nature and sin according to his carnal nature. In such false teachers, their old adam̄ misleads them into teaching contrary to God's Word.

(c) The word BELLY is an interesting one in the Greek. Its primary usages are as 1. "stomach" and 2. "womb". The third usage is "ones inner feelings", "ones inner carnal desires"; which certainly fits the text and the context. This is the same meaning as used ~~in~~ John 7:38 and Phil 3:19. Therefore to claim that such false teachers "are self-servers and perhaps, gluttonous" (as claimed by the '44') or are in the ministry to fill their bellies (for the money) is not textual. In so far as false teachers proclaim false doctrine, they are not serving the Lord Jesus, or the new man implanted by the Holy Ghost, but their sinful carnal desires, their old adam and their corrupt human reason.

(d) To claim that verse 18 can only refer to gross unbelievers and that we are then to avoid only such false teachers who are unbelievers, places Christians into a difficult predicament. Since only the Lord can determine who are unbelievers, since one man can not look into another's heart, how can God expect a human being to determine who are unbelievers in their hearts and to be avoided; and who are Christians? This would be impossible. Since the Lord Himself has said that man cannot judge another's Christianity unless outwardly he shows himself to be an unbeliever: surely He is not so foolish as to demand such judgement for any of His commands to be obeyed!

Thus the ELCR has included in the doctrinal paragraphs of its constitution the following statement:

"The command contained in v.17, namely 'Skopein...kai ekklinete ap autoon' (in the sense of 'watch out for....and have no church brotherly fellowship with them', i.e. altar, pulpit, and prayer-fellowship, or any other form of communio and co-operatio in sacris, e.g. joint missions, Christian education, student welfare and joint services) applies immediately and with full force to any and all teachers and their supporters (Lutherans and others alike) who, despite repeated admonition (Titus 3:10), keep on teaching and/or practising contrary to any doctrine of Holy Scripture, irrespective of whether or not they still cling to and confess all the fundamental articles of the historic Christian Faith and, in addition, also lead, as far as men can judge, a holy life."

Finally we conclude with the excellent words of Pastor Romoser:

"God has spoken in these verses and He has spoken clearly. He is in earnest in His Word. 1 Peter 4:11, 'If any man speak, let him speak as the oracles of God.' Jer 23:28 ff: 'He that hath My Word let him speak My Word faithfully, etc.' 1 Cor 1:10: 'Now I beseech you brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you; but that ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgement.' John 8:31f: 'If ye continue in My Word, then are ye My disciples indeed, and ye shall know the truth.' Matt 28:20: 'Teaching them to observe all things.' And so the passages are multiplied. God is concerned that His Word be held and taught



clearly and fully because of His holy wisdom and because of His infinite love for sinners, because He knows that each single error in teaching His Word is potentially destructive of faith, capable of leading men away from their eternal Saviour. He tells us that 'a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump', that the word of errorists 'doth eat like a cancer'. Therefore His earnestness in Rom 16:17, that hard command, and His stern judgement upon errorists in v.18".

(Notes on Romans 16:17,18, Reprinted in The Faithful Word, 1960, N.3, p4).

Those therefore who accept the "new" interpretation of this passage stand condemned by the clear Word of Scripture. They are adopting views contrary to the Word of God and as such must themselves be marked and avoided. It is easy to see why those who have accepted the "new" interpretation are so easily led on the pathway of unionism and compromise, and are so willing to give away the teachings of God's Word for the sake of uniting outwardly with false teachers.

CHAPTER X.

THE ADOPTION OF THE THESES OF AGREEMENT - A MASTERSTROKE OF COMPROMISE BASED ON THE EVIL OPEN QUESTIONS PRINCIPLE (1948-1959).

During the period 1947 - 1953 a series of meetings took place attended by the Intersynodical committees of both churches. Since the ELCA had now changed its official position on Rom 16:17,18 and the matter of Prayer Fellowship, much more "progress" was made in dealing with the points of difference that existed. These meetings were responsible for the drawing up of a series of statements or theses which were given the Title: Theses of Agreement.

Altogether this Document comprised nine articles, as follows:-

- I. Theses on Principles Governing Church Fellowship.
- II. Theses on Joint Prayer and worship.
- III. Theses on Conversion.
- IV. Theses on Election.
- V. Theses on the Church.
- VI. Theses on the Office of the Ministry.
- VII. Theses on Eschatological Matters.
- VIII. Theses on Scripture and Inspiration.
- IX. The Lutheran Confessions.

As well an Appendix was drawn up dealing with a number of practical matters; Lodges, Marriage and Betrothal, and Marriage with a deceased wife's sister.

This document is highly regarded by many from both former churches. It was claimed to have settled the differences between the two churches in the matters with which it dealt. In fact Dr. Stolz, General President of the UELCA, in his 1953 General Convention Report stated:

"The Committee is privileged to report the most outstanding event not only of the last synodical period but of many decades, yea of the history of the Lutheran Church in Australia: AGREEMENT IN DOCTRINE AND PRACTICE BETWEEN THE INTERSYNODICAL COMMITTEES OF THE UELCA AND ELCA REACHED".

Therefore the BIG QUESTION we raise is: DID THIS DOCUMENT SETTLE THE MATTERS OF DOCTRINAL DIFFERENCE WHICH EXISTED? Can the Theses of Agreement be said to have brought about a oneness of faith between the UELCA and ELCA?

Sadly, we give the answer NO to this question, for not only did the differences remain in the matter of Church Fellowship and Open Questions but in many others as well. The Theses of Agreement was based on the evi. OPEN QUESTIONS principle. It was a YES-NO statement, which

was happily accepted by both sides with the cry: "Now we are agreed", but which allowed those accepting it to retain their former ideas and opinions in doctrinal matters. It has been said: TWO MEN MAY SAY EXACTLY THE SAME THING BUT MEAN IT IN AN ENTIRELY DIFFERENT WAY. Such can also be said of the Theses of Agreement. It is drawn up in such an ambiguous fashion, using double-tongued statements, that men with entirely different doctrinal positions are able to accept it, but still retain their former positions. Those within the UELCA still held to their former errors, but claimed to accept the Theses of Agreement. The ELCA men rejoiced with the cry, "We have won them over. They now teach as we do." However, they were simply deceived into believing that there was doctrinal unity, without realizing that all along the differences still existed.

These differences in doctrine continued right up to the time of Union. They were never properly settled. Therefore outward union did take place, but not on the basis of complete unity in Scripture doctrine and practice, as the Scriptures and the former ELSA taught.

Even the "highly respected" theologian of the UELCA, Dr. H. Sasse, said as much about the Theses of Agreement.

Pastor F.W. Noack (formerly of Swanreach, South Australia) writes:

"On June 19, 1966, that is only a few months before the amalgamation of the two churches was to take place, Dr. Sasse claimed, in a letter which he sent overseas, that the Australian Theses of Agreement were a COMPROMISE! He wrote:...(German quoted, GLW)

"'In Australia I had the freedom to follow up the matter. The fruit is the contribution which I was able to make towards the Theses. You are right, that they are a compromise'".

(The Lutheran Church of Australia, An Examination, p13).

So here we have one of the chief architects of the Theses of Agreement claiming it was a compromise. Surely this learned gentleman is in a position to know.

In condemnation of the ambiguous and two-tongued language of the Theses of Agreement, we bring some strong words of orthodox teachers of the past.

Luther wrote in condemnation of the errors of Erasmus:

"So great a rhetorician and theologian (as Erasmus) ought not only to know, but to act according to, the teaching of Fabius: 'An ambiguous word should be avoided as a reef'. Where it happens now and then inadvertently, it may be pardoned, but where it is sought for designedly and purposely, it deserves no pardon whatever, but

justly merits the abhorrence of everyone...

"For what else would result if the custom of speaking ambiguously and craftily in religion, in law, and in all important matters were adopted than a thoroughly confused babel, so that finally noone could understand the other?"

(St.L.XVIII: 1996)

Dr. Pieper wrote:

"Christians are to use the same words also in the same sense. Agreement in words with disagreement in meaning is altogether contrary to the unity God calls for, and to seek such a 'unity' ('we agree to disagree') is immoral, a trifling with sacred, divine things, which is unseemly for Christians."

(Christian Dogmatics, III p426)

Dr. Luther again,

"On the contrary, one who has fallen prey to a perverted understanding should not be tolerated even when he uses correct words and zealously appeals to Scripture."

(ST.L.x, 1143f)

Dr. Walther states:

"Now there is no doubt that these men wish to convert people by using such false terms. They believe that they can convert men by concealing things from them or by presenting matters in a manner that is pleasing to men as they are by nature. They are like sorry physicians who do not like to prescribe a bitter medicine to delicate patients, or if they do prescribe it, they add so much sugar to it that the patient does not taste the bitter medicine, with the result that the effect is spoiled. Accordingly preachers who do not clearly and plainly proclaim the Gospel (here used in the sense of the whole Word of God, GLW), which is offensive to the world, are not faithful in the discharge of their ministry and inflict great injury on men's souls. Instead of advancing Christians in the knowledge of the pure doctrine, they allow them to grope in the dark, nurse false imaginations in them, and speed them on in their false and dangerous path."

(Law and Gospel, p276)

#### THE EVIL OPEN QUESTIONS PRINCIPLE IN THE THESES OF AGREEMENT.

As we saw in Chapter III, one of the chief differences existing between the ELCA and UELCA was the evil modern Theory of "OPEN QUESTIONS" One would therefore expect that a special Article would have been drawn up dealing with this matter. But no; the term "Open Questions" is not even mentioned in the Theses of Agreement. Veiled allusions are made to

it in several places. In Article I (Theses on Principles Governing Church Fellowship), Paragraph 4(e), it is cunningly stated:

"In case of differences in exegesis (Scripture exposition, GLW) that affects doctrine, agreement on the basis of God's Word must be sought by combined, prayerful examination of the passage or passages in question."

We now let Pastor Kleinig continue:

"So far, so good. But now listen carefully to what follows:

'If this does not lead to agreement, because no unanimity (complete agreement, all being of the same mind and the same judgement, compare 1 Cor 1,10) has been reached on the clarity (clearness) of the passage or passages in question, and hence on the stringency (binding nature) and adequacy (sufficiency) of the Scriptural proof, divergent views (remember this refers to doctrine) arising from such differences of interpretation are not divisive of church fellowship.' (emphasis ours).

"Here we surely see the cloven foot-prints of the devil. This quotation from the Theses of Agreement is quite a startling and at the same time satanically clever statement, for it provides full play for the notorious 'Open Questions Theory', which not only permits, but also legalizes and condones differences in doctrine in the same church body, and not only flatly contradicts but also abolishes the rule of Scripture **THAT YE ALL SPEAK THE SAME THING, 1 Cor. 1:10**".

(Answers to Questions on Church Fellowship, etc., p. 2,3)

Again, in regard to certain practices, as for example united prayer with people of heterodox denominations, these things are placed 'into the area of casuistics' (a cover-word for 'Open Questions') and are left to the conscience of the individual.

The terrible thing is that a number of otherwise conservative Lutherans have failed to detect this evil theory. Rev. K. Marquart writes:

"The anomaly was corrected, by the way, in our Theses of Agreement, which clearly state that all doctrines of Holy Writ are equally binding (1/4) and that no differences, even in Bible interpretation, may be tolerated if they in any way impair the teaching of Scripture and Confession".

(A Christian Handbook on Vital Issues, p. 434).

Pastor Thos. Dudley in an article of the Reporter, the official journal of the Federation of Conservative Lutherans, states that "there is nothing inherently wrong with the Theses of Agreement".

Among other errors, it contains this devilish "Open Questions" Theory.

We now hand over to Pastor Kleinig who examines the so-called safeguards to this thesis and points out the loopholes, which many conservatives fail to see:

"Now it would appear that someone, probably a member of the ELCA Committee, had some qualms of conscience concerning that ungodly statement in the above-quoted paragraph, for the following was then added:

'Providing that

- (i) there be readiness in principle to submit to the authority of the Word of God;
- (ii) thereby no clear Word of Scripture is denied, contradicted or ignored;
- (iii) such divergent views in no wise impair, infringe upon, or violate the central doctrine of Holy Scripture, justification by faith in Jesus Christ;
- (iv) nothing be taught contrary to the publica doctrina (Public doctrine) of the Lutheran Church as laid down in its Confessions;
- (v) such divergent views are not propagated as the publica doctrina of the Church and in no wise impair the doctrine of Holy Writ'. (Underlining ours, F.G.K.)

"Right from the outset we would like to say that all these provisos or safeguards, as they are also called, are quite beside the point and cannot solve anything unless there is first of all complete agreement on the authority and clarity of the Word of God, especially on that concerning the passage or passages in question. But the very fact there are 'divergent views' with regard to the DOCTRINE contained in the passages in question indisputably shows that such complete agreement is not in existence. What one holds to be clear and certain, another one regards as unclear and uncertain.

"So let us have a close look at these provisos or safeguards, which we shall quote once more:

'Providing that

- (i) there be readiness in principle to submit to the authority of the Word of God';

'Comment: Whenever this time-honored phrase 'submit in principle' is used, we may be quite certain that such submission is not 'in all things'. We recall that at the beginning of this century, when the Hermannsburg Mission controversy occupied the centre of the stage in the Lutheran Church in Australia, the cry of the Heidenreichs and some of their supporters was: 'Yes of course we agree in principle, but not in this particular case'. Today even such people

as the 'Jehovah's Witnesses' will readily 'in principle' submit to the authority of Scripture, provided they are permitted to interpret the Word in their own way!

"So then proviso (i) is quite worthless!

(ii) 'thereby no clear Word of Scripture is denied, contradicted or ignored';

"Comment: But supposing no 'unanimity' can be reached on the 'clarity' of the passage or passages in question, what then? Again, nothing would be solved, and the matter remains an OPEN QUESTION!

(iii) 'such divergent views in no wise impair, infringe upon, or violate the central doctrine of Holy Scripture, justification by grace through faith in Jesus Christ';

"Comment: To say the least, this sounds remarkable indeed! Did not the framers of this so-called 'safeguard' realize that ultimately every deviation from the Word of God does and must affect the 'central doctrine of Holy Scripture'? Did not St. Paul under inspiration warn Gal. 5,9: 'A little leaven leaveneth the whole lump'? and again, in 2 Tim 2,17: 'Their word will eat as doth a canker'? The only thing we can say in this connection is 'Poor show'!

(iv) 'nothing be taught contrary to the "publica doctrina" (public doctrine) of the Lutheran Church as laid down in its Confessions';

"Comment: This proviso indeed exhibits the cunning of the devil! At first sight it sounds so orthodox, so self-evident, so correct! The Book of Concord of 1580 which contains the Confessions of the orthodox Lutheran Church indeed guards purity of doctrine! But we must not overlook the fact that the Lutheran Confessions deal mainly with points of doctrine which had been in dispute prior to and up to that time, namely 1580! But they contain no special and separate articles on such matters as the 'Inspiration and Inerrancy of Scripture' or on 'Evolution', 'Creation', 'Church Fellowship' and other items which the devil up to that time had not yet raised within the visible Christian Church. Now comes the important questions: Since these matters are not dealt with and settled once and for all in and by the Lutheran Confessions, is it then permissible to raise and debate these matters today?

"It would certainly seem so; for ever since the formation of the LCA these matters have been debated there, and are not really settled yet. Ever and again the appeal is made to 'brotherly love' to bear a little longer with such as hold 'divergent views'. But it is a 'brotherly love' which Luther calls by its right name! In his famous Exposition of Galatians he writes: 'Cursed into the depths of hell be that kind of love which wants to exist at the expense of purity of doctrine, before which everything must give

way, be it love, or apostle, or angel from heaven, or whatever else it may be'.

"In 1932 the formerly orthodox Missouri Synod adopted a very fine Statement known as the Brief Statement, drawn up by one of their best ever Scripture theologians, Dr. Francis Pieper. In this Brief Statement all the false doctrines which Satan has introduced into the visible Christian Church since 1580 are dealt with in a very efficient manner and rejected, especially also the false teachings with regard to the Inspiration and Inerrancy of Scripture, the Creation, as well as Church Fellowship.

"If anyone wants to convince himself as to whether the Australian Merger has the correct Scriptural teaching on these matters, let him try to get the LCA to adopt the Brief Statement as part of its doctrinal confession. We can guarantee a negative result!

(v) 'such divergent views are not propagated as the publica doctrina of the Church and in no wise impair the doctrine of Holy Writ'.

"Comment: But what guarantee is there that this will not be done? Can it be expected that a teacher in the Church who is convinced in his own mind that his 'divergent view' is right will remain silent about it? Did not the Lord Himself say: 'Of the abundance of the heart his mouth speaketh'? (Luke 6,45; Matt 12,34)."

In order to prove that the "OPEN QUESTIONS" principle as allowed by Paragraph I, 4(e) of the Theses of Agreement is now in practice in the LCA, Pastor Kleinig goes on to quote several examples of divergence in public doctrine by leading men in that Church body.

"And has this not been done already? A Seminary professor (Dr. Pahl, GLW) some time ago claimed in a public lecture in Adelaide that the Creation story as related in Genesis 1 is not to be regarded as literal, but is to be taken pictorially! That means, that God's own record of the Creation did not really happen in the manner as recorded in the first chapter of the Bible!

"Then, in a Brochure entitled Basic Studies in Christianity and printed by the Lutheran Publishing House in Adelaide another Seminary professor declares that the Pentateuch, i.e., the first five books of the Bible were 'written down by various writers'; this evidently is a reference to the liberal and modernistic J.E.D.P. theory, which claims that what we regard as the Five Books of Moses were not written by Moses at all, but by various unknown writers, labeled J,E,D,P by the liberals; furthermore, the claim is made that the Pentateuch was not completed till about 1100 years after Moses' death.

"After referring to the 'various writers' of the Pentateuch the Adelaide professor also makes a somewhat disparaging remark about 'others



holding that Moses was the author of the whole Torah! concluding this statement (as you see) with an exclamation mark, which in this connection signifies as much as 'Well, just fancy that!'

"Furthermore, the Lutheran, official Church Paper of the LCA, of 26/3/73 contained the address delivered by a third Seminary professor on the occasion of the opening of the new school year at the Seminary. In that address the speaker twice made reference to the 'Second Isaiah', a term applied by the liberals to the last twenty-six chapters of the book of the prophet Isaiah, which these fellows claim was not written by Isaiah, but by some unknown writer. However, since they do not know this writer's name, they conveniently call him the 'Second Isaiah'. But the fact is that in the New Testament a number of Old Testament passages which occur within the last twenty-six chapters of the Book of Isaiah are very definitely ascribed to the prophet Isaiah, and not to a mythical 'Second Isaiah'. Compare Isa.40,3 with Matt 3,3; Isa 53,7.8 with Acts 8,28.32.33.

"Now supposing such professors are then confronted with 'Holy Writ' to show them that their 'divergent views' do 'impair' Scripture but they then reply: 'The passage you show us lacks 'clarity', hence it does not convince us that we are wrong, where do we go from there?

"Moreover, what would professors who hold such 'divergent' and liberal views teach their students?

"That the principles enunciated in Article I, paragraph 4(e) of the Theses of Agreement were in operation already before the actual amalgamation of the UELCA and the ELCA is clearly evidenced by the Minutes of a Pastoral Conference held at Concordia Memorial College, Toowoomba, Qld., on August 15th-17th, 1966. This was one of the last Pastoral Conferences of the now defunct ELCA Qld. District, and was attended by the Rev. Drs. H. Sasse and H. Hamann Jnr., both of Adelaide. Both of these learned Doctors held forth with regard to their ideas concerning 'Inerrancy of Scripture', 'Creation', 'Genesis 1-3' and related issues. When one of the pastors present asked one of the learned Doctors whether according to his (the Doctor's) view it would be permissible to take also the Fall account in some figurative sense, so that there might not have been a real tree with real fruit, or a real snake involved, the learned Rev. Doctor (according to the Conference Minutes) answered in the affirmative and also questioned whether there was a real Garden of Eden. 'These things are quite possibly figurative' he said. To the astonishment of some of the pastors present the learned Doctors maintained that all these views are permitted by the Theses of Agreement, and, of course, not church divisive. Do you notice Satan's cunning trap, Article I, paragraph 4(e), in action?

"Also, as the Minutes point out, even though some of those pastors present 'declared that they had never before understood the Theses to permit such views', they did nothing about it (they really could not,

since they had already accepted the Document of Union which embodies the Theses of Agreement); on the contrary, they expressed (by resolution) their thanks to the Rev. Doctors Hamann Jr. and Sasse for their presence and the profitable discussion!

"And, to top it all, the rather stupid Chairman of the Conference expressed his pleasure regarding the discussion, and also spoke of his thankfulness for the great degree of agreement which was more than he had hoped for at the outset!

"Well, there you are! And whosoever still has hopes that things will improve in the Merger, is either very ignorant and lacks 'spiritual judgement' (Compare 1 Cor 2,14.15.16) or he simply refuses to heed what God has to say on this matter, and thus brings himself under the condemnation announced in such passages as Eph.5,6; Col 3,6; Heb 10, 26.27. But, then, that is their business, and they will some day have to face up to it!

"So then the provision for 'divergent views' in doctrinal matters without in any way endangering church fellowship was well and truly laid down in the Theses of Agreement, and under these circumstances, each of the five so-called 'safeguards' which were unctiously added to paragraph I, 4(e) are plain 'humbug', and each one of them is actually a 'dud'.

"Moreover, that the 'Open Questions' Theory of the former UELCA, and which allowed for 'divergent views' in matters of doctrine, was actually sheltered by paragraph I, 4(e), is very plainly shown by a section of the former UELCA's official Statement read at the Albury Convention of the ELCA in 1959. There we read the following:

'We earnestly beg you, therefore, to consider whether the present situation is not analogous to that provided for in Thesis I, 4 of our Theses of Agreement....We submit that the provisions laid down in this Thesis in section (e) are applicable to the question of co-operation dividing us....We now ought to be able to affirm conjoint in this matter of co-operation, as it affects us, 'divergent views arising from such differences of interpretation are not divisive of church fellowship'.

"Again, in 1963 the then President-General of the former UELCA wrote concerning a statement made in that year by a pastor of the former ELCA:

'The writer (the above-mentioned pastor) states that the theory of 'Open Questions' is unscriptural. He should read his Theses of Agreement, which also have something to say regarding this matter'.

"The UELCA President-General was of course referring to Article I, 4(e), which safeguards once and for always the principle of the 'open questions'.

"This is now becoming more and more evident in LCA circles. And because this false, unscriptural principle has made its home in the Merger

any real doctrinal discipline is in the last instance quite impossible, since divergent interpretations in matters of doctrine are not divisive of church fellowship.

"Moreover, any LCA people who under such conditions are still hoping for improvement are very naive, and are living in a 'fool's paradise'. As the late Professor Koch used to say, with respect to such cases. 'Whoever believes such things, deserves a penny!'"

"And we have no doubts whatsoever that Satan by the successful inclusion of Article I, 4(e) in the Theses of Agreement has scored a major and decisive victory!"

(Answers to Questions on Church Fellowship, F.G. Kleinig).

Furthermore, to examine this highly important matter, we present portion of an article written by Pastor Bryce Winter entitled: THE DEVIL'S HOOK IN THE THESES OF AGREEMENT - THE SOURCE OF THE TROUBLE IN THE LUTHERAN CHURCH OF AUSTRALIA. (STEADFAST, January 1980, pp10-12)

From the beginning of the ELCR in 1965 until now, like voices crying in the wilderness, we of the ELCR have testified that the Lutheran Church of Australia is heterodox (false teaching) because--- (1) none of the doctrinal differences existing between the ELCA and UELCA were settled in a Scriptural manner before the union, but a wicked compromise took place; (2) the OFFICIAL doctrinal basis for the union, the Theses of Agreement, in clever high-flown double talk, contains, besides many other errors, the EVIL GODLESS OPEN QUESTIONS PRINCIPLE, to wit, "In cases of differences in exegesis that affects doctrine...divergent views arising from such differences of interpretation are not divisive of church fellowship" (Paragraph I(4)e. Emphasis added, BW).

Here we surely see the cloven foot-prints of the devil. This evil theory not only permits, but also legalizes and condones differences in doctrine in the same church body, and not only flatly contradicts, but also abolishes the rule of Scripture THAT YE ALL SPEAK THE SAME THING, 1 Cor 1:10.

Now some of the conservatives in the LCA are beginning to realize that in the Inerrancy and Genesis statements there are some "loopholes". However, we contend that in all the official statements concerning matters that once divided the ELCA and the UELCA the evil Open Questions principle: "We agree to disagree agreeably" is in action through ambiguous, high-flown, difficult language, often involving such complicated and difficult theological terms that the average layman (and often the naive conservative pastor) has no idea what they are saying. Worse still, the liberal theologians who are also involved in drawing up these evil statements often express their thoughts in such a veiled and camouflaged manner that unless a person knows their doctrinal stand and realizes what they are aiming at, he is apt to be deceived.

Again, they act in a cunning manner by stating the Scriptural truth at the beginning of the statement so that the conservatives think they have won the day. But later on, clothed in ambiguous language come the anti-scriptural ideas of the liberals. Pastor Kleinig has demonstrated this to be the case in an excellent fashion on numerous occasions.

For the present we simply intend to prove that paragraph I 4(e) of the Theses of Agreement contains the evil Open Questions Theory. Now it is true: there are true Open Questions. These are questions "which Scripture answers either not at all or not clearly" (Brief Statement, 1932 section 44). But what is condemned by Holy Scripture is the erroneous teaching that doctrines contained or indicated in Scripture are declared "free" or "open", so that each person can please himself what he believes teaches or practises. Hence such people regard such differing opinions in matters of Scripture doctrine as not being divisive of church fellowship. The following are wrongly treated as open questions in the LCA: the doctrines of the Church and Ministry, the Office of the Keys, the Future Millennium, the doctrine of Sunday, the Antichrist, first Resurrection, Conversion of Israel, Church Government, Predestination, Kenosis, Inspiration, Creation and the word Day in Genesis One.

We contend that the ambiguous language and double-talk based on the evil Open Questions principle was used deliberately by the liberals when drawing up these statements in order to deceive not only the lay people but also naive conservative pastors. Dr. Luther writes concerning such evil people:

"Fabius teaches that an ambiguous word must be avoided like a reef; if we undesignedly happen to use such a word, it may be overlooked. BUT INTENTIONALLY AND PURPOSELY TO CHOOSE SUCH A WORD IS INEXCUSABLE AND DESERVING OF THE MOST RIGHTEOUS HATRED OF ALL....For what else would result if the custom of speaking ambiguously and craftily in religion, in law, and in all important matters were adopted than a thoroughly confused babel, so that finally no-one could understand the other?" (Quoted in Christian Dogmatics, Pieper III, 426).

Dr. F. Pieper states stern words for these types of devil's theologians as follows:

"Then the Apostle continues: 'But that ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgement.'....Here he clearly says that Christians are to use the same words also IN THE SAME SENSE. Agreement in words with disagreement in meaning is altogether CONTRARY TO THE UNITY God calls for, and to seek such a 'unity' ('we agree to disagree') is IMMORAL, A TRIFLING WITH SACRED, DIVINE THINGS, WHICH IS UNSEEMLY FOR CHRISTIANS". (Ibid. III, 426. Emphasis added, BW).

Again, Pieper writes: "The use of ambiguous terms is forbidden by the moral code" (ibid. II, 497).

Dr. C.F.W. Walther urges true Christians to note that "When two men seem to say the same thing, the meaning is not always the same". (L.u.W. XIV, 1868, quoted in C.T.M. 1939)

Therefore, in order to avoid ambiguous statements it is necessary to include positive and negative statements.

By the use of "yes-no" statements the LCA grants error the equal right with truth and in doing so RENOUNCES THE TRUTH itself.

That is why Dr. F. Pieper described TRUE ORTHODOXY as follows:

"We Missourians (old orthodox Missouri Synod, BW) consider a church body, as a body, ORTHODOX only when the pure doctrine is proclaimed from ALL pulpits and professors' chairs and in ALL writings that become public within the communion, and when, on the other hand, EVERY ERRONEOUS TEACHING IS STOPPED in the manner prescribed by God AS SOON AS IT MAKES ITS APPEARANCE. We Missourians must and will be satisfied to be judged by that doctrine that is held by our individual pastors, whether it be in San Francisco or New York, St. Paul or New Orleans, or in our periodicals, whether they be published officially or unofficially. If it were shown us that even BUT ONE pastor were preaching false doctrine, or that even but ONE periodical were in the service of false doctrine, and we would not put a STOP to this false doctrine, we would thereby have then CEASED to be an ORTHODOX SYNOD, and would have become a UNIONISTIC FELLOWSHIP. In short, it is the earmark of an orthodox fellowship that throughout it ONLY the pure doctrine is not only officially recognized, BUT ALSO ACTUALLY PREVAILS". (Lehre und Wehre, XXXVI, 261f).

Because the Theses contained the evil Open Questions principle Pastor Kleinig rejected them as antiscritural. Referring to this he wrote in a public letter circulated to all the pastors of the ELCA:

"That is one paragraph I would for my person never subscribe to, as I believe in that paragraph is the nigger in the wood-pile.... As far as I personally am concerned, I believe that the real and essential difference between the two Lutheran Church-bodies in Australia consists in their differing attitude towards the 'Open Questions' affair, and unless this problem is solved in accordance with the Scriptures, there can be no true and lasting unity between them. And that means, the UELCA will have to alter its unscriptural and un-Lutheran attitude with respect to them. I AM REALLY AMAZED THAT IN THE THESES OF AGREEMENT THERE IS NO PARAGRAPH DEALING WITH THIS VITAL AND BASIC MATTER.... It certainly seems to me that it is on the basis of the 'Open Questions' theory that the UELCA refuses the idea of being tied down by the Scripture texts which rule out Unionism in any shape or form. And so it remains a matter of the pup chasing its own tail". (Emphasis added, BW. Letter to Koch, 3rd September 1962, page 5, Pastor Kleinig).

That is why the late Pastor H.E. Temme did not vote for the Theses of Agreement. On the 12th September, 1962 he wrote to Pastor Kleinig:

"I do not know whether you know that in 1954 I was the only pastor (and the Adelaide College Assembly Hall was almost full at a General Pastoral Conference) who stood up when the chairman asked who was against the adoption of the Union Theses. My reasons are enclosed herewith. I felt pretty blue for a while. I later found that Dr. Zschech, Hassold, MacKenzie, Brinkworth, Kriewaldt, late T.W. Lutze were right behind me. But I was the only one who stood up".

On the 13th September, 1962, Pastor C. Priebbenow, then of Lowood, Queensland, wrote to Pastor Kleinig:

"Your hit at the par. I 4(e) of the Theses was well-made....What seems needed is that a detailed criticism of I 4(e) is made. (It need not be long), a re-wording of how it ought to read and sent along to our Intersynodical committee with the demand for its consideration. It might well be accompanied with the demand that Theses be drawn up also on the Open Questions principle, together with antitheses. That would knock the whole union business into a cocked hat, show up the UELCA in their true colours before all and sundry".

It is very clear that the UELCA did not give up their wrong position as it was claimed by the leaders in the ELCA. This is proven not only by recent history, but also by an article in the Lutheran Herald (official church paper of the UELCA) which makes the following point:

"A question that may come into the minds of some people is: 'Who gave in?' This is a question which really cannot be put, because the concluding negotiations were not carried out in this spirit. Both groups have come forward to meet each other, respecting each other's differing viewpoints on the extent to which it is possible to co-operate with Lutheran bodies beyond our shores, and willing to face these questions together in the future".  
(February 13, 1965, page 37, emphasis added, BW).

In effect, this is the same Open Questions principle as in the Theses of Agreement.

On February 26, 1965, an ELCA pastor, Pastor Glen Zweck, then of Rockhampton, Queensland, also realized the ambiguous statements in the Theses of Agreement, as well as the evil Open Questions principle. He writes:

"I have previously mentioned that the Theses of Agreement suffer from ambiguity, which leads to widely differing interpretations.... In other words, there is good reason to believe that the Theses of Agreement by no means have settled the points with which they deal" (Lutheran Union, G. Zweck, page 8).

Again he writes:

"There is plenty of evidence to prove that the UELCA believes that 4(e) of the Theses on Principles Governing Church Fellowship endorses their stand on Open Questions. Only lack of time prevents me from listing it. But the UELCA has consistently taken this attitude: Since you cannot convince us from Scripture that we are wrong, therefore this matter on which we cannot agree is an Open Question, and is not divisive of church fellowship". (Ibid, p.9).

Dr. S. Hebart stated the position the UELCA took into the union in a paper entitled: "The Statement of Minimum Requirements for Church fellowship of the UELCA is in complete harmony with the teaching and practice of the New Testament, the Early Church and the Lutheran Reformation". Here the same evil Open Questions principle is clearly stated, in very learned and theological language we might say.

Here Dr. Hebart takes issue with the ELCA which demanded that "Church fellowship presupposes the common acceptance and confession of all doctrines revealed in the Holy Scriptures." (Page 14)

On the other hand he claims, "that on the other hand they (the Apostles, GLW) clearly extend tolerance to those who differ from them in non-fundamentals, always provided that such a difference does not interfere with the foundation of faith or any organic part thereof. In other words, beyond the sphere of fundamentals certain differences are possible which are by no means divisive of church fellowship, for charity is the perfect bond". (Page 10)

Thirty-one pages are spent in justifying this unscriptural claim, showing that it was firmly held by the UELCA.

Dr. Lohe (General President of the UELCA) presented the position of the UELCA to the General Meeting of the Australian Lutheran Association (ALA), October 29, 1961. He wrote in his report:

"The UELCA has always taken the attitude that the 'satus est' ('it is enough') implies that in the fundamental doctrines of salvation there must be agreement....

"The notion that those who wish to enjoy church fellowship must agree in all points of doctrine rests upon an erroneous interpretation of 1 Cor 1:10 and similar texts....but here we have an indication as to the kind of doctrines on which there must be agreement, namely the articles of fundamental importance, but certainly not those of non-fundamental importance. Amongst these we find points concerning which in the opinion of some there must be full agreement, unless one is willing to bear the odium of unionism....More important, however....is the lack of Scriptural proof for both the contention that church fellowship can be established and maintained only when there is absolutely complete agreement in every non-fundamental truth; and for the claim that

one may have prayer fellowship only with such persons as differ from him in no point of doctrine."

(Minutes of ALA, Walla Walla, October 29, 1961).

So here we see that the amalgamation of the two churches was based on this evil OPEN QUESTIONS PRINCIPLE, that same false teaching held by the former UELCA. One of the Conservative ministers in the LCA, Pastor F.W. Noack, formerly of Swan Reach, S.A., comments:

"Thus, at the time of the amalgamation, and even before that, there were differing theologies among Lutherans in Australia: some people regarding as open questions matters which others believed were settled by Holy Scripture.

"Members of the Church were not in general informed of this officially, the impression being given that there was true unity. We were given the impression that in the new church we would have the same doctrine as we had had. Now many discover that they are in a church which has differing theological attitudes....

"It is clear that there are differing theologies in the LCA, some people treating as open questions matters that others believe are settled by clear teaching of God's Word."

(Reporter, June 1979, pp 6,7)

That this evil OPEN QUESTIONS principle is in practice in the LCA today, is clearly evident from the many differing opinions, publicly stated in matters of doctrine which depart from the orthodox Lutheran position. Amongst many such matters where teachings contrary to Scripture are tolerated, we may mention:-

1. Attitude towards LWF membership;
2. Attitude towards church fellowship with false teaching churches, joint prayer, minister's fraternals;
3. Attitude towards Genesis 1, and the word "day" in this chapter;
4. Teaching of Evolution;
5. The writer of the first five books of the Bible;
6. The author of Isaiah, and other books of the Old Testament;
7. Inspiration, Inerrancy and Authority of Holy Scripture;
8. Charismatic movement;
9. Worldliness: Modern Dance, Modern Music, Gambling;
10. Position of Women in the Church.

Ample documentation of the above could be given but does not come into the scope of this book. Although much "noise" is made by conservatives in the LCA regarding these matters, rarely are they Scripturally settled; in the main those harbouring and officially teaching these errors are allowed to remain in the church with their ideas officially tolerated.

(We will deal with the present situation in the LCA in a later chapter).



DIFFERENCES ON JOINT PRAYER AND WORSHIP NOT SETTLED.

As already shown in Chapter VIII, the ELCA sadly changed its position on the matter of Prayer Fellowship with heterodox churches in 1948.

It is therefore understandable that the ELCA was willing to adopt the following statements in the "Theses on Joint Prayer and Worship".

- "1. We acknowledge that on the basis of Scripture and of the Confessions, joint prayer cannot under all circumstances be identified with unionistic prayer or church fellowship."
- "3. We agree that joint prayer is not unionistic, and hence permissible when it arises from some external circumstance and is yet based on a common Christianity, i.e., the common acceptance of Jesus Christ as the Son of God and Lord and only Saviour."

(Theses of Agreement, p.4,5)

But, unless there is full agreement on Scripture first, all joint prayer under any circumstance is strictly forbidden.

The above two statements are also very ambiguous and open to interpretation. Who is to determine in which "circumstances" one can have fellowship and in which one may not? According to these statements, it is up to the individual to decide, in order to suit himself.

The old ELSA maintained, on the basis of Scripture that all church fellowship with heterodox churches was forbidden, whether it be joint prayer, worship, fellowship of altar or pulpit. This Thesis maintains it is "left to individual consciences" to determine whether to join in or not. The term "casuistics" is used to describe such matters, which appears to be a clever term used by the authors of the Theses for the evil open questions principle.

So also the LCA today, while some pastors may object, are prepared to permit other pastors and lay people join in ecumenical services, joint services, minister's fraternals, women's world day of prayer, etc. on the basis that these do not constitute unionism. Dr. J.H.C. Fritz correctly defines unionism:

"Joining in religious worship or in religious work or in both by such as are not in doctrinal agreement is religious unionism."

(Pastoral Theology, p.218)

The willingness of the ELCA to adopt this statement (Theses of Agreement) was brought about by its change in church fellowship several years beforehand.

If true agreement had been reached between the ELCA and UELCA on this matter, why did the matter of LWF membership and oversees fellowship (which involved prayer and church fellowship with the heterodox) delay fellowship for so many years until 1965? Surely if these Theses did show Scriptural agreement, agreement should have also been attained on these matters, since they both involve the same principles of church fellowship.

The ELCA and UELCA were not agreed on joint prayer and worship. This was another of those matters on which the Theses involved a compromise and did not settle the difference between the two churches.

DIFFERENCES ON CONVERSION AND ELECTION NOT SETTLED.

Two very short Theses were drawn up supposedly settling the differences on CONVERSION and ELECTION.

The UELCA had formerly permitted it to be taught:

- "that conversion or coming to faith is a long drawn-out process";
- "that faith, 'already present in seed and germ', though 'still as if none, and even in fact actually none', is eventually 'brought to a state of relative perfection or maturity'";
- "that man before his conversion, inasmuch as the responsibility is upon him, 'must decide in his will for the acceptance or rejection of the grace working upon him in the Word'" (synergism
- "that God has elected 'all humanity' on the condition of their coming to faith"(false view of Election);

(Brief Statement of Doctrinal Differences, Janzow and MacKenzie, pp. 15-19)

When it came to the point, the two churches had to get around the differences. Someone apparently struck on the idea of reading the portion in the Confessions and simply stating their agreement to it.

It is claimed: "Since no difference in belief and teaching was noted by either body during the reading, it was established with thanks to God that the doctrine of conversion does not constitute a difference between the two churches." (Theses, p6)

And again: "No difference in belief and teaching was noted by either body during the reading." (Theses p.6)

A brief summary of the doctrine of Election is then given.

We regard these two Theses as being grossly inadequate for the following reasons:-

- they do not settle, or even mention the differences existing between the two churches;

- no mention is made of the article of Janzow outlining the differences, even that it was read;
- no statement is made condemning the false teaching formerly held by the UELCA.

A true orthodox Lutheran, knowing the history of the Lutheran Church in Australia and America, and realizing the points of controversy in these doctrines that have occurred, could never put his name to statements like this, knowing their complete failure to confess the orthodox Lutheran stand.

#### DIFFERENCES ON CHURCH AND MINISTRY.

The Theses on the CHURCH and the MINISTRY are certainly far more detailed than the previous two. Unfortunately they neglect to mention the following points, controverted in the Lutheran Church in recent times:-

1. That the word "Gospel" as used in the Augsburg Confession, Article VII ('For the true unity of the Church it is enough to agree concerning the teaching of the Gospel and the administration of the Sacraments') is not explained in its correct sense as referring to the whole Word of God.
2. That the local congregation is a divine institution.
3. That groups of Christians gathered together apart from the local congregation do so merely by human arrangement, (e.g. Church Council, Synod).

Pastor Schmidt (UELCA Qld. District President) writes concerning these Theses:

"Students of Church History are aware that it was 'on this doctrine that Loehe and Walther (pioneer fathers of the Lutheran Church in America) had parted ways, one inclining to over-emphasizing the ministry, the other the congregation - to point at just one point of difference' to quote from Dr. Stolz's report to the 1950 General Convention, in which he continued: 'The truth in both viewpoints was not given up but the right synthesis found.' It would appear that this difference of understanding and emphasis, although important, was not so much in the forefront of the doctrines which were held to be dividing the Church."

(A Monograph, p6)

From the above it is evident that the UELCA regarded the Theses on CHURCH and MINISTRY as a "Synthesis" (might we say compromise) between the correct position held to by the Missouri Synod and the old ELSA, and the antisciptural ideas of Loehe and his followers. The

UELCA obviously realized that they were able to retain these false ideas and still claim to accept the statements in the Theses of Agreement.

We therefore ask the questions: IS THE EVIL OPEN QUESTIONS IDEA ALSO TO BE APPLIED TO THE DOCTRINES OF THE CHURCH AND MINISTRY SO AS TO CALL ANY DIFFERENCES NON-DIVISIVE?

DIFFERENCES PERMITTED IN ESCHATOLOGICAL MATTERS.

The UELCA (although it "rejects Chiliasm with an external, earthly and worldly kingdom of glory, preceded by a resurrection") yet, "permits Chiliasm to be an open question inasmuch as it may be held and taught, or discarded. Since the UELCA holds that Scripture is not sufficiently clear on this point, further light is expected through fulfilment" (ATR 1936, No. 3 p.78).

Since its formation, the UELCA has regarded matters connected with the false teaching of the Millennium as an open question. This is not surprising, since in the early Lutheran Church, this was one of the burning issues which Kavel held to, which finally led to his separation from Fritzsche.

Thus the Theses on Eschatological Matters, though containing portions which are quite correct, still have a number of loopholes which permit various views regarding the millennium to be accepted. This essentially is just as wrong as if those errors were officially stated and accepted themselves. A document that has loopholes permitting false teachings must be condemned for failure to confess the whole Word of God. (See the introductory section of the chapter).

When, for example, it states,

"The Person and Work and Gospel of Jesus Christ are also the norm and criterion for the interpretation of all eschatological passages and figures in the Old and in the New Testament "  
(Preliminary Statements (b)),

this could be taken to mean that different views on this doctrine are permitted as long as they do not contradict the central doctrine of Christ's Saving work - the evil Open Questions Principle in action.

The same could be understood when it states:

"Therefore a detailed interpretation and application of prophetic passages on the Last Things is not always possible and no interpretation of all parts of the prophecy of the Last Things can be made binding upon Christians". (Preliminary Statements 15)

Even though the following Theses 1 and 2 are quite correct, what is to stop a person who holds antiscritptural teachings in these matters from appealing to these loopholes to justify his false teaching? Even though other parts of the Theses may contradict his false teaching, liberals

have the habit of often quoting those portions which permit their false ideas.

Similarly the statement,

"The question, whether the 'thousand years' of Rev. 20 designate one thousand ordinary years, or whether this term designates a period known to God only and fixed by Him, is not divisive of Church fellowship. No interpretation of these 'thousand years' dare be given contrary to the analogy of faith" (Thesis 4),

leaves the matter wide and open to anyone who wishes to retain their false ideas in the matter.

Sadly also the section on ANTICHRIST is very cunningly worded in the same vein.

The orthodox Lutheran Church has always taught that the Papacy is the very Antichrist.

The Brief Statement of the Missouri Synod of 1932 states:

"As to the Antichrist we teach that the prophecies of the Holy Scriptures concerning the Antichrist, 2 Thess 2:3-12; 1 John 2:18, have been fulfilled in the Pope of Rome and his dominion. All the features of the Antichrist as drawn in these prophecies, including the most abominable and horrible ones, for example, that the Antichrist 'as God sitteth in the temple of God', 2 Thess 2:4; that he anathematizes the very heart of the Gospel of Christ, that is, the doctrine of the forgiveness of sins by grace alone, for Christ's sake alone, through faith alone, without any merit or worthiness in man (Rom 3:20-28; Gal 2:16); that he recognizes only those as members of the Christian Church who bow to his authority; and that, like a deluge, he had inundated the whole Church with his antichristian doctrines till God revealed him through the Reformation - these very features are the outstanding characteristics of the Papacy. (cf. Smalcald Articles. Triglot, p.515, paras 39 to 41; p.401 para. 45; M., pp336,258). Hence we subscribe to the statement of our Confessions that the Pope is 'the very Antichrist'. (Smalcald Articles. Triglot, p.475 para 10; M., p.308)."

That the ELSA held to this same teaching is shown by articles entitled "The Antichrist" and "Is our teaching of the Antichrist Based Upon the Scriptures?" in the Australasian Theological Review, Jan-March, 1941.

On the other hand, the UELCA,

"forsaking the Confessions, treats this doctrine as an open question, whereby the 'old opinion' may be discarded, and the 'opinion' may be held that a personal Antichrist may yet 'emerge

from the Papacy, or perhaps from the ranks of political potentates' during the last times." (ATR 1936 p.79).

That this was the official opinion held by the UELCA in the 1940's is shown by an Editorial in the Lutheran Herald (official church paper of the UELCA) in which the author says:

"Is the Pope the true Antichrist? It has always puzzled us how some find it possible to uphold the opinion that he is....In our times....it seems contrary to the truth to designate the Pope the very antichrist."

(Lutheran Herald, July 7, 1941, pp 210,211).

Although challenged by the editor of the Australian Lutheran (ELCA church paper), the UELCA still held to its views. (Lutheran Herald, 1941, July 21, p227).

Again, commenting on Theses VII on ESCHATOLOGICAL MATTERS, Pastor Schmidt states:

"This occupied a great deal of time, thought and care. There were differences of understanding on these matters, e.g. the Antichrist. But whereas these were not regarded as church divisive on the part of the UELCA, they were so regarded by the ELCA."

(A Monograph, p6)

These comments, made in 1976 show where the UELCA stood on the matter of ANTICHRIST.

The Theses of Agreement basically call the doctrine of the Papacy as the Antichrist an open question. They do not accept the orthodox Lutheran position on this matter.

With statements such as:

"We recognise that in the interpretation of these passages no full agreement has existed or exists. Such differences of exegesis (regarding the passages that deal with the Antichrist, GLW) need not be church-divisive, provided the interpretation offered does not contradict any clear word of Scripture (cf. Theses on Principle Governing Church Fellowship 4(d) and (e))." (Thesis 7(a))

and:

"(d) the Church cannot definitely state how and in what form the prophecy on Antichrist may still be fulfilled in the future in the Papacy and elsewhere" (Thesis 7(d)),

it is clear that the UELCA won the day, and the ELCA abandoned the position it had previously held. It is quite astounding that the ELCA men who were still relatively sound in their teaching could be duped into putting their names to a statement like this, which runs contrary to what

their church had previously stood for.

DIFFERENCES STILL EXISTED ON SCRIPTURE AND INSPIRATION.

Sadly, on this fundamental doctrine of the Bible, differences existed at the time of the Union. The former teachings of the UELCA were permitted to be accepted and taught by the Theses of Agreement. No Scriptural discipline is followed in the LCA today over against those who hold views contrary to the orthodox Lutheran position. Even a professor of theology from the ELCA at the time of the Union attacked this doctrine as shown by the Pastoral Conference Minutes in Toowoomba, 1966.

The orthodox Lutheran position, also formerly held by the old ELCA is outlined in the Brief Statement of the Missouri Synod, 1932:

"OF THE HOLY SCRIPTURES

- "1. We teach that the Holy Scriptures differ from all other books in the world in that they are the Word of God. They are the Word of God because the holy men of God who wrote the Scriptures wrote only that which the Holy Ghost communicated to them by inspiration, 2 Tim 3:16; 2 Pet 1:21. We teach also that the verbal inspiration of the Scriptures is not a so-called 'theological deduction,' but that it is taught by direct statements of the Scriptures, 2 Tim 3:16; John 10:35; Rom 3:2; 1 Cor 2:13. Since the Holy Scriptures are the Word of God, it goes without saying that they contain no errors or contradictions, but that they are in all their parts and words the infallible truth, also in those parts which treat of historical, geographical, and other secular matters, John 10: 35.
- "2. We furthermore teach regarding the Holy Scriptures that they are given by God to the Christian Church for the foundation of faith, Eph 2:20. Hence the Holy Scriptures are the sole source from which all doctrines proclaimed in the Christian Church must be taken and therefore, too, the sole rule and norm by which all teachers and doctrines must be examined and judged. -- With the Confessions of our Church we teach also that the 'rule of faith' (analogia fidei) according to which the Holy Scriptures are to be understood are the clear passages of the Scriptures themselves which set forth the individual doctrines. (Apology. Triglot, p.441 l. 60; Mueller, p.284). The rule of faith is not the man-made so-called 'totality of Scripture' ('Ganzes der Schrift').
- "3. We reject the doctrine which under the name of science has gained wide popularity in the Church of our day that Holy Scripture is not in all its parts the Word of God, but in

part the Word of God and in part the word of man and hence does or at least, might, contain error. We reject this erroneous doctrine as horrible and blasphemous, since it flatly contradicts Christ and His holy apostles, sets up men as judges over the Word of God, and thus overthrows the foundation of the Christian Church and its faith."

The false teaching of the UELCA has already been stated in Chapter V, Part G.

Though the Theses of Agreement, (Part VIII) have some fine things to say about the doctrine of the Inspiration and inerrancy of the Bible, yet there are enough loopholes remaining to permit antiscritptural views of those who wish to deny this doctrine. This is shown (i) by statements in Theses VIII which are open to interpretation; (ii) by the need of the LCA to draw up further statements to 'clarify' its position on the inspiration and inerrancy of the Bible; (iii) by attacks which have been made by leading seminary professors in the LCA with no Scriptural repentance, retraction and apology for such attacks or Scriptural Doctrinal discipline by the leaders of the LCA of those who propound these attacks.

The "Theses on Scripture and Inspiration" contain the following ambiguous statements:-

-- " Scripture teaches the fact of inspiration, but is silent on the 'how' i.e., on the manner or method" (Thesis 8).

Comment: The word inspired (Gk: God-breathed) in itself tells us that God breathed the words into the minds of the Holy writers seeing to it that they were written down on their manuscripts as He told them. Isn't this the 'how' of inspiration? This statement could be used by a liberal to cast doubt on God's use of the Holy writers to give us His Word

-- " The fact that God dealt with each of the prophets in a different way shows that the personality, character, way of thinking and speaking of the individual man were not extinguished....But they retained their individuality and were not exempt from the labour methods and responsibility of human authorship." (Thesis

Comment: These words can be understood correctly, but unless they are fully explained leave the matter open to false interpretation. Liberals speak of the "human side" of Scripture too, and conclude that since humans have limitations in their knowledge, make errors and mistakes and are responsible for any inaccuracies in their work, so also the "human" writers of the Bible. One in the LCA who denies the Scriptural teaching could appeal to this portion of the Theses to support his view.

-- " We believe that the holy writers, whom God used, retained the distinctive features of their personalities (language



and terminology, literary methods, conditions of life, knowledge of nature and history as apart from direct divine revelation and prophecy)" (Thesis 10).

Comment: Could a liberal conclude from this statement that when the holy writers spoke of geography, history etc., since their human knowledge may have been incorrect, these errors also may have been included in the pages of Holy Writ?

-- " God made use of them in such a manner that even that which human reason might call a deficiency in Holy Scripture must serve the divine purpose".

Comment: Here it speaks of "human reason" finding deficiencies in Holy Scripture. Such a statement plays right into the hands of those who deny the absolute inerrancy of the Bible.

-- Even as early as 1961, the Theses of Agreement were quoted by an out and out liberal in the Missouri Synod (Dr. M. Sharlemann) who used them to support his erroneous views claiming the Bible has errors and mistakes (ATR 1961, No. 2 p.61).

-- In a letter dated Jan 15, 1952, Dr. H. Sasse reported on the completion of the Theses on Scripture and Inspiration. Speaking of the Theses of Agreement, he stated:

"Our document, then, is a parallel to the Common Confession of Missouri and the American Lutheran Church in the United States of America. We tried to overcome the old scheme of the Orthodox fathers and to build the doctrine on Scripture on Luther's understanding of the Word of God. I think you will like this approach, which tries to overcome the Fundamentalist issues." (CTM, 1952, p.221)

Comment: Does Dr. Sasse here indicate that, according to his understanding, a departure took place from the old position on the inspiration and inerrancy of the Bible? He certainly was one of those who denied this doctrine at the time of the union.

Since 1966, the matter of the Inspiration and Inerrancy of the Bible has never been settled in the L.C.A. Every now and again leading theologians from their midst attack this doctrine in articles or books dealing with the matter.

Therefore a number of statements have had to be brought out, trying to settle the matter. The necessity of these statements proves that it is not settled in the LCA today and was not settled at the time of the union by the Theses of Agreement.

The statements are those of Albury (1968) and Horsham Conventions (1972) and "A Consensus Statement on Holy Scripture" (1984).

On the first two of these statements, we present the following. This same error appears in both the Albury (A) and Horsham (H) statement on the Inspiration and Inerrancy of Scripture which were adopted by the LCA. Because of time and space the full text of both statements will not be reproduced. But if anybody would like complete copies of these devilishly cunning statements in order to compare them, they are available upon request. Our comments will be based on the parts of these statements which contain the errors.

First of all some general comments about both statements are given:

1. On close examination and with careful study the reader will find that they both cover the same ground, and that there is no essential difference between them, the only variation being in expressions and wording. Both the A and H statements are so arranged that they make both the liberals and the conservatives happy. Both statements are of the "yes-no" type, which affirm a thing and then again deny it, and are not worth the paper they are written on.

2. It is rather striking that both statements bring no Scripture text to prove their assertions. How different from the paragraph of the "Brief Statement" which we quoted on Page 92. But then we recall the fact that several years ago an LCA pastor told us: "The Theses of Agreement are our Bible!"

3. The reader will notice that the learned theologians who prepared the statements used high-flown and difficult language, often involving such complicated and difficult theological terms that the average layman has no idea what they are really talking about, and even pastors sometimes do not get the point as to what is really meant. Worse still, liberal theologians often express their thoughts in such a veiled and camouflage manner that unless one has knowledge of their stand on various doctrines of Scripture and realizes what they are really aiming at, he is apt to be deceived. Moreover, they also have the habit of not fully spelling out their thoughts, so as to keep one guessing, or else putting them in such a way that they may be taken in different ways. This of course is done to keep both "conservatives" and "liberals" happy, and, above all, to keep them together in the same camp.

St. Paul handled matters differently. He wrote to the congregation at Corinth: "When I came to you, fellow Christians, I didn't come to tell you God's truth with extra fine speech or wisdom... I didn't use clever talk to persuade you, but I let the Spirit and His power prove the truth to you so that your faith will not depend on men's wisdom but on God's power" (1 Cor. 2: 1,4-5, Beck's Translation).

The point St. Paul here makes is perfectly clear. Most of the members of the Corinthian congregation were no doubt plain, simple folk, not versed in the language and thinking of the philosophers and learned men of their day. Therefore Paul preached to them the Word in the language they could follow and understand.

Fourthly, consider that this type of statement is not infrequently submitted to conventions for adoption. But since most church conventions are made up not only of pastors but also of lay members, the latter as a rule in the majority, and most of these latter ones not at all well-versed in theology--most lay people seem never to get much beyond the ABC of the Christian religion--then how in the world can such people vote intelligently on such statements? What of course usually happens is that they take their cue from the speakers debating the motion, and then cast their votes in accordance with their own personal feelings on the matter and also in favour of the speaker who appealed to them most. Such remarks as: The Seminary professors say so, and such learned men must know what is right; the President supports it; our own pastor is in favour of it, are often heard. And that then as a rule decides the issue. But the question: "What does the Lord say about it in His Word?" is seldom heard. And so the motion is put, adopted, usually unanimously, the statement becomes "the voice of the church", and as such provides the guide-line to be followed. But if the statement happens to be a cunningly veiled "double-header", matters go on as before.

Finally, we must have a look at both statements A (Albury) and H (Horsham), since both are basically the same, even though the wording is somewhat different. Here are the points we desire to make.

1. Both Statements appear to be designed to make both "conservatives" and "liberals" happy. For example, when we read in both that "the Theses of Agreement use the term 'inerrancy' in its normal sense of freedom from all error and contradiction" and thus one "should not speak of 'errors' in Holy Scripture" then no doubt the "conservatives" rejoiced and believed they had scored a vital point. Statement A also points out that "the hermeneutical principle that 'Scripture interprets Scripture' must not be abandoned"; that is correct. The "conservatives" must have felt happy to notice these points appearing in both statements. And since "conservatives" generally are inclined to be rather naive (meaning possessing childlike simplicity and trust mixed with a dash of stupidity), they must have also thought: Now we have our friends the liberals in the corner.

But when it also speaks about someone regarding "as a mere allegory or symbol what the Scriptures clearly recognize as historical truth or fact" is acting contrary to the sound doctrine of the Scriptures and of the Theses of Agreement (H) then we ask: "Are all LCA theologians agreed on what constitutes such 'clear recognition'? What about Gen 1-3, which is regarded by a number of Seminary professors as 'pictorial'? Will they be required to change their minds about that, and if not, will they be disciplined?"

But we must come to the main point, which renders both statements really useless, and that is the one which harps on the so-called "human side" of Scripture. Although the writers of both statements do not mention the matter by this name, they certainly refer to it in unmis-

akable terms. Statement A speaks thus in Section 3: "...the Theses of Agreement carry a very difficult subject to the limits of human cognition and linguistic expression, without either violating the character of the Sacred Scriptures as the inspired Word of God, or stripping the holy writers of human thought, feeling, and activity" (Underlining ours). Statement H deals with the matter in more detail. It points out that the Theses of Agreement take "into account the rich complexity of the Holy Scriptures as Word of God in all its parts and aspects and also word of man in all its parts and aspects" and later on informs us that the Theses of Agreement make reference to "seeming deficiencies relating to and caused by the fact that the holy writers retained the distinctive features of their personalities, that they used contemporary methods of historiography and used the terminology of contemporary views of nature and the world. These evidences of the limitations of the human mind in no way invalidate the inerrancy of God's written word, but illustrate the servant form of the written Word of God, which is interested not in technical precision for its own sake but in a popular, intelligible presentation, which best serves the saving purposes of God" (Underlining ours). Then follows: "It must be borne in mind that a proper and adequate description of the written Word of God with its unity of the human and divine is beset with great difficulties."

It is definitely true that the Scriptures have a "human side", if we wish to call it that.

The Bible was written by human beings, using human language, the holy writers recorded human events, human history, at times carefully collected and checked by human historians. But in spite of these human efforts the Scriptures themselves declare, 2 Peter 1:20: "Holy men of God spake as they were moved (literally carried) by the Holy Ghost". The result of this "moving" was, as St. Paul puts it in 1 Corinthians 2:12-13: "The things that are freely given to us of God we speak, not in the words which man's wisdom teacheth, BUT WHICH THE HOLY GHOST TEACHETH." And since the Holy Ghost is "the Spirit of Truth" (John 16:13) Who guides "into all truth" (John 16:13), we know from the very outset that, since He is the real Author of the Bible, and ALL Scripture has been inspired by Him, and that "Scripture cannot be broken" (John 10:35) that in Holy Scripture we indeed have God's truth, the absolute truth, the truth without the least admixture of error, also when it speaks of secular matters, as the Lord Himself said: "Thy word is truth" (John 17:17).

When liberal "theologians" speak of the "human side" of Scripture - and they usually stress that - they mean something very much different from what we do whenever we happen to mention this term. They figure this way: The Scriptures were written by human beings; all human beings are subject to error; therefore the Scripture contains error.

But all liberals are not the same; there are also so-called "moderate" liberals. The "moderate" liberal still teaches that the Bible is inerrant in the great doctrines pertaining to salvation (theological

inerrancy), but contends that there are mistakes in Scripture with respect to secular matters (history, geography, bad grammar, etc.) and therefore rejects "total" inerrancy, which is demanded by the Scriptures themselves, since Christ Himself declared: "The Scripture cannot be broken".

Now we also know that certain doctors of theology in the LCA have made statements which plainly indicate that they do not subscribe to the "total" inerrancy required by the Word of God. Therefore Dr. Sasse wrote (A.T.R., XIX,2): "One thing Christian theology can never admit, namely, the presence of 'errors' in the sense of false statements in Holy Scripture". (Underlining ours).

To the uninitiated this sentence will probably appear correct; but it is so shrewdly constructed that it says something quite different from what it seems to say. The writer uses two words in that sentence, "error" and "false" which originate from the Latin language, "error" from "errare" (to wander away, to make a mistake) and "false" from "fallere" (to deceive). So what this doctor of theology means is this: The Scriptures do not contain any statement by means of which the reader is intended to be deceived, but they could, and in fact do, contain mistakes in secular matters, in numbers, etc., which are unintentional, mainly due to the rather limited knowledge in secular matters of the holy writers living in those ancient times. (By the way, were these writers not inspired? Does, then, the Holy Spirit also possess only limited knowledge?)

So this professor certainly does not believe in "total" inerrancy.

Another LCA doctor of theology (Dr. J.T.E. Renner) wrote several years ago in an essay entitled "Soundly Interpreting the Scriptures" p.2: "It pleased the Holy Spirit to give us God's Word through human beings limited in their outlook and often not equipped with historical and cosmological acumen and knowledge known by men today....Should not it be openly and frankly admitted that apparently it did not please the Holy Spirit to provide us with Scriptures that are in all their historical, cultural and cosmological details accurate and that in many parts of the Scriptures it is so that the historical facts do not measure up to the scientific historio-graphical rules supplied by historians? All this belongs to the human side of the Word".

This long involved sentence with its "big" words briefly means this: The men who wrote the Bible were of limited education. They did not know many of the things we know today. These were the men the Holy Spirit had to appoint to write the Scriptures, since there were no better ones around at the time. As a matter of fact, it pleased the Holy Spirit, for some reason or other, to provide us with a Bible that contains a considerable number of errors.

Well, this professor also certainly does not believe in "total" inerrancy, and we wonder just what he teaches his students!

Now comes the sixty-four dollar question: Could those last words of Section 3 have been inserted into the Statement on Inerrancy to provide room for and to keep within the LCA teachers holding such views?

Again, in Section 4, the closing sentence: "It must be admitted, however, that the decision on what is literal and what is figurative may at times be difficult to determine" does call for some comment.

It is on record that a theological professor (Dr. Pahl) in the LCA claims that Genesis 1-3 is not real history, "hence these things described there must be taken as pictures or symbols, as in the book of Revelation. A second professor, Dr. Hamann, according to the Conference minutes, "questioned also whether there was a real Garden of Eden. These things (Tree of Knowledge of good and evil, fruit, serpent) are quite possibly figurative. It was maintained that all these views are permitted by the Theses of Agreement". (Our underlining).

Thus the last sentence in Section 4 must have been placed there for a purpose. What purpose? To provide room for professors who hold such views?

Since then further statements have issued from within the LCA which definitely prove that they have leading men, especially in their Seminary who hold heterodox ideas concerning the Scriptures, and which ideas appear in veiled and cleverly camouflaged form in both the Albury and Horsham statements, both making ample reference to the "human side" of Scripture.

Note our underlinings in the Horsham statement. That is why we could never accept a statement like that. A church that takes its stand on a basis of that kind has really not much to offer, but on the other hand can very seriously endanger a person's eternal salvation! (Taken from Pastor Kleinig's 1972 Fellowship Day Essay "The Inspiration and Inerrancy of Holy Scripture", pages 14-17).

That the LCA today has many problems with its leading theologians attacking this doctrine of the Bible is undoubtedly well-known to our readers. All of these men again and again have appealed to the Theses of Agreement to justify themselves. Surely this all proves that the Theses on this document do not settle the matter but permit those who outwardly claim to accept it to retain their false teachings.

In order to show what a hold these false teachings have taken on the LCA, we present the following proofs:

Pastor E. Kriewaldt reports concerning papers by Drs. Hamann, Hebart and Renner dealing with the inspiration and inerrancy of Scripture:

1) "In his essay Dr. Hamann dealt with the relationship of the Holy Spirit to the Holy Scriptures. First he said some unusual things about the work of the Holy Spirit, namely that the Holy Spirit has only one function, and that is to testify of Jesus. What profoundly disturbed me was that

the writer dared to affirm that the Scriptures contain mistakes, errors of history, etc. But then came the "double-talk". He claimed that such errors did not affect the doctrine of inspiration. Since I do not have the paper before me at present, I cannot quote directly, but can tell only of its contents.

2) "Dr. Hebart (UELCA) praised the paper and spoke along similar lines. He stressed the fact that the Bible has a human side, which could be the reason for the mistakes it contains.

"Dr. Renner's paper on Hermeneutics repeated the same heresy. Even though the Conference did not adopt the papers, it did not condemn them.

3) "Now these are the men who will train our future pastors. What can be expected if men who have been moulded by professors who reject the inerrancy of the Bible slip further and further away from the true doctrine? If faith in the Scriptures is lost, then the way is open for all manner of errors". (Letter to Pastor Kleinig, 1966)

Dr. Sasse in an essay entitled "Holy Scripture, Comments on this Inspiration Doctrine of Augustine" writes: "It is one of the great tragedies of Church History that, supported by the authority of the greatest Church fathers Christendom has had to drag along through the centuries a theory (the verbal inspiration of Scripture, BW) which is merely a laboriously Christianised form of a heathen teaching about inspired writings".

In a circular entitled "The Decline of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Australia", the Rev. F.W. Noack, (Swan Reach, South Australia) states the following:

"At Luther Seminary there are instructors who made it evident that they believed that there were errors in the inspired Scriptures..

"Dr. Renner...also presented a paper claiming that there were weaknesses and errors in the Bible because of the "human side".

"Dr. H. Hamann, Jnr...too, presented a paper claiming that there were errors in the Bible. And in an article published in the Concordia Theological Monthly, of September, 1970, he speaks of Mark as being 'clumsy, inaccurate, and obscure', as being capable 'of marring beyond recognition the best bit of Greek', and as 'blundering' and 'botching'...

"Dr. V. Pfitzner stated in a lecture to a group of young people in 1971:

"We have Paul doing some really violent things to the Old Testament text. The way he interprets the Old Testament at times is hair-raising, isn't it? 'Well', we say, 'Fair enough, he's an Apostle, he can get away with it'. And he does. But if we were to do that kind of thing with the Old Testament - things that he does - the way he allegorizes and plays around, for example, with Hagar and

Sarah - what he makes of these two - Oh, it's abominable, in terms of literature and in terms of - well - illustrations. The point he is making is absolutely true - it's inspired theology - but I would recommend that we follow Paul's method of getting to the point that he does. His literary method at this point I think is very poor, and I wouldn't be ashamed to defend this thesis in public. I still believe that what he writes is inspired. But this is part of the human side of what he writes". And referring to St. Peter, Dr. Pfitzner stated: "The writing also of Peter - in the first chapter where he refers to the living and abiding Word of God - he takes an Old Testament passage which originally refers to God and which originally refers to the everlasting nature of God, and he turns the whole thing around and makes it refer to, not God, but Jesus Christ, and not to the abiding nature of God, but the abiding nature of the Word. In other words, he doesn't really quote the passage correctly, he misquotes it and he uses it for his purpose. Now we would say he's doing violence, and this is what the sects do now-a-days".

"A fourth-year student at Luther Seminary had the following, which contains most erroneous and misleading material, published in the July, 1971 issue of the Youth Paper Encounter:

#### "Inerrancy, Fallacies

That the Bible is inspired leads us to conclude that the Bible is without error. Yet, if we claim the human agency, surely mistakes must have occurred. For example, a conception of the Earth as flat covered by a great dome holding out 'the waters', supported by pillars and set above 'the great deep', is found in the Old Testament. Today we know that this is simply not factual, and there are other ideas which have similarly been debunked by science.

What are we to say of this: Does it mean that we have good reason to doubt the truth of the entire Scriptures? To the person without faith it very often does. But we in faith accept the fact that the Bible contains the truth.

Provable?

There is no rational way of proving that the Bible is the truth. The two texts cited about are not proofs because they do no more than the man who might say that he is a tree - the mere claim that he is a tree does not prove that he is a tree. And cannot 'proofs like archaeological discoveries, unity, harmony, popularity and survival be just as easily squashed? Where DO we turn for proof? In the end there is only one proof!"

We have already recorded earlier in this chapter the dreadful statements made by Drs. H. Sasse and H. Hamann (Jnr) at a Pastoral Conference of the Qld. District, at Toowoomba in 1966.

Of recent we mention, but do not quote in detail, the following



attacks on this same doctrine:

- "Theology of the Word" by Dr. S.P. Hebart
- "The Bible between Fundamentalism and Philosophy" - Dr. H. Hamann
- Commentary on Genesis - Dr. J. Renner

Not one of these learned doctors has ever publicly retracted these errors; confessed his great sin in clinging to them in the past and promised to teach the truth in the future.

Therefore the LCA has become a party to these false teachings, officially condones and tolerates them, and itself becomes guilty of allowing the Bible to be charged with errors and mistakes.

### ELCA CHANGES ITS POSITION ON PRACTICAL MATTERS.

In the matters of Lodges, Marriage and Betrothal, and Marriage with the Deceased Wife's Sister, the ELCA did not so much compromise, but CHANGED THEIR POSITION from that which was previously held.

Although the statement in the Theses of Agreement regarding LODGES does condemn these antichristian organizations, and require "evangelical discipline" towards those who belong, it was a well-known fact that UELCA pastors had for many years tolerated known lodge members in their midst without such discipline.

That the ELCA had become lax in such discipline, and based this on its acceptance of the Theses of Agreement is evident from the following minute in the S.A. District Pastoral Conference, ELCA, (June 2-4, 1959):

"LODGE MEMBERSHIP: RESOLVED that in accordance with the Theses of Agreement, page 29, we raise no objection to membership by registration where it is not by initiation". (Minutes, p1)

Here we see a "loophole" in the Statement on Lodges permitting "financial membership" being used to allow ELCA and UELCA members to remain members of these anti-Christian organizations. Such was not in accordance with the former position of the ELSA as shown in an article entitled FREEMASONRY by Pastor T.A. Reimers (ATR, 1937 p.85).

Regarding ENGAGEMENT being tantamount to MARRIAGE in God's sight, the old ELSA had taken the position of old Missouri that the Lord regarded a validly engaged couple as being already husband and wife. (Essay on Church Fellowship, Dr. Th. Nickel, 1902, p.34 - English translation, F.G. Kleinig).

Dr. J.B. Koch reports concerning the ELSA's position on engagement:

"Gradually, however, the attitude became official doctrine and was modified only later in the 1940's and 1950's in inter-synodical negotiations" (When the Murray Meets the Mississippi,

J.B. Koch, p.81, underlining added)

From this it is clear that the ELCA, together with the Missouri Synod altered their position on ENGAGEMENT when it accepted the following statements on Marriage and Betrothal:

"Holy Scripture contains no specific doctrine or law for Christians on betrothal or engagement. We agree, therefore, that betrothal or engagement is of human origin and its meaning and significance is for that reason largely subject to prevailing custom which may vary from age to age and place to place."

The ELCR, on the basis of Matt 1:18-20; Deut 22:22-24; 28-30; Gen. 19:14; Hosea 4:13,14; still maintains the Scriptural principle that A VALID ENGAGEMENT before God is regarded as TANTAMOUNT TO MARRIAGE.

Finally the ELCA changed its position in regard to Marriage with the Deceased wife's Sister. In articles entitled "Marriage with a Deceased Wife's Sister Prohibited" (ATR, 1931, No.3 & 4), Pastor A. Mackenzie outlined the ELSA's position that this was forbidden.

The "Theses of Agreement" state:

"We believe that the Scripture passage often adduced in support of the opinion that marriage with a deceased wife's sister is absolutely and for all time prohibited by God's Moral Law (Lev 18:6,16,18), are not sufficiently clear, both intrinsically and in their relation to the Moral Law, to compel the formulation of a doctrine reflecting God's revelation and will, so that different views on this matter are not divisive of church fellowship."

So these matters, since there were varying "opinions" on them were also placed into the evil OPEN QUESTIONS box.

THESES ON "PRINCIPLES GOVERNING CO-OPERATION BETWEEN CHURCHES NOT IN CHURCH FELLOWSHIP" NOT ADOPTED BY UELCA.

In 1954 the Intersynodical Committees adopted Theses dealing with PRINCIPLES GOVERNING CO-OPERATION BETWEEN CHURCHES NOT IN CHURCH FELLOWSHIP. (They were printed in AL, 1956, June 27)

These were finally adopted by the ELCA in 1959, but never became a part of the Theses of Agreement because they were not accepted by the UELCA Pastoral Conference or Convention. The question is asked, WHY NOT?

Dr. M. Lohe gives an indication when he states concerning them:

"It was recognised that these Theses on Co-operation were altogether too negative." (LH, 1965, p.4)

The Theses (CTM, 1956, p.891), though not condemning membership in

the LWF with the very words, could be interpreted as to take this position. That is no doubt why the UELCA would not accept them, because they could be taken to condemn their LWF membership, and be used as a lever for the ELCA to get the UELCA out of the LWF.

OTHER MATTERS OF DIFFERENCE NOT MENTIONED BY THE THESES OF AGREEMENT.

It is interesting that a number of matters regarded as constituting differences between the two Churches in 1936 (ATR 1936, No.3) are not even given a mention in the Theses of Agreement, let alone Scripturally settled. These are, apart from the OPEN QUESTIONS MATTER mentioned previously:

- SUNDAY (Scriptural attitude towards)
- CHRIST'S STATE OF HUMILIATION - (Kenosis).

Are we therefore to assume that these matters too constituted differences not settled at the time of the union?

Other matters concerning which there were divergent opinions in the two Churches, and on which false positions have either been officially adopted or are tolerated by the LCA today are:

- Genesis 1 - 3 (attitude towards)
- word 'day' in Genesis 1
- position of women in the church
- modern dance

ADOPTION OF THESES OF AGREEMENT.

The Theses of Agreement, having been drawn up by the Intersynodical Committees, and studied by Pastoral Conferences and Conventions, were finally adopted by the UELCA at its 1956 Convention and the ELCA at its 1959 Convention.

But opinion in the ELCA was by no means unanimously in favour of its adoption.

Pastor Temme wrote to Pastor Kleinig:

"I do not know whether you know that in 1954 I was the only pastor (and the Adelaide College Assembly Hall was almost full at a General Pastoral Conference) who stood up when the chairman asked who was against the adoption of the union theses. My reasons are enclosed herewith. I felt pretty blue for a while. I later found that Dr. Zschech, Hassold, A. Mackenzie, Brinkworth Kriewaldt, late T.W. Lutze were right behind me. But I was the only one who stood up." (Letter to Pastor Kleinig dated 12.9.62)

What a great pity that these ELCA men who knew better did not faithfully confess the truths of God's Word and oppose the Theses of

Agreement publicly because of its false teachings. Because leading men in the ELCA, especially those old and respected pastors, did not take a public stand against its contents, it was generally accepted by the younger pastors and lay people who looked to these men to take the lead. Thus their Church forfeited its doctrinal position and were led, not many years after, into an unscriptural union.

Many of the lay people and pastors of the ELCA were so crazy for this union at any cost that the union would have come about anyway. But the old solid men who opposed it, if they had taken a stand, though not stopping the union, would have created a larger nucleus of support for those who did not go in. Courageous leadership was necessary from these men to inform as many true Lutherans as possible and then to act in not going in.

CHAPTER XI.

DIFFERENCES BETWEEN TWO CHURCHES HALT PROGRESS IN UNION. (1959-1964).

Since the Theses of Agreement was adopted by the UELCA and ELCA in 1956 and 1959, one would have expected the merger quickly to have resulted. But it was a number of years before this eventuated. The question is then asked: Why did the final amalgamation take so long?

Dr. Stolz, the General President of the UELCA, stated in 1953:

"The one unsolved problem confronting the two Committees is that of the Overseas Connections of both Churches in their bearing on the Union." (Report of 1953 General Convention, UELCA)

Simply stated, the UELCA was a member of the Lutheran World Federation (LWF), and also in fellowship with and a supporter of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of New Guinea (ELCONG). ELCONG was supported by and provided with missionaries from the Bavarian State Church (Neuendettelsau Mission), the State Church of Hanover (Leipzig Mission), and the American Lutheran Church (ALC). All of these were false teaching churches, the latter being a member of the World Council of Churches (WCC). The UELCA could see nothing wrong with this situation. The ELCA on the other hand considered LWF membership contrary to Scripture. Also they considered fellowship with and support of ELCONG, the mission of heterodox church bodies to be sinful. The UELCA considered it to be an adiaphoron (something neither commanded nor forbidden in the Scriptures), the ELCA taught that it was forbidden by the Bible.

THE DIFFERENCE WENT MUCH DEEPER.

As has been pointed out the differences between the two churches went much deeper than just this point. The matter of LWF membership and fellowship with heterodox churches was just one of the many matters the UELCA put into the Open Questions Box. It really came down to the attitude of each to God's Word, and the refusal of the UELCA to accept the clear instructions of Scripture in these matters. The UELCA adopted the position in practice: WE WILL ONLY ACCEPT GOD'S WORD WHEN IT IS IN HARMONY WITH OUR EARTHLY OPINION. GOD DOES NOT EXPECT US TO OBEY HIM IN ALL MATTERS OF SCRIPTURE.

That there were more basic differences between the two churches was recognized by Dr. S.P. Hebart. He states:

"The reason for this doubt (whether the problem of co-operation can be solved) is that for many years our Committee has believed that the remaining difference between the Churches lies far more deeply than the problem of co-operation. But it is not so easy to pinpoint this basic difference and our own Committee is not agreed on what it could be.

"It was a member of the ELCA Committee who suggested at this juncture that it might be worth asking ourselves whether there was not between us a real difference in the way in which we read our New Testament, understand it and apply it.

"Professor Altus, of Concordia Seminary, has kept on reminding us that union in this country is so urgent that overseas connections are secondary and he has suggested that we might consider on both sides giving up all such relationships, uniting, and then, as one Church together, examine what overseas connections we desire to have or can have. Such a prospect is indeed fascinating. But it has always been answered that it would be unrealistic to bypass the deeper difference that separates us, only to find afterwards that it is still there."

(Report of UELCA Synodical Committee to 1962 Convention at Bundaberg, p.179, emphasis added)

Let us inform Dr. Hebart, if he has not since found out, that the basic difference concerning which the UELCA "committee is not agreed on what it could be", was the notorious OPEN QUESTIONS PRINCIPLE and their attitude towards the authority of God's Word.

But let us examine the vital differences between the two churches regarding CHURCH FELLOWSHIP.

#### MEMBERSHIP IN LUTHERAN WORLD FEDERATION AND OVERSEAS CONNECTIONS.

The Australian Lutheran (March 18, 1959) contains a Declaration drawn up by the Intersynodical Committee of the ELCA and its Executive Council. This well summarizes the differences in these points.

"On the other hand, we sincerely regret that we have not reached agreement in all matters of Christian doctrine and practice.

"Although we have adopted Theses on 'Joint Prayer and Worship', and although we have agreed that 'according to the revealed will and command of God all believers are directed to that visible church, which teaches the Word of God in its truth and purity and administers the Sacraments according to the institution of their Founder, and, conversely, are directed to avoid all erring and heterodox churches' (Theses of Agreement on the Church, v.15) and although the Joint Intersynodical Committees have adopted Theses on 'Co-operation between Churches not in Church Fellowship' we are not in agreement as yet on what constitutes unionism and how the principle adopted against unionism are to be applied.

"Our lack of agreement appears in the following:

- (a) The Evangelical Lutheran Church of Australia is in fellowship with a number of churches with which the United Evangelical Lutheran Church of Australia is not in fellowship; (eg. Missouri and Wisconsin Synods, GLW)

- (b) The United Evangelical Lutheran Church of Australia practices selective fellowship with members of churches, with which they are not in fellowship;
- (c) The United Evangelical Lutheran Church of Australia is a partner in a Mission (New Guinea), in which the United Evangelical Lutheran Church of Australia missionaries practise fellowship with missionaries from other churches with which United Evangelical Lutheran Church of Australia is not in fellowship - churches that tolerate false doctrine and false teachers and belong to unionistic organisations;
- (d) The United Evangelical Lutheran Church of Australia has so far not clearly defined its attitude towards the World Council of Churches which fosters the modern ecumenical movement, and which the Lutheran World Federation encourages in the purpose clause of its Constitution, whereas the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Australia has defined its attitude. (See Toowoomba Synodical Report, 1950, p.124);
- (e) The United Evangelical Lutheran Church of Australia is a member-church of the Lutheran World Fellowship, whereas the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Australia has declined membership;
- (f) The United Evangelical Lutheran Church of Australia continues to remain a member-church, even though the Intersynodical Committees have declared that 'The practice of the Lutheran World Federation is contrary to its own Constitution -
  - (1) in admitting churches and church-groups, which are not really Lutheran;
  - (2) in permitting such churches to retain membership;
  - (3) in letting un-Lutheran practice continue unchallenged in member-churches;
  - (4) in condoning un-Lutheran alliances.'
- (g) The United Evangelical Lutheran Church of Australia continues its membership with the LWF, even though the Australian Proposals for a change of the Constitution to enable genuinely Lutheran Churches to join up and remain members with a good conscience were not adopted at Minneapolis."

The reasons why the ELCA on Scriptural grounds refused LWF membership were outlined by Pastor F. Noack, President of the Qld. District of the ELCA in an essay entitled, "The Lutheran World Federation and New Guinea," presented to the Qld. District Convention in Kingaroy, 1956.

Amongst other things he states:

"WE CANNOT TAKE THE SAME STAND. WHY NOT?"

"Here are some of the reasons:-

- "1. The Lutheran World Federation claims that it is merely a Federation, that is a free league or association of Churches,

and therefore not a Church, and since the member-Churches are absolutely autonomous, that is, completely self-governing, they do not become responsible for what is being done by other member-Churches of the L.W.F. Therefore every and any Lutheran Church may be a member-Church with a good conscience.

"We answer: Now, even though the L.W.F. professes to be merely a Federation, its own constitution does not confirm this claim. In chapter III, paragraph 2, clause (a) reads: 'To bear united witness before the world to the Gospel of Jesus Christ as the power of God for salvation'. Mark, the task of bearing witness to the Gospel of Jesus Christ for salvation God has given to the Church. Hence, by carrying out clause (a) of its constitution, the L.W.F. does the task of the Church and therefore its claim that it is merely a Federation cannot be upheld, neither the argument that member-Churches do not become responsible for what the other member-Churches do. As a matter of fact, it does not bear serious examination, for even in worldly affairs it holds good, that if one is a member of an organisation, one is responsible for its actions and the actions of the members.

"2. The Lutheran World Federation, according to its constitution, has the end and aim of cultivating fellowship and co-operation in regard to the tasks which God has given the Church. Clause (e) of the Constitution states: 'To develop a united Lutheran approach to responsibilities in missions and education'. Note, responsibilities in missions is a task which God has given to the Church. Here this task is assigned by the Constitution to the Lutheran World Federation. In carrying out this task the L.W.F. is again actually doing the work of the Church, therefore the claim that it is merely a Federation falls to the ground.

"3. The Lutheran World Federation is guilty of sinful unionism, for it tolerates false doctrine and false teachers and encourages them. Where is the proof? The L.W.F. invited Professor Staehlin, of the University of Erlangen, Germany, to read an essay on Holy Communion at the Hannover Convention, 1952. In his essay Professor Staehlin openly advocated open Holy Communion, that is, to give the Lord's Supper to everyone who desires to partake of it, irrespective of whether he believes that he receives the true body and blood of Christ in the Lord's Supper or not. Clearly this essay was in conflict with the doctrine of Scripture on Holy Communion. Did the Lutheran World Federation, in accordance with its Constitution, reject this unscriptural doctrine on Holy Communion? Certainly not, for it appears in its printed report without any correction, censure, or disapproval whatsoever. Thereby the L.W.F. assigns to error equal right with the truth.

"Here is another example that shows that the Lutheran World Federation is guilty of sinful unionism. At the Hannover Convention it listed the celebration of Holy Communion on the programme of its



inaugural (commencement) service, and it was part and parcel of the main service. There was no break whatsoever. It was attended by the delegates with few exceptions. Orthodox and heterodox knelt side by side and received the Lord's Supper. This is sinful unionism and the L.W.F. has in no wise disapproved of it.

"4. Furthermore, the L.W.F. is guilty of sinful unionism, because it encourages orthodox and unorthodox Churches to co-operate in matters which require unity in doctrine and practice beforehand, viz; joint mission work and united witness, financial support for false Churches.

"5. The L.W.F. breaks its Constitution by accepting into membership heterodox Churches (Churches which teach falsely and refuse to be corrected by God's Word), e.g.: The Church of Sweden and the Church of Denmark, which have established pulpit and altar fellowship with the Reformed Church, that is with the Church of Zwingli and Calvin who falsified the doctrine of Holy Communion.

"Furthermore, the L.W.F. has accepted into membership the Union Church of Pomerania, which is still a member-Church of the Evangelical Church Union of Germany, the former Prussian State Church, which is grossly unionistic. Now did the Lutheran World Federation request the Church of Pomerania to sever its connection with the E.K.U., because this Church does not uphold the Lutheran Confessions? It took no action whatsoever. How can the L.W.F. accept a Church which subscribes to a Constitution which is plainly opposed to the Constitution of the L.W.F., whose Confessional paragraph reads: 'The Lutheran World Federation acknowledges the Holy Scriptures of the Old and New Testament as the only source and norm of all Church doctrine and practice and sees in the Confessions, especially in the Unaltered Augsburg Confession and Luther's Small Catechism, a pure exposition of the Word of God'?

"Now by admitting heterodox (false Churches) side by side with orthodox Churches (those that teach according to God's Word), the L.W.F. breaks its own Constitution and gives equal room and scope to false and pure Churches and their proclamation, and thereby assigns to error equal right with the truth. This is sinful unionism.

"6. The L.W.F. condones (overlooks) un-Lutheran affiliations, eg: the affiliation of the Lutheran Church of Sweden with the Reformed Church of England and the affiliation of the Lutheran Church of Denmark with the Reformed Presbyterian Church of Scotland. Both the Church of England and the Presbyterian Church of Scotland confess, teach, and believe that at the Lord's Table we do not receive the true body and blood of the Lord in, with, and under the bread and wine. Both deny that the Sacraments work forgiveness of sins, life, and salvation.

"By establishing pulpit and altar fellowship with these Reformed Churches, the Lutheran Church of Sweden and the Lutheran Church of Denmark have given to error equal right with the truth. Now what has the Lutheran World Federation done to admonish or reprove these member-Churches in regard to these un-Lutheran affiliations? Nothing.

- "7. The Lutheran World Federation condones un-Lutheran alliances, e.g.: the alliances of the Lutheran Landeskirchen (former State Churches) with the unionistic Evangelical Church, Germany, the E.K.I.D., to which belong Reformed, Lutherans, and Unionists. What has the Lutheran World Federation done to save these Lutheran Churches from the sinful unionism of the Evangelical Church in Germany? Again we must answer: Nothing.
- "8. The L.W.F. condones unionism. One of the most glaring examples that the L.W.F. condones unionism is the Kirchentag (joint rally of Protestant Churches) at Hamburg. A report on this day appeared in 1953, in the Sonntagsblatt, Nr.34, whose publisher is Dr. Hans Lilje, the President of the L.W.F.... This article proves beyond all doubt that gross unionism is indulged in on these days and that it is boasted of by the writer; and the publisher, Hans Lilje, condones it all, for in vain do we search his paper the Sonntagsblatt, for a single word of warning, rebuke, or censure.
- "9. The Lutheran World Federation does not take seriously clause (b) in paragraph 2, dealing with the nature and the purpose of the Federation. There we read: 'To cultivate unity of faith and confession among the Lutheran Churches of the world'....
- "10. The Lutheran World Federation, according to Section III, 2, d, of its Constitution, is resolved to participate in the ecumenical movements of today, viz: World Council of Churches, without asking or answering the highly important question whether these movements: The Evangelical Church of Germany (the E.K.I.D.) and the World Council of Churches stand four-square upon the Scriptures or not, but this is precisely the duty which its own Constitution in its confessional paragraph imposes on the L.W.F.
- "Therefore, because of all the reasons we have just heard, the E.L.C.A. cannot see its way clear to become a member of the L.W.F. as long as it is unionistic."

Finally, the writer draws the conclusion:

"The UELCA, by its membership in the LWF, and its co-operation with unionistic organizations, is involved in unionism. By establishing pulpit and altar fellowship, our church would also be involved in unionism. We would also expose our Church to the constant and grave danger of losing the truth of God's Word. Again how can we establish pulpit and altar fellowship with the UELCA when we are not agreed on the question of unionism which strikes at the Script-

ures and the Confessions? The Prophet Amos asks, 'Can two walk together except they be agreed' (Amos 3:3)"

The UELCA POSITION is clearly put by President Lohe (UELCA General President) and Secretary Proeve in a statement by the UELCA Church Council to the Albany General Pastoral Conference of the ELCA, 1959.

They state:

"We have given special attention to the question which at present particularly divides us, the matter of co-operation with other Churches and bodies with whom we are not in church fellowship (whether within the Lutheran World Federation or not), including the implications of a co-operatio in sacris. We can only affirm that in spite of our study and consideration of all possibly relevant Scripture texts, we are not able to discover anything in the principles underlying our present practice as a Church in the matter of co-operation which is contrary to the clear teaching of Scripture, and therefore sinful...

"Certainly we know how serious is the will of our Lord that we should not profane God's holy Name, but rather hallow it; and we are one with you in the holy desire to obey God's will for us by teaching His Word in all its truth and purity, and leading a holy life according to it, that by God's grace His Kingdom may come through the working of the Holy Spirit given to us. But we must beg you, brethren, to believe us when we now declare before God and you, that we know of nothing in the life of our Church, in particular in regard to our co-operation as practised within the Lutheran World Federation or with our partners in Lutheran Mission New Guinea, which directly or indirectly involves us in a profanation of God's Holy Name, or which directly or indirectly prevents us from the pure and true teaching of God's holy Word. We have a clear conscience in this matter, and we must beg you to respect and honour that conscience.

"On the other hand, we know equally well that when so far you for your part have rejected our practice in regard to co-operation with Churches with whom we are not in church fellowship as unscriptural and sinful, and when you have accordingly refused us the hand of fellowship, you have done so with a clear conscience, based on the firm conviction that only in this way you could obey the will of God that we should hallow His Name. We respect these, your conscientious scruples, and realise that so far we have not been able to show you convincing passages of Holy Writ which would have allayed your scruples, in the same way as you have not succeeded in showing a single passage from God's Word which would clearly condemn our present practice in co-operation and lead us to repentance.

"Brethren, we cannot at present foresee a single possible development which would alter scripturally-based convictions on either

side or make bad consciences of consciences that now are clear and free in either Church. Yet we believe that you are one with us, not only in doctrine, but also in the sad knowledge that our present disunity is a stumbling-block for many of our people, so that the sincerity of our intentions is doubted in many parts of our Lutheran Church."

APPEALS FOR UNION ON THE BASIS OF DECLARING OVERSEAS CONNECTIONS AN "OPEN QUESTION".

The UELCA did not regard the matters just discussed as preventing fellowship and amalgamation with the ELCA. In fact they regarded them as an OPEN QUESTION. Here we see this evil principle at work. Though Scripture forbade LWF membership and fellowship with heterodox churches, the UELCA preferred to allow each to please himself regarding his position.

As proof of this, the UELCA on two occasions offered Altar and Pulpit Fellowship to the ELCA on the basis of Paragraph I, 4(e) of the Theses of Agreement, (at Albury, 1959 and Bundaberg, 1962) as follows:

"We earnestly beg you, therefore, to consider whether the present situation is not analogous to that provided for in Thesis I,4 of our Theses of Agreement....Because we believe this to be so, we submit that the provisions laid down in this Thesis in section (e) are applicable to the question of co-operation dividing us. Our differing convictions, each equally based on a differing interpretation of God's Word, are a clear indication of the need to apply these provisions.

"We further believe that these provisions have been observed and their demands fulfilled; so that we now ought to be able to affirm cojointly in this matter of co-operation, as it affects us, 'divergent views arising from such differences of interpretation are not divisive of Church fellowship'.

"So we beg you to consider with us, prayerfully and in obedience to God's Word, whether, in accordance with Thesis I,4, our present divergent views on co-operation, as it affects us, are not irrelevant to the establishment of altar and pulpit fellowship between our churches." (Queensland Lutheran, Vol XVII,4, April 7, 1959).

Since the ELCA at this stage still realized that union on this basis was contrary to Scripture, this appeal was refused.

Thus Dr. Cl. Hoopmann wrote:

"Another overture for the establishment of altar and pulpit was made by the General Church Council of the UELCA at the beginning of the year, but as it was on the same basis as the overture made at Glenelg in 1956, it could not be accepted.

"We desire union. We are longing for it, but it must be a union based on God's Word and the Confessions of our church. The truth is too precious to be sacrificed for the sake of outward union."

(Synodical Report, 1958, p.38).

Similarly, Dr. S.P. Hebart (UELCA) appealed to the Pastoral Conference of the ELCA (Burrumbuttock, 1956) to give careful consideration to the question "whether in view of the great amount of unity established through the Theses of Agreement accepted by both Churches, the one remaining difference relating to co-operation with Churches with whom we are not in church fellowship must prevent pulpit and altar fellowship between our Churches in Australia."

It reminds one very much of Zwingli's appeal, with tears in his eyes, to Luther not to be so uncompromising on the doctrine of the Lord's Supper.

The UELCA was quite willing to unite with this matter unsettled, no doubt hoping that the ELCA men would soon be won over to their position. This position (that LWF membership was an adiaphoron) was taken by the UELCA right up to the time of merger, and as we will later on show, was the position of the Document of Union which supposedly "settled" these differences between the two churches.

#### ATTEMPTS TO CHANGE LWF CONSTITUTION FAIL.

In 1955, the Intersynodical Committees adopted the rather foolish hope that if the Constitution of the LWF could be changed, it would then take away the contentious scruples of the ELCA to LWF membership. Proposals were put to the LWF by Dr. Lohe on behalf of both Committees, involving requests to eliminate the doctrinal basis of the LWF; change its purpose clauses; and alter membership clauses.

These proposals failed, in fact were dealt with rather quickly as Dr. Hoopmann reports:

"When Dr. Lohe submitted these proposed changes to the Executive Committee in January, 1956, they were not discussed but referred to the Constitutional Committee.

"At Minneapolis many were anxious to hear the report of this Committee. It was submitted to the full assembly on August 20th, but was not read. Delegates were asked to study it before any action was taken. The Report stated that the questions that arise in connection with the Australian proposals go to the very heart of the nature of a federation and particularly the nature of the LWF. No changes, however, were recommended by the Committee with regard to the doctrinal basis and the purpose clauses of the Constitution....The whole matter was disposed of in less than fifteen minutes on the floor of the Assembly."

(General Presidents Report, 1957 Qld District Convention, ELCA, Dalby, p.50).

Thus, the foolish hope of changing this heterodox conglomeration of false teaching churches came to nothing. We ask the pertinent question: What do you expect? Can a leopard change its spots?

UELCA DECLARES FELLOWSHIP WITH A.L.C.

As if its then present overseas relationships were not bad enough, the UELCA in 1959 decided officially to declare fellowship with the ALC. Although not until now officially declared, the UELCA already regarded itself in fellowship with this group, and showed this by exchanges of pastors, with altars and pulpits also being shared. At the 1959 General Convention of the UELCA at Nuriootpa, this fellowship was officially recognized, though the Church Council of the UELCA advised against it, fearing it would hinder the progress of union. The ALC was not only a false teaching Lutheran body, but was also a member of the devilish World Council of Churches (WCC). If the ELCA were then to declare fellowship with the UELCA it would be in fellowship with a church which was part and parcel of the WCC, thereby being in fellowship indirectly with the WCC. Very little sound Christian judgement is needed to see how far the WCC has strayed from the Scriptures, admitting churches of all doctrinal persuasions. By being a member or being in fellowship with a church which has membership in the WCC, one thereby shares in and has co-responsibility for all the errors tolerated and condoned in the WCC. We can see what an obstacle this placed in the road to union of the two churches.

Dr. Cl. Hoopmann (General President of the ELCA) made the following statement:

"We would have welcomed it had the UELCA declined the offer of the ALC for confessional reasons. As this was not done, however, we must face the new situation. We are not prepared to say that it has widened the gulf separating the two churches in Australia, but it has shown us more clearly than ever how serious the differences are that still divide us. We fear the action of the UELCA at Nuriootpa was symptomatic of the attitude taken by the Synod for some time. It is becoming more and more evident that we are not one in the doctrine of unionism and its practical application."

Can you have clearer evidence that although both Churches had adopted the statements in the Theses of Agreement - Theses on Principles Governing Church Fellowship and Theses on Joint Prayer and Worship and though they claimed agreement, this was not an agreement in understanding Both churches understood things in a different way. They were not truly united in doctrine. (1 Cor 1:10).

So here was where matters lay up until 1964, both Churches "earnestly praying" for and seeking union, but realizing that the gulf that divided them was great.

But then, within a year (late 1964 to November 1965), not only had supposed "agreement" been found, but altar and pulpit fellowship was declared. We therefore must answer the question:

WHO DECIDED TO CHANGE THEIR POSITION: THE UELCA, THE ELCA, OR BOTH?

This question will be answered in Chapter XII.

CHAPTER XII.

E.L.C.A. MAKES IT FINAL FATAL MISTAKE - ADOPTION OF THE  
DOCUMENT OF UNION. (1965)

DRAWING UP OF DOCUMENT.

It was towards the end of 1964 that a dramatic event took place, which was hailed as a settlement of the last remaining differences between the two churches. A statement was drawn up entitled the DOCUMENT OF UNION. Sad to say, this document openly declared the matters which previously divided the churches OPEN QUESTIONS.

Pastor F.H. Schmidt relates concerning the history of this document:

"A personal reminiscence will, I trust, be permitted at this point. We were in Adelaide at the time for the graduation of our son-in-law, Pastor M. Heuschele. We had a free day on which we left early to visit my people in the country. Next morning when I met Dr. Hebart he told me that they had been looking for me the previous morning to ask me to attend a meeting of the Intersynodical Committees. Enthusiastically, he went on to say that he believed there had been an important development and that Lutheran Union was imminent.....

"Dr. Hebart, briefly recalling the steps which led to this change, tells how at the conclusion of a meeting of the Committees, which in his report to the 1965 General Convention he described as 'most unpromising and confused,' it was resolved 'in the last few minutes of the meeting that the Faculties of the two Seminaries be asked to investigate the basic question that divided us, the problem of co-operation. There was little enthusiasm for this suggestion, but the motion was adopted'....

"It was on the basis of the report and recommendations of the Joint Faculties that the momentous decision was made in December 1964 'that a committee consisting of Dr. C.E. Hoopmann, Dr. F. Blaess, Dr. H. Hamann, Dr. M. Lohe, Dr. S.P. Hebart and Dr. J.T.E. Renner should draft a Union Document.' This committee immediately asked Dr. Blaess and Dr. Hebart to undertake the actual drafting. By December 30th, 1964 this Document of Union was ready for this Committee and on 11th January, 1965, it was presented to and adopted by a meeting of the Joint Committee."

(A Monograph, Pastor F.H. Schmidt, p.14)

Basically the Document of Union requested that each church sever all overseas fellowships which hindered the progress of union. The ELCA was to sever its connection with the Missouri Synod, the Wisconsin Synod, the ELS and other bodies it had been in fellowship with for many

years. Likewise the UELCA, from the time of its adoption of the Document of Union, was to sever its links with the LWF, the ALC and other heterodox groups they had been in fellowship with. Then, without any overseas connections, both churches would be free to go in and unite, leaving the new church to determine what fellowships were to be arranged. This suggestion was put forward by Dr. Altus of Concordia Seminary (ELCA), and formed the basis for this document (cf. Dr. Hebart's Intersynodical Committee Report to UELCA Convention, Bundaberg, 1962).

Now all this sounds very pleasing, and obviously achieved the objective of union.

BUT WAS IT A SCRIPTURAL GOD-PLEASING UNION, OR A UNION ON THE BASIS OF COMPROMISE?

We summarize our chief objections to this "settlement" with the following points:

1. The UELCA severed its connection with the LWF (and other overseas bodies NOT BECAUSE IT BELIEVED SUCH TO BE CONTRARY TO SCRIPTURE, BUT FOR THE SAKE OF CONVENIENCE. The UELCA STILL HELD that they could see nothing wrong with membership in the LWF. In other words, their OFFICIAL DOCTRINAL POSITION was that the Word of God does not condemn LWF MEMBERSHIP.

This is shown: (a) By official statements, such as the following:

"3. Lutheran World Federation. The UELCA while still convinced that membership in the Lutheran World Federation is not contrary to the Word of God, does not require that this question must be decided before union. The united Church will therefore not be a member of the Lutheran World Federation and will decide the question of affiliation with that body at a future time." (Lutheran Herald, Feb 13, 1965, p.37).

(b) By the fact that no repentance, sorrow or regret was expressed by the UELCA for its sinful LWF membership in the past.

(c) By the thankfulness the UELCA expressed for its previous LWF membership, and its sorrow at having to sever such "cherished associations", simply for the sake of a united church in Australia. (Lutheran Herald, Oct 9, 1965 p.1).

Thus there was NOT A TRUE UNITY between the two churches as regards LWF membership, each still holding its former opinion. ALL UNION WITHOUT UNITY is contrary to God's Word.

2. The matter of LWF membership is stated to be an ADIAPHORON (something neither commanded nor forbidden by God's Word) in the Document of Union.



This is shown by Paragraph 16b which states:

"In the uniting Churches there are some who hold that membership in the Lutheran World Federation is not contrary to the Word of God, while others hold that it is."

What clearer statement could there be that there was a difference in doctrine between the two churches? Pastor Kleinig wrote on this:

"This is perhaps the most revealing sentence of the whole Document. Nowhere is there a clear decision as to which of these views is right and which is wrong. That means that both views are recognized as having equal right from the out-set. And this is the UELCA principle of 'Open Questions'. Apparently then this unscriptural principle is to be incorporated into the new Church from the very beginning. Every true Lutheran Christian who wants to abide by Scripture and Confessions, will say: No, thank you!"

(Notes on 'Document of Union', p.5)

In order to accommodate the ideas of the UELCA, Para 15 states:

"We hold that membership in an association or federation of Churches is in itself neither bidden nor forbidden in the Holy Scriptures, so that it is an adiaphoron and therefore a matter of free choice for a Church."

Obviously, those from within the UELCA could with clear consciences continue to support their former position, understanding the words "association or federation" to refer to the LWF.

The final paragraph (16c) states that in the new church, LWF membership is to be "resolved to the satisfaction of the united church."

We ask: Why could not this matter have been Scripturally settled before union, as the Lord requires in Holy Writ?

3. There are no clear statements in the Document of Union condemning LWF membership. Surely if the ELCA wanted to retain its former doctrinal position, it should have demanded such statements before agreeing to union. Scripture demands that we not only confess the true doctrine, but also condemn false teaching, especially those which are particularly before our eyes at the moment. Here the Document of Union fails.

4. The Document of Union required of the ELCA that it sever the bonds of fellowship with like-minded churches. How can this be justified by Scripture? The Bible requires of an orthodox church that where agreement in doctrine is shown to exist, there such fellowship must be sought and declared (Eph 4:1-6). The ELCA in severing these relationships, was guilty of separatism, deliberately severing the bonds of fellowship with those whom it regarded as brothers in the faith. Thus it accepted the Document of Union and entered fellowship with the UELCA

in disobedience to the Word of God.

5. The Document in many places is vague and ambiguous, a double-talk statement which is arranged to suit both sides, but to allow each to continue in their former teaching.

For example,

- (a) It states, "We accept this unity as an unmerited gift of our God in sincere repentance for what lies behind us since our fathers went their divided ways." Of what is the ELCA to repent? Clinging to God's Word in its truth and purity? Are Fritzsche and other forefathers of the ELSA to be condemned because they refused the hand of fellowship to a false teaching church? If this is what is meant - GOD FORBID!
- (b) It claims "church fellowship...presupposes unanimity in the pure doctrine of the Gospel and in the right administration of the Sacraments". (Paragraph 5).

What is meant by "Gospel"? Is it to be taken in its wider sense referring to the whole Word of God, or just to the saving message of the Gospel (narrow sense) as formerly held by the UELCA? Why is the meaning of this word, used often in the Document, not clearly stated?

- (c) Paragraph 8 is so worded as to permit exceptions to the Scripture Rule: No church fellowship with those with whom we are not united in matters of doctrine and practice. Where does God in Scripture permit such exceptions to His Law? Who is to decide and judge which are "special circumstances" and which are not?
- (d) Paragraph 9 states: "We acknowledge ourselves to be in church fellowship with all Lutheran Churches which subscribe to the Lutheran Confessions."

Isn't there something vital missing here? What of the Lord's command to adhere in all points to His Word? There are many doctrines of God's Word that are not dealt with in the Confessions. These points of controversy have arisen since the Confessions were drawn up. May we teach as we please in these points? Not all understand the Lutheran Confessions in the same sense nor do they regard everything as equally binding.

6. Finally, regarding the matter of fellowship with the native Evangelical Lutheran Church of New Guinea (ELCONG), the arrangements made concerning this mission of the UELCA were not Scripturally sound.

As previously explained, Lutheran Mission New Guinea (LMNG) was a mission of the ALC (America) and the Bavarian State Church (Germany), both heterodox churches which supported ELCONG. They not only gave of their mission funds, but also trained pastors and missionaries to serve in these churches. As well, their representatives would often come out

and commune at the altars of ELCONG. ELCONG pastors, when they visited their home congregations, would commune at the altars of their mother churches.

Those pushing for union, willing to explain things according to any way that would encourage union, claimed:

"LMNG is a completely independent body, and that its missionaries, though drawn from the American, German, and Australian churches, are not the representatives or officers of these churches, nor do they receive their calls from them but from ELCONG or LMNG. They are also carefully screened so that it is possible that not all men coming from these church bodies would be, for doctrinal, or other reasons, acceptable to ELCONG. If this is so, and there is really no actual spiritual connection with the American Lutheran Church and the unionistic Bavarian State Church, then our objections (the ELCA's, GLW) have been met, so that by practising fellowship with ELCONG we would not necessarily be involved in illicit fellowship with those American and German churches."

(In Response to Conscientious Concerns. Rev. M.J. Grieger, pp17-18)

But to these assurances, we raise the following objections:-

- (a) It was fully known that ALC and Bavarian State Church officials when visiting ELCONG communed at their altars, with official approval and sanction.
- (b) Similarly, ELCONG pastors communed at the altars of their heterodox parent bodies when on vacation.
- (c) New missionaries were trained at the false-teaching seminaries of their heterodox parent bodies, and would not only need to have been 'screened', but given a thorough reindoctrination at an orthodox seminary to make sure they did not harbour false teachings.
- (d) Pastors of the LCA have told us that this promised 'screening' process did not take place anyway, but pastors were allowed to become a part of ELCONG, still clinging to their errors.
- (e) Since the ALC and the heterodox German Churches supported ELCONG with its mission collections, this shows that they regarded themselves in fellowship or of like mind with ELCONG.
- (f) Besides the point whether ELCONG was in fellowship with the ALC and other heterodox bodies or independent, what was the doctrinal position of ELCONG? It certainly was not orthodox. If it was, how could it allow itself to fellowship freely with other heterodox Lutheran bodies?

Thereby it is clear to see that the ELCA, by declaring church fellowship with the UELCA, also brought itself into spiritual contact with heterodox overseas church bodies. Such is the sad result of not

clinging in all points to God's Word.

From this we see that the matter of church fellowship was not settled in the Document of Union. Despite some paragraphs which appeared to be watertight (e.g. Para 6: "We reject all religious syncretism or unionism enough loopholes remained for the UELCA to permit practices which the ELCA formally rejected. The UELCA took the attitude that Scripture did not forbid membership in Minister's fraternals, nor UELCA pastors joining in worship services with ministers of other denominations. This was known by leaders of the ELCA at the time of Union, but no settlement of this issue was arrived at before declaration of altar and pulpit fellowship. The matter was looked upon as an OPEN QUESTION.

Pastor Emil Kriewalt, a concerned pastor at the time of the Union who finally decided to "go in and testify" wrote:

"There are quite a number in South Australia who have such fond hope also, believing that after the union all the differences can be ironed out. The Document of Union is based on this same hope for it does not settle the points at issue, namely the doctrine of Church Fellowship, and its application in regard to the Lutheran World Federation, and overseas affiliations."

(Letter to Mr. H. Jeffers, dated 4.7.66)

And again he wrote:

"Because the Document of Union did not speak with a clear voice in regard to fellowship, even compromised the truth, we shall now find all manner of unionistic practices practised and openly condoned. How have the mighty fallen? The way is open to fraternizing with the sects, and it is only a matter of time we shall become a sect ourselves."

(Letter to Pastor Kleinig, end of 1966)

Finally Rev. M.J. Grieger writes:

"It is clear that paragraph 15b of the Document of Union:

'In the uniting churches there are some who hold that membership in the Lutheran World Federation is not contrary to God's Word, while others hold that it is.'

is an admission of the fact that there is, as yet, no agreement on this matter of practice. This is so even though at the present the LCA is not a member of the LWF. The previous UELCA was prepared to abandon membership in the LWF not because they were convinced that such practice was contrary to Scripture, but for the sake of obtaining the union with us. This is a vital matter, then, which must speedily be resolved in the LCA."

(In Response to Conscientious Concerns, p.4)

According to Scripture, the ELCA should have refused union until

this matter, and the other points of difference between it and the UELCA were settled in a God-pleasing manner. Would a business man, who had any sense in his head, put his name to a cheque, if the amount had not been written in; or sign a legal document if he did not fully understand what its contents meant? The ELCA should have refused to accept the Document of Union, and demanded that a clear and thorough statement be drawn up, outlining its former principles, which then could be put to the UELCA for reaction. By permitting union without settling these things, it betrayed its former teachings and compromised its doctrinal position simply for the sake of union.

The reader may ask: How could the pastors who wrote the above quotations, knowing what they did, with a clear conscience enter such a union? We reply: How indeed! This matter will be looked at in the next chapter.

Even the UELCA recognized that matters were not settled. In a letter to the ELCA, dated December 2, 1966, read to the ELCA closing Convention, Qld. district, the UELCA Qld. District Church Council wrote:

"We are agreed that in case of a division in the District because of certain theological decisions yet to be made by the Lutheran Church of Australia (Lutheran World Federation; Overseas Fellowships; 'Modern Hermeneutics'), which may God graciously prevent, the property rights of any group seceding for conscience sake shall be fully respected."

(Synopsis of Convention, P.7)

#### ELCA ADOPTS THE DOCUMENT OF UNION.

The telling moment for the ELCA was March 12-19, 1965, when the Document of Union was officially adopted by this church. The most telling points about this convention were:-

1. The all-out push for union adopted by leaders of the ELCA and delegates of southern congregations despite any opposition or objections by others. Union was the desired goal, and "insignificant" points of difference which hindered this purpose seemed to be regarded as unimportant.

One man was even heard to comment: "If the vote is close, I am prepared to get down on my back and put up both hands and both legs so that the vote for the Document goes through."

2. The opposition to the adoption of the Document of Union by a number of pastors (especially from Queensland) which soon dwindled away when the pressure was put on.

We let a man who was present at this Convention explain what happened:-

"The most far-reaching matter to come before the Toowoomba Convention was undoubtedly the adoption of the 'Document of

Union' as a basis for union between the two Lutheran churches in Australia. It was surely quite evident to most of the delegates already long before the vote was taken that this document would be adopted by a vast majority. It seemed as if the delegates were simply tired of waiting for a union and now that the Inter-Synodical committees had adopted a plan for union which admittedly by-passed certain matters (e.g. agreement on whether LWF membership is wrong, they were determined to adopt this plan which in essence they had rejected as unsatisfactory at the last Convention in Melbourne (prop 90a).

"Discussions with various delegates present revealed that they were ready to adopt the Document of Union even though they did not really understand what it meant. This failure to understand the document was not only among uneducated delegates but also among university graduates and teachers in our church. Private conversations reveal that some did not even care to understand the document. So long as its adoption would lead to a union they were happy to vote for it no matter what it really said or meant to say, so it seemed.

"A number of our pastors who had objected to the document for conscientious reasons, met with Dr. Hamann (jnr, GLW) one evening, who explained that the document was not really intended to mean what the words conveyed to them (and this document drawn up by 'learned' theologians, GLW). For instance in paragraph 8 the word 'normally' was not intended to deny that continued co-operation in the preaching of the Gospel and the administration of the sacraments is always and by its very nature an expression of fellowship. 'Normally' here should not be understood in its common meaning of 'usually but not always'. Again paragraph 15 does not really intend to imply that membership in the Lutheran World Federation is now regarded as an adiaphoron (a matter of indifference, neither commanded nor forbidden).

"Because of this admitted lack of clarity in the document and because a 'Document of Union' forming a basis of union between two uniting churches should obviously be very clear and not able to be interpreted in different ways, especially not in doctrinal matters, some urged that either the 'Document of Union' should be changed, so that it is clear to all what it really does mean before it is adopted, or else it should be adopted only in principle and the necessary alterations be made afterwards. The officials, however, refused to allow any changes to be made by the Convention, or even to adopt it in principle, but insisted that it be either adopted or rejected as it stood. They well knew, as did everyone else, that the convention was in the mood to adopt it anyhow. And so it was adopted in its ambiguous form with only one opposing vote and a number of abstentions. A rider was added, however, 'that the joint Intersynodical Committee be asked to clarify certain statements in the Document of Union, and that such clarification be submitted also to the Synod of the United Evangelical Lutheran Church of Australia to be held in Horsham'"

(Marburg-Minden Parish Messenger, May 1965, Pastor V. Grieger, pp2,3).

These "Clarifications" did come at a later date, but as Dr. Hoopmann even pointed out, they made no essential change to the contents of the Document. Only one word was changed and paragraph numbering was altered towards the end, which didn't change the meaning anyway. So not one of the false teachings of the Document of Union was withdrawn or in any way retracted. In fact the Intersynodical Committees made it clear

"that no alterations should be made in the substance of the Document of Union, which is the expression of the consensus reached after years of discussion." (L.H. 1965, Aug 14, p.229)

To show that the Document was grossly vague and ambiguous, two-tongued and compromising, it was stated that they

"would not argue that the wording and phrasing are in every instance perfect, and therefore suggest that, after the Horsham Convention, the whole Document of Union be examined by a joint committee to find the most adequate wording and expression for the consensus that has brought the two churches together." (L.H. 1965, Aug 14, p.229)

How ridiculous! Two churches draw up a document as a basis for union, adopt it, declare fellowship and then immediately state that perhaps the Document is inadequate and not as clear as it should be, and so appoint a committee to make changes to it! It shows that true agreement had not been reached on the pages of the Document, and the ones who drew it up were feeling rather guilty about it. Why could not full agreement in doctrine and practice have been reached before Union as Scripture demands?

Thus any hope that concerned ELCA pastors would have the Document of Union altered according to their grievances was dashed once these clarifications arrived. Pastor Kleinig reports that Pastor K. Marquart commented: "A camel could get through before but now a camel and two elephants can get through". But the damage had been done! The Document of Union had already been adopted by their church. It was now a matter of 'toe the line or get out.' Since these pastors and lay people had already compromised with false teaching, they now continued to ignore the Lord's commands to separate from error and continued to be a part of an antisciptural union.

The above reminiscences show the complete stupidity of a number of pastors and delegates, who were unhappy with the Document of Union. Under pressure they decided to vote in favour not of the actual meaning of the Document but for its "intended meaning". Who was to decide what the Document intended to mean? Obviously each could interpret it the way he pleased. The matter was left completely up in the air. Other pastors adopted it with the hope that words would be changed and clarifications made to the Document. If the same procedures were adopted in

the legal world with signed documents left open to interpretation and details added at one's discretion later on, the matter would soon finish up in disaster. No wonder the adoption of the Document of Union ended up in disaster for the ELCA, with its abandonment of its doctrinal position!

### WHO CHANGED ITS POSITION?

This leads us to the vital question we now ask above. Up to 1962 it was recognized by the ELCA that there were differences between the two churches which had not been settled. Union could only go ahead when agreement in these matters (LWF, New Guinea, Overseas Connections) had been reached. Now, in 1965, it was claimed that these matters had been settled between the two churches, and they were no longer an obstacle to union. We therefore ask:

Who changed its position? 1. the ELCA, 2. the UELCA, or 3. was there a compromise where both changed from what they formerly held?

Pastor F.G. Kleinig raised this very question in a letter to Dr. Hamann Snr., who up to the 1960's was regarded as the leading theologian in the ELCA. The reply he received was very striking and is regarded today as one of Pastor Kleinig's most prized possessions. With Dr. Hamann's answers to the questions, we concur.

Dr. Hamann (Snr.) wrote:

"You ask: Which church abandoned the position previously held? Very obviously the ELCA. Consider: Up to the convention at So. Melbourne in March, 1962, the involvement of the UELCA, in New Guinea, with the ALC, Neuendettelsau, and the Leipzig mission was considered to be an obstacle to the union of the ELCA with the UELCA. At Toowoomba, in March of this year, that involvement was considered to be no obstacle to the union. Perfectly plain, isn't it? The UELCA has not shifted an inch from its position that there is nothing wrong with its relation to the LWF and the other churches mentioned even though all of them belong not only to the LWF, but also to the World Council of Churches.

"Was there a compromise? As regards the ELCA, there was not so much a compromise as a change of position or attitude or conviction (see the previous paragraph. Rightly or wrongly, we gave up a position which we had held for years - at Albury and at Glenelg). - Was the a compromise on the part of the UELCA? The position of that body with reference to the LWF remains basically unchanged; it merely accepts the fact that, when a new Lutheran Church comes into being in Australia, that church is not automatically a member of the LWF, but will have to apply for membership at some future time. Yet in a sense one can perhaps speak of a compromise on the part of the UELCA: they did not make membership of the "new church" a condition of union with the ELCA, but left the decision on that point to the "new church". I say this on the supposition that the Horsham convention of the UELCA will not insist upon such a stipulation.



"Your letter seems to contain a question about the genesis or origin of the Document of Union. It grew out of a Proposal worked out by the faculties of Immanuel Seminary and Concordia Seminary. Very much of this Proposal has been embodied in the Document of Union. I saw the Proposal not very long after my return to Australia - with something of a shock. Well, I had my say in the committee meetings; but I realised very quickly that the desire for union was overwhelming. In our own committee only two voices were critical of the Proposal and the resulting Document. Had I been at Toowoomba, and had I had the right to vote, I could not have voted for adoption in that form. The Document seems to me contradictory at two important points. It states correctly that continued co-operation in sacris indicates united witness (and hence church-fellowship); but it goes on to say that 'in special circumstances' or 'in sporadic cases' etc such co-operation is not wrong. Clearly the co-operation in New Guinea is not to be 'sporadic', nor is it thought of as an 'emergency'. Again, the Document says correctly that existing church-fellowship cannot be repudiated except for Scriptural reasons (or words to that effect); and yet it seems to demand severance of fellowship with Missouri, with which body we have no 'legal and external ties'. As I see it, when the 'new church' comes into existence, some will consider themselves to be in fellowship with the ALC, others with Missouri. This condition is perhaps tolerable until things settle down. But what then? Can we thus commit ourselves to uncertainty, with the possibility that we may be forced into a fellowship against our conviction - or be driven into a new split?

"As far as I can see, the argument that carried the day for union in the minds of our people was this: In building up the Lutheran Church in New Guinea, the 'new church' would not enter into fellowship with the other bodies that are now building ELCONG (the ALC, Neuen-dettelsau-Bavarian Landeskirche, and Leipzig). That may be the intention. Whether that can be done in actual practice is another matter. Besides, ELCONG is actually in fellowship with the ALC, and the 'new church' would certainly be in fellowship with the Lutheran Church in New Guinea. At best, the entire situation seems to me unclear, so that one fears for the future."

(Letter to Pastor Kleinig, dated 20.6.65)

So there you have it - a leading theologian of the former ELCA admitting that his church had changed its position for the sake of union and even stating that he himself could not give his vote to the Document of Union. Surely this justifies the position taken by those who refused to have any part of the Union, desiring to hold to those teachings formerly held by the ELCA in its orthodox days. Could God grant His blessings upon a union like this which has not been entered according to His Will?

THE UELCA ADOPTS THE DOCUMENT OF UNION - HORSHAM CONVENTION -  
OCTOBER 1965 - ATTITUDE OF UELCA TO THE DOCUMENT OF UNION.

Since the ELCA had adopted this Document in March, declaration of Altar and Pulpit <sup>fellowship</sup> depended on the reaction of the UELCA. There was little doubt that it would be welcomed with great glee, because basically the Document took the position of the UELCA anyway. The only regrets expressed were that they were forced to part with their dear friends in the LWF, but the hope was there that the LCA would soon be back in the LWF anyway.

Let us hear some quotes from this important Convention which clearly shows us the attitude of the UELCA towards the Document of Union. (The following is taken from a report to the UELCA Qld. District, by President F.H. Schmidt).

"Dr. Hebart.....spoke at some length on \*8 which, he said, was the work of the joint faculties. This was an attempt to avoid legalism great praise is due to the Concordia Faculty for this is not part of their tradition. It was an important contribution toward Union ..He felt that the \* (paragraph, GLW) on LWF is probably the weakest part of the Document but it would have an important role to play in gaining the confidence of the ELCA. There was difficulty of maintaining unity within our own ranks. (Some smarted at having to leave the LWF, GLW). He readily admitted a basic inconsistency in the Document of Union and this was referred to ever and again in the discussions".

Dr. Hebart, no doubt recognized that the Document of Union was two-tongued, allowing with one paragraph what it condemned in another.

"Bro. Grope....said he felt there was an apparent lack of concern about the details of the Document of Union. He felt the inconsistencies in it and was concerned about every sentence and its implications. He stated that the view was being rather freely expressed that with regard to our severance from LWF only being a year or two and we would be back in the LWF and therefore the question did not need much debate. While he was very much in favour of Union, he asked whether we should have union at any cost. Is what we are receiving greater than what we will be losing?"

Here again we can see that UELCA pastors, in general, saw nothing wrong with LWF membership and were heartbroken when they were forced, for the sake of union to leave.

"Dr. Sasse said that with regard to the LWF there were different opinions within the two churches."

This revealing statement proves what we have been saying is true. Is this the principle of the orthodox Lutheran Church that two churches may unite while there are still "different opinions" in matters of doctrine? Definitely not!

"Dr. Schiötz (President of the LWF and the ALC)....then spoke with

full candour, 'The Document of Union is full of inconsistencies, theologically spiritually and logically. I cannot understand it with my head, yet I understand it with my heart. There is such a thing as holy inconsistency. I pray for you, I wish you God's blessing on your union. This, however, does not excuse you working on it that it may become consistent, that your head and heart may work together.'"

Well, at least this gentleman is honest. He readily admits the grave contradictions in the Document of Union. But he then says: After all, don't worry about that. As long as the desire of "my heart" (union between the two Australian Churches) is fulfilled. This smacks of the principle of the Jesuits, the loyal shock troops of the Papacy: "The end justifies the means".

Finally, the depths to which the ELCA was willing to stoop for the sake of union are shown by Pastor C. Koch who

"said that he felt that this was one of the undeserved mercies of God which our Church has experienced. We have been guilty of sins of commission and omission....I am satisfied that under our leaders we will be kept so busy that we will have no time for unfruitful debate. The more work, the less danger of division, the more we will retain the truth of the Gospel....He hoped that the rupture we were witnessing today in relationships would be temporary and that the church together would be led back into the LWF."

Note: this comes from an ELCA man who supposedly accepted the former position of his church on LWF membership.

So now the way had been cleared for declaration of fellowship between the UELCA and ELCA. As Dr. Hamann (Snr) declared: Since the two churches now basically agree, nothing should hinder them from declaring fellowship with one another. This occurred on November 28, 1965. The way was now clear for the sought-after amalgamation.

#### SUMMARY.

We of the ELCR cannot accept the Document of Union as a basis for fellowship because it leaves matters open which God's Word has decided. This Document was a compromise agreement, capitulating to the UELCA standpoint in matters of Church Fellowship, LWF membership, Overseas fellowship and the very unionistic area of ELCONG. It was on the basis of this YES-NO statement that fellowship was declared.

CHAPTER XIII.

OPPOSITION TO UNION FAILS - A VICTORY TO FALSE TEACHING.

Looking at the numerical situation of those churches in Australia today which are not a part of the LCA, one could be forgiven for assuming that the number of those who recognized the compromise and change in position by the ELCA was only very small. It would be therefore surprising for such a one to find that before the adoption of the Document of Union, the number of those, both pastors and laymen, who recognized its fatal flaws was much greater than those who eventually refused to be a part of the merger for conscience reasons. In fact, especially in Queensland, there were quite a few who were determined not to be a part of a union at the expense of truth, but later changed their minds and decided to "go in and testify".

OPPOSITION TO UNION.

This opposition we will relate in some detail.

1. The Queensland Pastoral Conference Minutes (1963 - 1966) report much of this concern.

(a) Much debate took place over Rom 16:17-18. This centred on what is the correct exposition of Rom 16:17-18, the old orthodox position (Rom 16:17-18 applies to all persistent errorists) or the "new" interpretation (it applies only to unbelievers). At the 1963 Ipswich Pastoral Conference, Pastor Kleinig and Pastor Marquart read papers outlining the old orthodox position, and although a resolution was put by Pastor Marquart supporting this position, it had too much opposition to be passed.

This same matter was debated at subsequent Conferences, a motion finally being adopted in January, 1965 which basically supported the old position.

(b) At the Ipswich Conference, 1963, debate was held on joint worship at the joint Pastoral Conference soon to be held with the UELCA. "A number of our pastors signified that they have serious scruples in taking part in such joint worship," the Minutes stated. They further stated, "A number of our pastors did not attend the devotions (joint worship, GLW) conducted by Pastor Schmidt, for conscientious reasons."

(c) At a Pastoral Conference in Greenwood, January 1965, the Document of Union was first presented. Herewith it is stated: "Many of our pastors in discussing these Articles of Union stated that they believed these articles to be totally inadequate and objectionable." A Resolution was then passed: "Whereas we cannot in good conscience accept the proposed 'Document of Union' in its present form, as we understand it as an adequate and God-pleasing resolution of differences, therefore be it

RESOLVED that we herewith ask our District President to convey to the Intersynodical Committees the particular points raised, to underscore the grave, conscientious nature of these concerns, and to secure a genuine coming to grips with these matters."

2. In February, 1965, the Parish Education Committee of the Qld. District of the ELCA issued a booklet entitled "CROSSROADS, A report on two pressing problems facing the ELCA compiled especially for laymen". This booklet dealt firstly with liberal trends within the Missouri Synod and secondly with the Lutheran Union situation in Australia. Though drawn up by Pastor K. Marquart, the Chairman of the Committee Pastor C. Priebenow and others unanimously approved it for publication.

CROSSROADS, though not mentioning the Document of Union, took a position directly contrary to it, stating that a settlement of the differences between the ELCA and the UELCA according to the principles of the Document of Union would be contrary to God's Word. It thereby represented the doctrinal stance of those concerned ELCA members who felt that a union was being brought about without proper settlement of the differences.

Let us bring a few quotes from this seventy-two page booklet.

### "III. Australian Lutheran Union.

It has often been said, and quite correctly, that the main issue dividing the two Australian Lutheran Synods today is the Lutheran World Federation. But this statement is not often understood correctly. Many people take it to mean that if only the UELCA were to leave the LWF, the problem would be solved. But this mistakes a mere symptom, or effect, for the real cause. It is like curing measles by treating red spots.

"THE REAL PROBLEM HAS NEVER BEEN AND IS NOT NOW THE FACT OF UELCA MEMBERSHIP IN THE L.W.F., BUT THE THEOLOGY WHICH MAKES SUCH MEMBERSHIP POSSIBLE!.....

"It follows that if the UELCA were to leave the LWF tomorrow, (which is exactly what they promised when accepting the Document of Union, GLW) that in itself would solve nothing. For the difference is not this that one Synod has said, 'We should not belong to the LWF,' and the other, 'We should belong'. Rather, one has said: 'It is wrong, and contrary to the Word of God to hold membership in the LWF', while the other has said, 'No, it is not wrong'. The real difference cannot be met by withdrawing from the LWF, but only by deciding the question: Is it, or is it not, contrary to the Word of God to hold membership in the LWF? And obviously that question can be answered only in one of two ways; no third choice exists. Nothing short of such clear-cut decision can claim to have removed the difference, no matter how well it may have been hidden. Union without agreement here would mean joint submission not to the Word of God, but to the false 'Open Questions'

theory."

"The ELCA has always insisted that it is the under-lying principles, not merely the symptoms, which really matter, and on which agreement must therefore be reached if there is to be true unity.

"This insistence on facing principles, not just symptoms, is not only good theology but plain common sense. If the ELCA united with the UELCA merely on the basis of the latter body's leaving the LWF, without having resolved the underlying differences about Church fellowship and 'attitude to the ecumenical movement and ecumenical bodies', the result would not require prophetic vision to foresee.

"We must trust the UELCA to continue holding to its declared position that LWF membership and similar things are not contrary to the Word of God, unless this position is clearly and officially changed. And leaving the LWF just to humour what is perhaps regarded simply as the ELCA's odd and erring conscience, does not change that position in the least.

"The difference over Church Fellowship, briefly, is this, that whereas the ELCA in obedience to Scripture, rejects all Church Fellowship with false, erring churches, the UELCA while agreeing with the principle, nevertheless interprets it in such a way that all kinds of spiritual, fraternal relations with the adherents of false doctrine are regarded as permissible."

(CROSSROADS, pp 47-49)

Finally under Chapter IV. What Can We Do?, the author mentions that if agreement can not be reached, the only alternative would be to discontinue negotiations.

Then he concludes

"IMPASSE OR BY-PASS?"

"The only alternative to this orderly, responsible procedure would seem to be a detour around the real issues, into a union without unity. Now, if agreement is impossible before union, it is certainly foolish to expect such an agreement to materialise after the union has been consummated! But to leave such vital issues as the Lutheran World Federation, the Ecumenical Movement and its theology, the nature of church-fellowship, and overseas fellowship, in abeyance until after the union, would be to plan for chaos and civil war. Truth would be sacrificed to majorities in such an unprincipled, helter-skelter scrambling of the two Synods, which is, for these reasons, unthinkable.

"Unless full agreement in doctrine and the corresponding practice is reached and demonstrated before union, the actual position of the new body - no matter how good its 'doctrinal basis' - would be doubtful and uncertain. But actions on the basis of spiritual uncertainty are an intolerable abomination, for St. Paul teaches:

'And he that doubteth is damned if he eat, because he eateth not of faith: for WHATSOEVER IS NOT OF FAITH IS SIN!' (Rom 14:23). If this applies to such a seeming trifle as the eating of meat, how much more to the momentous question of a church body's doctrinal position! No Christian could with a good conscience join a Synod whose doctrinal position is not yet known or certain, but might turn out this way or that. Conscience and confession cannot be held in abeyance!"

Quite strong words these are! If the pastors who wrote them and the Queensland district for whom they had been written had clung to them, they certainly could not, several months later, have entered the union. In fact, when the Document of Union was adopted, these writings became an acute embarrassment to the Qld. District Pastoral Conference because they condemned the position the Document of Union takes. They therefore cunningly decided to wipe their hands of its contents. At a Pastoral Conference of the ELCA, Qld. District, it was decided that "Crossroads" is not an official publication of the Queensland District, and was published without the knowledge and consent of its officials." (Minutes, p.2)

It is reported that Dr. Hoopmann (the General-President of the ELCA)

"was saddened in 1965 by the appearance of an official report by the committee of parish education of the Queensland District which was critical of Missouri."

(When the Murray meets the Mississippi, J.B. Koch, p.212)

Apparently pressure was put on the Qld. District of the ELCA to do something about "CROSSROADS" lest it become an obstacle to union. It is interesting to note that the Qld. District President, while claiming "not to be held responsible for CROSSROADS" (AL, 1965, Aug 18), took a cleverly worded "sitting on the fence" attitude by claiming that the "President, while not endorsing every individual judgement, fully backs the theology of CROSSROADS" (AL, 1965, Aug 18).

How convenient! If one in favour of union came and complained to the President about the contents of "CROSSROADS", he could reply, "I agree with you, I've already said I can't accept all the judgements it makes." If one opposed to union and in agreement with "CROSSROADS" asks for the opinion of the President, he can say "Yes, I agree with the theology of 'CROSSROADS' too". It is "two-faced" statements like these, hoping to please both the conservatives and liberals, that the devil uses to cause a church the greatest harm, cunningly encouraging false and true doctrine to exist side by side.

3. Further evidence of concern is shown by individual writings of men in Queensland who saw the evil Open Questions idea at work in the Merger. We do not have room to quote from these in detail, but will summarize the views expressed. (Copies of these documents are

available from the author).

- (a) In a paper entitled "STATUS CONTROVERSIAE" (State of Controversy dated 29.12.62 and written by Pastor C.R. Priebbenow, the writer clearly states the points at issue in the proposed merger of the two churches. He deals with such matters as Church Fellowship, Rom 16:17, joint prayer with representatives of heterodox church bodies, doctrinal discipline, open questions, LWF membership and doctrinal differences with the UELCA.

It is quite obvious from this that the author was unhappy about the proposed merger and recognized that there were many serious doctrinal differences still existing.

- (b) At the 1962 ELCA Convention, Mr. T.D. Koch, (Exec. Secretary of Lutheran Layman's League), a strong supporter of immediate union with the UELCA, challenged anyone on the floor of Convention to nominate any passages of Scripture which forebade immediate fellowship with the UELCA. In reply, Pastor C.R. Priebbenow responded with passages such as Rom 16:17; Amos 3:3; 1 Cor 1:10; Gal 1:6,7. Mr. T. Koch then claimed that these passages referred to outright unbelievers. After Convention, Pastor Priebbenow responded with a circular to ELCA pastors; Koch replied and Priebbenow sent a second circular.

In reply to Mr. T.D. Koch's Circular, Pastor Kleinig wrote a letter of eight typed foolscap pages, which was then sent as a circular to all ELCA pastors. Pastor Kleinig here wrote:

"My personal opinion is that the ELCA is heading for a crisis, and the sooner we all get clear on this the better. We shall then be able to meet it." (Page 1)

Pastor Kleinig went on to point out the UELCA Open Questions principle (agreeing to disagree in matters of doctrine) and the historic position of the ELCA: First unity in doctrine and practice, then organic union. Pastor Kleinig follows the Open Questions principle through the history of the UELCA, pointing out that Koch's attitude that 100% agreement in accord with God Word is not necessary for union, was contrary to the clear Word of Christ. (Matt 28:19,20). He also showed how this same principle was at the basis of the Theses of Agreement.

To this circular, Pastor Kleinig received only two replies, one from Pastor Temme and the second from Pastor Priebbenow. Pastor Temme wrote:

"Many thanks for the copy of your reply to Koch. I wholeheartedly endorse! In the past there has been far too much pussy-footing

(Letter to Pastor F.G. Kleinig, dated 12.9.62)

Pastor Priebbenow replied:



"Your circular to Brother Koch arrived yesterday. You have given him, and our ministry, the kind of words that have been so necessary for years now, and I pray our Lord Jesus Christ that He will richly bless the ministry of our church through it. Naturally, I subscribe wholeheartedly to everything in it."

(Letter to Pastor F.G. Kleinig, dated 13.9.62)

- (c) Pastor Glen Zweck wrote a paper dated February 26, 1965 entitled "Lutheran Union". This paper strongly opposed the Document of Union, pointing out the many flaws and compromises it contains, especially ranking LWF membership as an Open Question. Concerning the Document of Union compromise on LWF membership, Pastor Zweck writes:

"Notice that, according to point (c) of the Document of Union, LWF membership is to be decided by a majority vote after union. Apart from the fact that loyalty to the Scriptures cannot tolerate such a procedure, we surely have here the seeds of a future split." (page 6)

Concerning the unscriptural settlement of the OVERSEAS CONNECTIONS matter, Pastor Zweck writes:

"Instead we find the matter of overseas connections is now something to be decided AFTER union, not BEFORE. This is intolerable. We dare not allow a matter of conscience like this to be left a matter of doubt, to be resolved by a post-union lottery. That would be the sin of schism." (page 7)

Pastor Zweck also exposes the UELCA Open Questions idea, and reveals that it occurs in the opening section of the Theses of Agreement. Finally he concludes:

"I could not possibly have any part in a church that was formed on the basis of this Document of Union, unless it is drastically amended to rectify the faults I have indicated above. That would be the rankest disloyalty to God and His Word. I have considered well what may be the consequences of taking this stand, but I have decided that I must nevertheless take it, come what may. God may yet be able and willing to bring about a conclusion that is in harmony with His Word." (page 10)

These are certainly strong words, and one must wonder how such a one could turn around so quickly and be a part of a union he so soundly has condemned.

- (d) In the Pastoral Messenger of the Greenwood Parish, February 1965, in an article entitled "TOWARDS A GOD-PLEASING UNION", Pastor M. Grieger strongly objected to many points in the Document of Union, in relation to Overseas connections, LWF membership and New Guinea.

Using strong and clear language, Pastor Grieger wrote:

"If we can't agree on which churches to affiliate with before the union, we are inviting chaos and civil war after the union. It is unthinkable to postpone these decisions until after a union. We cannot legitimately agree in advance to walk together into the dark. It is a pre-requisite to a God-pleasing union to have full agreement in doctrine and practice. The important disagreements in fellowship practice between the two churches in the past indicates that we will not be 'perfectly joined together in the same mind and the same judgement' unless these important issues are agreed upon before the union." (page 9)

Concerning the compromise on LWF membership, Pastor Grieger writes:

"If we wish to be joined together in the 'same mind and the same judgement' this issue must be agreed upon to the satisfaction of the uniting churches before they can be joined together, for without it there is no true unity for a God-pleasing union. And 'union without unity is not pleasing to God'. We must reject membership in the LWF as being contrary to God's Word. Nothing less is acceptable." (page 11)

From what has been written above, we can see that in the Qld. District of the ELCA, strong opposition existed to the Document of Union. In fact if these ones had clung to their former positions, there would have been a strong contingent who would have remained separate from the union. There was even talk of the concerned Queensland pastors forming their own church body, establishing a Seminary and even becoming a district of an overseas confessional Lutheran Church body, Wisconsin.

Apart from Pastor Kleinig, amongst those who had expressed concern, we number the following pastors:

K. Marquart, C. Priebbenow, G. Zweck, M. Grieger, V. Grieger, the late H. Temme, A. Bode, D. Heyne, the late E. Kriewalt (S.A.)

But this opposition faltered in March 1965 and fell soon after. Concerning this, we may pointedly ask: HOW COULD MEN WHO KNEW THAT DIFFERENCES HAD NOT BEEN SCRIPTURALLY SETTLED, WHO PREVIOUSLY HAD STRONGLY OPPOSED UNION AND THE DOCUMENT OF UNION FOR CONSCIENCE REASONS, NOW TURN AROUND AND ENTER THIS UNION TO WHICH THEY HAD PREVIOUSLY OBJECTED?

This question will now be answered.

#### OPPOSITION TO UNION FALTERS.

Quite obviously, of those previously mentioned, a change of position must have taken place. Previously, before March 1965, they strongly objected to the erroneous principles of the Document of Union; now, after March 1965, they accepted it in principle and later were willing to

be a part of a union which used the Document of Union as its basis.

When and how did this change of position take place?

A former Queensland Pastor, who was amongst those concerned about union, gives detailed information of this in a letter written to explain the happenings during and around the March 1965 Convention held in Toowoomba. Here the Document of Union was adopted. Since the pressure was now being put on to have this Document passed, those opposing its contents were forced either to take a stand and reject it, thereby being forced to consider the need to leave the ELCA; or to change their position and accept its contents in principle and thus to overthrow all the objections they had previously given. Sadly, many pastors decided to do the latter.

This Queensland Pastor writes:

"I take this opportunity to report on our ELCA Convention in Toowoomba, which is still in progress. I should like to supply some background information regarding the Document of Union, so that you will know what really happened here.

"Already before the Convention our Queensland Pastoral Conference has declared the Document inadequate. Our President (Pastor F. Noack, GLW), however, did not stand with us, partly, I think, owing to some unfortunate personal conflicts which had developed in the last few months.

"A few days before the Convention our District Parish Education Committee released Crossroads, in a belated attempt to bring some semblance of facts and evidence to bear upon the situation...

"The present Convention was preceded by two days of General Pastoral Conference, at which we did almost nothing else than debate the Document of Union. As it was voted on, section by section, the objectionable features were opposed by up to 15 pastors. About five or six other opponents of these sections were absent, so that the final vote would have involved at least 20 or 21 'no's', or between 1/6 and 1/7 of those present. By midnight before the opening of Convention, the deadlock remained unresolved. Still, the officials insisted on taking it to the floor of Convention anyway."

From this it can be seen that on this evening substantial opposition still existed to adopting the Document of Union. But what is now reported would bring horror even to a babe in the Scriptures. It was a complete capitulation under pressure to those desiring union at any cost.

The Pastor continues:

"In the meantime, private meetings of our group and Dr. H.P. Hamann (jnr, GLW) had brought out the interesting fact that the Document was not

intended to mean what on the face of it was clearly being said. The word 'normally' there suggests that sometimes altar and pulpit fellowship is not really koinonia, a manifest absurdity and contradiction in terms, which opens the door to any amount of unionism. We were told, however, that this was not the intention. 'Co-operation' in 8 was meant to cover situations short of koinonia - perhaps an area we used to describe as circa sacra, or some other unusual arrangements not involving koinonia. Dr. Hamann, being both intelligent and fair, suggested to us that we could agree to the Document in principle, and then have certain changes made, which would remove our conscientious objections. An amendment to that effect was proposed by Pastor Boesch - Science Master at our Concordia College here - but the President and others on the Intersynodical Committee took the position that the Document had to be accepted or rejected precisely in the form in which it was submitted and that no alterations could be made. Although the laymen were obviously and overwhelmingly for the union--on any terms, one would conclude--there was sufficiently determined opposition to this all-or-nothing approach, that the matter was tabled, and the suggestion made that over the weekend the Intersynodical Committee meet with the conscientious objectors and see if some accommodation could be reached.

"After four hours of debate on Sunday, the Committee relented, and, to avoid a full-scale battle on the Convention floor, agreed to include in the motion the recommendation that certain statements be clarified (that is, reformulated). We submitted a statement (enclosed) indicating our conscientious objections. We understand that they will be met. On this understanding we did not oppose the motion and it went through with much unanimity, and there was no nastiness."  
(emphasis added)

Finally the writer summarizes:

"But then it was shown that our fundamental doctrinal objection (par. 7 and 8) would be met -- in other words that the intended meaning of our document was not as bad as the actual wording, which we could under no circumstances accept. With that, it seems to me, no clear conscientious grounds for separation are left."

(Letter by a former Queensland Pastor, not dated).

Here we have the horrifying situation where those objecting to union were willing finally to accept the Document of Union because it "was not intended to mean what on the face of it was clearly being said". Yes, clarifications requested did finally come, but as was shown changed none of the basic principles of the Document of Union and answered none of the objections mentioned in the previous chapter.

That the capitulation to decide to accept the Document of Union was unscriptural is seen by the following points:

1. 1 Cor 1:10...."that ye all speak the same thing, and that there

be no divisions among you; but that ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgement" demands that not only agreement be reached in the same words, but also that these words be understood in the same sense. The Document of Union was obviously ambiguous, being able to be taken up in different ways. To claim agreement on the basis of a statement that can be understood in different senses is plainly dishonest, for such true agreement does not exist.

2. By accepting this double-tongued statement, equal right was given to the false teachings and erroneous doctrines of others. God requires of Christians not only to confess the true doctrine, but also to condemn false doctrines (Matt 10:32; Rom 16:17-18). When a person is willing to accept a statement which gives equal space to and tolerates false doctrines, or at least permits such teachings to be held, he becomes a partaker of those false doctrines (1 Tim 5:22) and is just as guilty before God as if he taught them himself.

The UELCA understood the Document of Union in their sense, permitting the view that LWF membership was not contrary to God's Word and certain forms of Church fellowship could be had with heterodox churches; while ELCA pastors understood it as condemning these things. This is the evil OPEN QUESTIONS PRINCIPLE in action.

3. Faithful orthodox teachers of the past condemned such double-tongued statements. Consider the testimonies given in Chapter X dealing with the unscriptural nature of the Theses of Agreement.
4. Pastor Kleinig often warned against being fooled by the pious claim: "We agree with you in principle." The immediate question comes: How much does he agree? He certainly does not accept it 100%; what points does he disagree with? Generally the claim to agree "in principle" is just an excuse to convey the impression of a semblance of agreement, whereas in truth the teachings are poles apart.
5. Especially we find it highly contradictory to have claimed agreement with the Document of Union and then to desire "clarifications" and changes in various points where one is dissatisfied. This is like putting one's signature to a cheque and then saying to a stranger: "You put in the amount of money you see fit." Would any sound businessman do something like this? Would an individual with the least bit of common sense in his head, sign a legal document without understanding its contents, and then say: We must determine later on what this means? This would be plain foolishness. This is in earthly matters. Surely in spiritual matters where God's Word is involved the need is far more important to know clearly where one stands before taking the vital step of giving one's assent to its contents. Conservatives should have demanded a plain statement of Scriptural teaching settling the

differences between the ELCA and UELCA before voting to accept it.

By accepting the Document of Union, the concerned ones in the ELCA accepted, must take responsibility for and made their own the anti-scriptural views held by the UELCA. Thus they did a complete somersault from their former opposition. The unionists certainly won the day.

#### WHAT SHOULD THE CONCERNED ELCA PASTORS HAVE DEMANDED?

As has been shown in Chapter X, there were many other matters between the two churches which were not settled by the Theses of Agreement. Scripture demanded that complete agreement be reached on these matters before fellowship and amalgamation.

But concerning the matters dealt with by the Document of Union, those who were unhappy with its contents should have followed the following points:

1. Rejection of the Document of Union as a basis for union between the two churches because its teachings were contrary to Scripture

2. Demand of a clear, unambiguous statement of orthodox Lutheran teaching, which not only stated the teachings of the former ELSA, but also contained NEGATIVA condemning those errors held by the former UELCA. The Brief Statement of the Missouri Synod of 1932, as well as sound essay written in the past on Church Fellowship and related matters should have served as a basis.

3. If such a Scriptural statement was not forthcoming from the Intersynodical Committees, a suggested alternative statement could have been drawn up by the concerned pastors, stating their position in doctrine and practice - (e.g. Brief Statement of 1932).

4. This statement could have been put to the UELCA for their approval or rejection.

If it was APPROVED by the UELCA and they wholeheartedly promised to abide by it, several years testing period should then have elapsed to prove that the UELCA had changed from its former position before amalgamation.

If it was REJECTED by the UELCA, this would be clear indication that they held to their former position and refused to accept Scriptural teaching. This would be proof of their heterodoxy. Fellowship would then be refused until Scriptural doctrine and practice was accepted.

5. Finally if the ELCA accepted officially the Document of Union (as happened in March, 1965), those who rejected its contents should have taken their stand on Scripture and said: Since you now officially condone the teachings of the UELCA, despite instruction and admonition, we can no longer regard you as brothers in the faith and must sever

fellowship with you, as the Lord commands (Amos 3:3; 2 Cor 6:17). Complete reliance should have been laid upon the Lord in loyal obedience to His Word.

What a sad day it was for the ELCA that the majority of those concerned pastors did not stick to their principles but gave way in the face of opposition. Thus, in this last battle in the ELCA for orthodox Lutheran teaching, Satan won the day; the little leaven of false teaching prevailed.

### EXCUSES OF PASTORS AND LAY PEOPLE FOR ENTERING A GOD-DISPLEASING UNION.

There were numerous lay people and pastors from the ELCA who realized that there were matters not settled between the two churches and that it was being brought about on an un-Scriptural basis. But almost just as many were the EXCUSES used to justify their entrance into such an unbiblical union.

In the following list of such EXCUSES, and our Scriptural reply, we will not mention names, but can assure the reader that such can be cited upon request. In many cases documentary evidence is available to prove that these were used to placate consciences in regard to fellowship with the UELCA and LCA membership.

1. Some claimed: "We know that things are not settled in the new church. But see, it is our duty to GO IN AND WITNESS against these false teachings." "We will correct them" was the great cry. "They will not be able to reply to our testimony to Lutheran teaching." "If we find our testimony falls on deaf ears, then is the time to withdraw from the Church." So ignoring their Scriptural duty to remain separate from a false teaching church, they saw their God-given duty to remain in and set themselves up as a stay against the false teachings in their church.

To such, the simple reply comes: What does God's Word really mean to you and are you truly prepared to abide by it? What do you regard as more important: God's commands in Scripture to separate from false doctrine, or man's opinion that it is the best thing to witness against false teaching from within a false teaching church?

The false idea of many conservatives to remain in a false teaching church and witness is spoken of by Dr. Janzow. Dr. Janzow strikingly comments concerning this foolish action and vain hope:

"But could not a person by means of uniting with errorists finally help truth to victory? Enraptured with this thought many enter into church-fellowship with such whose persistent departing from important parts of Christian doctrine is well known to them. With confident hope they figure thus: 'If only we are once united with them, then our witness will soon exert

such a convincing influence upon them that they will drop their errors and turn to the truth in all points'. --- Foolish hope! In their naive, truly child-like innocence they do not even notice that by means of their syncretistic, faith-mingling union they have from the very outset tied their tongue, so that they cannot really witness without coming into contradiction with themselves. For through their uniting with the errorists in the first place they have already declared the existing differences in doctrine to be 'non essential', indifferent and not divisive of church-fellowship. Why then still make so much fuss concerning them? If these differences did not hinder the union, what purpose could their removal now serve, since church-fellowship is established and is practised in spite of difference in doctrine? That is how the 'heterodox' in the union view the matter --- and continue to uphold their previous error.

"That is acting quite logically; but it explains at the same time why by means of such unionistic, syncretistic compromises in matters of Christian doctrine truth never achieves victory, but always error, which from the outset had nothing to lose. Unionism actually cancels out the difference between truth and error; for through the admixture of the least error truth forfeits its character as truth. Instead of helping truth to victory, unionism seals the lips of the witnesses to the truth in the interests of a false peace, so that they can no longer befittingly reprove error and combat it with any hope of victory. ---

"FOR GOD'S SAKE LET NO ONE THEREFORE PERMIT HIMSELF TO BE FOOLED BY THIS AIM OF UNION."

(Why Still the Division, A.T.R., Vol 1 No.4 p.129f, emphasis ours)

2. Others said: "Our leaders have assured us that everything is right. They are more learned than we. We will trust them and go in

To this we reply:

(a) Yes, it is true that the leaders of the ELCA gave the assurances: "They have come a long way. The UELCA accepts the Scriptures and the Lutheran Confessions. We have studied matters and can assure you everything is okay. We must trust the promises the UELCA has given us that everything has been settled." On the basis of these assurances many lay people and pastors who were concerned decided to trust their leaders promises; where as otherwise they may have remained separate Sadly many of these were really ignorant of the many issues involved. For them the words of Hosea 4:6 are true: "My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge."

(b) The leaders of the ELCA deliberately kept details of a number of matters from their members because they realized it would bring concern to them about the proposed union and perhaps incline them against joining. For example:



-- At a Qld. District Pastoral Conference held in Toowoomba, 8-10th February, 1966, the minutes record the following:

"After lunch Pastor Noack gave some information concerning union matters which he did not want made public as yet, e.g. UELCA membership in the Australian Council of Missions, and the communing of A.L.C. officials in ELCONG."

Obviously, this would be quite explosive if it were known at the time by some ELCA lay people. Hence the keen desire to keep the matter quiet.

-- At a meeting of Queensland district Pastors in Adelaide with the Seminary faculties to discuss Queensland objections to the Document of Union (July 1966), it came as a shock to them that the majority of Seminary professors of both churches denied the inerrancy of the Bible, claiming there are numerous mistakes, errors and contradictions in the Scriptures.

No full report of these claims was given to pastors and lay people at the time. The matter was deliberately hushed up by the leaders because they realized it would put the "spanner in the works". Rather a compromise statement was drawn up as the official "agreement" of these meetings which allowed the liberals to retain their previous errors.

-- At a Pastoral Conference held in Toowoomba, August 15-17 1966, Dr. Hamann (jnr) and Dr. Sasse opened up before the Queensland pastors about their denial of the inspiration and absolute inerrancy of the Scriptures. In fact to read these minutes is rather horrifying, to know that these things were said at a "Lutheran" pastoral Conference and that of the ELCA.

Pastor A. Bode, a pastor at Teviotville, South-east Queensland, was not present at the Conference, and so received a report from the secretary, Pastor V. Grieger. Pastor Bode wrote to Pastor Kleinig:

"The Report, particularly the one about our Conference, was so astonishing that I came to the conclusion: Surely this cannot all be correctly reported! So I wrote about my amazement to Brother Grieger.

"I should love to send you all the material, but now a letter has arrived from Noack and Schmidt (the two Presidents, GLW) with the plea directed to all pastors not to reveal anything of what transpired there at Toowoomba. It is to be kept secret among the pastors. The Venerable Rev. gentlemen plead: 'May we ask once more that Pastoral Wisdom be applied?'"

Pastor Bode summarizes the Conference with the words:

"Dear, oh dear, what a dreadful report about that Conference!"  
(Letter to Pastor Kleinig, dated 31.7.66).

Obviously these leaders were true church politicians, willing to use questionable means to achieve their aims. Surely doubt is cast on the legitimacy of a union that needs to be brought about by deliberately hiding things from the lay people and stealth.

- (c) The Lord places the duty of judging the doctrine and practice of the church not only upon the pastors, but particularly upon the laypeople. They are to be informed about where their church stands and what it does so that they as individuals can with a good conscience either support or reject its teachings and practice. The words of Christ: "Beware of false prophets" (Matt 7:15) are addressed to all Christians. In fact, where a church relies solely on its pastors, or leaders to judge doctrine and practice, history has proven that that church is doomed to depart from the Word of God, and the groundwork is laid for a papistical institution.
- (d) God warns against putting trust in men or earthly opinions. "Cursed be the man that trusteth in man!" says Jeremiah 17:5. "Trust not in princes..." says Hymn 449 (ALHB). See also Ps. 146:3; 118: 8,9. Consciences must rest solely in God and His Word and not doubt but be certain concerning the doctrine of the Church. To do otherwise amounts to idolatry, putting ones trust elsewhere than on God's Word. "Trust in the Lord with all thine heart," the Lord commands (Prov 3:5).

3. Others used as their comfort: "Why not simply trust the good faith of everyone concerned? They have all promised that they agree; must we not accept their promises?"

To this Crossroads amply replies: "This is a well-meaning but disastrous misunderstanding. In the first place, it is not at all a question of trust and good faith, but of adequate doctrinal statements. Everyone would gladly trust the good faith of those who give clear unambiguous assent to Scripture truth on the exact points at issue. But in the absence of such clear, unmistakable declarations, one can only trust that each party will in good faith continue to hold and teach what it has held and taught in the past! ....

"Secondly, if it were a matter of trust, then it must be said, with Luther, that when it comes to doctrine, it is wrong and idolatrous to trust in mere man." (Crossroads, p.48)

4. A number who realized differences were not settled jumped upon the argument palatable to human reason: "Since our church, the ELCA, as a whole united to form the LCA, our old church went out of existence. I now was a part of the LCA and had to assume it was an orthodox church and begin to combat the errors as they made their presence felt."

To this we reply:

- (a) The Lord places responsibility for the doctrine and practice of a church not just upon the church as a whole, its Conventions, councils or boards of elders, but upon every individual lay

person or pastor in that church. If their church goes contrary to the Word of God, no person has the right to say: "I know this is wrong, but after all it is not I but the church as a whole that has decided to this. God does not hold me responsible. I must now stay in and try to correct things." No, by remaining in the union such a one becomes a part of and condones (1 Tim 5:22) the unscriptural actions which brought it about. He is responsible for this compromise of God's Word and therefore is in duty bound to take his stand and refuse to be a part of the union this compromise brings about.

- (b) To claim in essence, "I was carried along with the stream and therefore cannot be held responsible for what happened" is both untruthful and unScriptural. It is untruthful because every voting member of ELCA had the opportunity to vote for or against the Document of Union and merger with the UELCA. If they voted YES, they agreed with its unscriptural basis. If they abstained (because of a concerned conscience) the Lord required of them to make their decision on the basis of Scripture; otherwise such abstention sooner or later amounts to saying "Yes" to what has been accepted. If the individual's vote was "No", since the matters involved were of a doctrinal nature, the Lord required ACTION: yes, admonition and instruction of those who have erred; but soon SEPARATION if such instruction and admonition was not heeded.

To bring such an excuse as this is shirking one's responsibility to the Lord and His Word and also those souls who in ignorance agreed to join the new church not realizing its unscriptural basis.

5. Again some argued: "We have a doubting conscience about joining the LCA. But not only are we uncertain that by joining in we would be committing the sin of unionism; but also by refusing to be a part of it we may be committing the sin of separatism (remaining separate from an orthodox church without valid reason). Therefore since we don't in ignorance want to be guilty of the sin of separatism, and since we can't act in view of our doubting conscience, we had better remain in."

It is astounding to what lengths the guilty conscience is willing to go to excuse its actions! We reply

- (a) God's Word demands unity in doctrine and Scriptural practice before union or fellowship. If such unity has not been achieved no orthodox Lutheran Christian can with a good conscience be a part of the resulting fellowship.
- (b) The Scriptural principle is: Don't act against a doubting conscience. In other words, if you are unsure whether a proposed action is contrary to the Word of God or not, keep on the ground of which you are sure until any new action has been demonstrated as Scripturally correct. Those in the ELCA

unhappy about the proposed merger should have remained separate from fellowship with the UELCA and union until it was clearly shown that unity had been achieved.

Surely the orthodox Lutheran axiom also applies here, "He who advocates a change has the burden of proof"; or put in other words: We are to hold to the accepted teachings and practices unless it has been clearly demonstrated from Scripture that a change should be made. The ELCA should have remained separate from the UELCA until complete Scriptural unity in doctrine and practice had been reached.

6. Again the comment was heard: "Although matters may not be settled, we know it is God's Will for union, therefore we must join."

We reply: An argument like this should be treated with the contempt it deserves. Did God perhaps come in a vision or dream, or did He speak directly from heaven and reveal to such a one that union was His will!! No; It is His Word which reveals to us His will, and God's Word tells us that no union is God-pleasing unless union in doctrine and practice has been achieved.

7. Finally, some permitted themselves to be swayed by earthly considerations. Lay people considered the fact that they had grown up in the church, they had contributed much money to it, were baptised, confirmed and married in it, they had positions of office bearers in it, had their families belonging to it etc. Pastors considered the fact that their congregations would not support their position and follow them in their stand against the merger, they would have no congregation to support them, their superannuation would be lost etc. Though such people may not consciously have said: These things are more important to me than abiding by God's Word, yet these earthly considerations swayed their decision to enter an unscriptural union.

#### "A DECLARATION AND PLEA" - SALVE FOR A WORRIED CONSCIENCE.

During 1966, a number of those pastors formerly opposed to union but who changed their minds, became very concerned about the compromises in the Document of Union, as well as other errors which they felt were being tolerated or would be soon taught in the new church.

Therefore a statement entitled "A DECLARATION AND PLEA" was drawn up not only condemning errors opposed to the doctrine of the Inspiration and Inerrancy of Scripture, but also condemning Ministers' fraternals and LWF membership. The doctrinal contents of "A DECLARATION AND PLEA" are quite sound and in accord with orthodox Lutheran teaching. This document was adopted by the Qld. District Pastoral Conference of the ELCA and although commended to all ELCA congregations in Queensland to bind themselves to, was only eventually adopted by a small minority of congregations.

Although, as we have indicated, the DECLARATION AND PLEA was in itself doctrinally sound, its adoption by a small group of pastors in the ELCA was pointless and of no final benefit. Consider the following:

1. "A DECLARATION AND PLEA" was never officially adopted by the ELCA and therefore is not an official statement of its doctrinal position and not binding on its pastors.
2. Objections were raised to the contents of A DECLARATION AND PLEA by pastors and seminary professors of both churches, indicating that they could not with a good conscience accept all its teachings, e.g. "RESPONSE TO 'A DECLARATION AND PLEA'" by the Joint Faculties of Concordia and Immanuel Synods. The faculties called the DECLARATION a non-Lutheran document. This shows that differences in doctrine and practice were being tolerated within both churches.
3. Once the ELCA went out of existence, "A DECLARATION AND PLEA", being adopted by the ELCA Qld. District Pastoral Conference, became null and void, and could only be appealed to by those individual LCA congregations that had adopted it. (It has been reported to the writer that it was only ever adopted by one parish - that of Marburg/Minden).
4. Even though "A DECLARATION AND PLEA" was adopted by a number, its contents were negated by the loopholes and compromises in the Document of Union. When a congregation or group of congregations are a part of a church which tolerates false teaching, even though they themselves may not accept these false doctrines, by the very fact of their fellowship with or membership in such a church they are co-responsible for its errors. Therefore those in the ELCA who held to "A DECLARATION AND PLEA", could not claim orthodoxy by appealing to their acceptance of it, but were co-responsible and partakers of the errors of the Document of Union and the UELCA and were thereby held guilty before God of some of the errors "A DECLARATION AND PLEA" condemned.

Our judgement regarding "A DECLARATION AND PLEA" is that it was simply a salve for worried consciences. The fact of its existence proves the inadequacy of the Theses of Agreement and Document of Union. If these union statements had settled differences, why should there be a need for documents like "A DECLARATION AND PLEA"? A number of concerned ELCA pastors, now worried about the move they had made into fellowship with the UELCA, wanted something to justify their concerned consciences and to appeal to if they were charged with tolerating error. "A DECLARATION AND PLEA" was a convenient scapegoat for them, an excuse for their unscriptural actions. However, while they belong to an unscriptural union and thereby tolerate its false teachings and practices, all appeal to such fine statements amounts to nothing. They are still held responsible to God by virtue of their membership in a false

teaching church body.

ADMISSIONS OF COMPROMISE BY LCA PASTORS AND LAY PEOPLE.

Numerous correspondences and talks with LCA pastors and laypeople have revealed that many have, either just after the union or years later, realized the compromises that took place when their church was formed.

The following examples will suffice:

1. Pastor Kleinig visited Pastor F. Noack, Toowoomba, the former president of the ELCA, Qld. District, shortly before his death. Pastor Kleinig reports that this man, one of the chief architects of the union, said to him:

'We were deceived. If only I had known then as I do now, that many in the UELCA still held to their errors, I would never have advised anyone to have entered the union.'

2. Pastor Bode, one of those older pastors very concerned about the union, but who nevertheless decided to go in, wrote, soon after a revealing pastoral Conference of the ELCA:

'Dear Kleinig, the whole business is so shocking that I am now firmly convinced you did the right thing when you made your decision 2 Cor 6:17,18'.

(Letter to Pastor Kleinig, dated 31.8.66)

3. Pastor Emil Kriewaldt, a South Australian pastor in a similar position to the one quoted above, wrote many letters of concern about the new church to Pastor Kleinig.

One of them states: 'I am more than convinced that God cannot be pleased with the action of our leaders, who until eighteen months ago assured us that they would remain steadfast in opposing any union not based on unity, but who then unaccountably reversed their stand and supported and fought for a document of union which does not remove the differences which formerly divided the two Churches. The days I spent at Toowoomba in 1965 were the unhappiest of my life for I could see that the great majority of our pastors no longer laid much weight on purity of doctrine, were quite ready to enter the ecumenical stream, and were willing to sacrifice their overseas brethren for the mess of pottage of an amalgamation.'

(Letter to Pastor Kleinig, dated 14.6.66).

Again: 'Because the Document of Union did not speak with a clear voice in regard to fellowship, even compromised the truth, we shall now find all manner of unionistic practices practised and openly condoned. How have the mighty fallen? The way is now open to fraternizing with the sects, and it is only a matter of time we shall become a sect ourselves. I am glad my father did not live to see this day. We have compromised again and again,

and more will follow....

'The old ELCA is now in its death period. How tragic! The one stable rock is about to be shattered. May God punish those who are responsible.'

(Letter to Pastor Kleinig from Pastor E. Kriewaldt written app. October, 1966).

'I think also that many will gradually begin to realize that the union is not based on unity but on compromise. The fact remains that no true agreement has been reached, no matter how forcibly the claim is made. And this disagreement has sown the seeds for future compromises.'

(Letter to Pastor Kleinig, dated 3.11.66)

4. Even lay people have realized the disastrous consequences of the compromises at the time of union. In an editorial entitled "COMMENT", the editor of the "Reporter" comments:

"It is sure the amalgamation of the two Lutheran Churches in Australia has brought about a new religion. It is sure we were deceived into supporting amalgamation on the grounds of unity. It is certain that had all facts been made known to delegates attending the Toowoomba, Queensland General Synod, there would have been many who would have voted against amalgamation."

(Reporter, No. 11, June 1979).

CHAPTER XIV.

THE FORMATION OF THE ELCR. (1966)

Due alone to the Grace of God, there were a small group of people who realized the unScriptural nature of the proposed union, and shortly after the declaration of fellowship with the UELCA (which occurred in November, 1965), severed their connection with their former church, the ELCA. On March 20, 1966, a small gathering of about 50 souls gathered together at Kilkivan, Queensland, the chief aim being the formation of a Church body to continue in the teachings which their former church (the ELCA) had departed from. The Constituting Convention occurred on May 29, 1966 at the same place. At the first Annual Convention, (January 15th, 1967) the Chairman of the ELCR (the name chosen for this church body) reported a membership of 108 souls, with congregations at Woombye, Gympie, Maryborough, Kumbia and Murgon, all in Queensland. The pastor who led this group, in fact the only pastor of the former ELCA to remain separate from the union, was PASTOR F.G. KLEINIG.

A BRIEF HISTORY OF PASTOR KLEINIG.

Frederic G. Kleinig was born at Kapunda, South Australia on October 3rd, 1900. For the first fifteen years, he lived on a farm at St. Kitts. It was also here that he was baptized, confirmed and later on ordained to the Holy Ministry (1925). With a view to becoming a day-school teacher, he entered Concordia College in 1916. Although in 1916 Lutheran Day Schools were closed in South Australia by order of the Government, Student Kleinig continued on to achieve his junior and senior certificates. In 1922 he decided to enter the Theological Class at Concordia Seminary, Adelaide, ELSA. Pastor Kleinig even today speaks highly of one of his professors who made a lasting impression on him, Professor G.C. Koch. As well as being a master of the English language, having a remarkable knowledge of history and being an outstanding public speaker and preacher, Professor Koch excelled himself as a specialist in the right division of LAW and GOSPEL. His doctrine and spirit was passed onto his student.

Having completed his theological course in 1924, Pastor Kleinig was ordained and began his ministry as a Home Missionary in March 1925 at Caboolture, north of Brisbane. He remained in this field until 1929 when he accepted a Call from the Denial Bay Parish in South Australia. After having been there for only one year, an urgent Call was considered and accepted from the Kumbia Parish in Queensland. Here Pastor Kleinig laboured from 1931 to 1941. Due to some unfortunate happenings within this parish, which greatly disheartened the pastor, he resigned from his office, and for seventeen years took on secular work, both manual and clerical.

In the latter half of 1959, it was suggested to him that he re-entered the Ministry. An ELCA parish desperately required a pastor, having issued



Calls to a number of Pastors, all of which were declined. The need was considered, and when a Call arrived accepted, and Pastor Kleinig was duly installed as pastor of the Gatton Parish in August, 1959. This Parish he served until 1964, when he unexpectedly received a Call from the hard-pressed Gympie Parish. Being aware of the circumstances prevailing in that Parish, he finally accepted their Call, and served as their pastor until the end of 1965 when he resigned from the ministry of the ELCA, returned to his private home in Kingaroy and shortly after severed fellowship from the ELCA. From here he served for many years as Pastor of the newly-formed church body, the ELCR.

(Adapted from A WORD ABOUT THE AUTHOR, contained in SERMONS by Pastor F.G. Kleinig)

### PASTOR KLEINIG SEES THE DOCTRINAL DECLINE OF THE ELCA.

The period from 1942 to 1959 marked a serious decline and change in the doctrinal position of the ELCA. Pastor Kleinig regards his being out of the ministry during this period as a special measure of the Grace of God. He has mentioned several times that if the Lord had not taken him out of the Ministry at that time, then he may not have noticed the serious decline of the ELCA, may too have adopted the wrong interpretation of Romans 16:17 and altered position on CHURCH FELLOWSHIP, and have entered the union between the ELCA and UELCA.

Already in 1930, Pastor Kleinig had been struck by the comment of Professor W. Zschech, "We (the ELSA) are no longer what we used to be; quite a new spirit is entering our church".

During his time out of the ministry, Pastor Kleinig had been preserved from the little leaven of false teaching gradually making its way into the ELCA.

"What a shock he got when he realized how much the ELCA had changed from its original orthodox position when he returned to the ministry.

"Pastor Kleinig now got to work. First of all he studied the history of the two churches in the German and in the English. He studied the doctrinal papers that had been written promoting the new interpretation of Romans 16:17. Finally he began to deepen his already good knowledge of New Testament Greek. Having studied the history of things, and Scripture, Pastor Kleinig now critically examined the Theses of Agreement. He soon began to realize that there were many cleverly worded, veiled double-tongued anti-Scriptural statements in that document and that actually the people had been deceived; for not one of the doctrinal differences had been settled and that the coming union was actually being based on the 'Open Questions' Theory."

(The Testimony of the Two Witnesses, Sermons by F.G. Kleinig, p.ix)

The concern of Pastor Kleinig that his church was departing from its doctrinal position, is shown by several letters he wrote during 1962 and 1963.

In Sept., 1962, Pastor Kleinig sent a circular to every Pastor of the ELCA, replying to claims of Mr. T.D. Koch, (connected with the Lutheran Layman's League). Mr. Koch had sent out a call for immediate union between the two churches, and considered that the differences between the churches should not stop declaration of fellowship. Pastor Kleinig clearly pointed out, both from history and doctrinal statements, the evil OPEN QUESTIONS theory of the UELCA, stating that

"the historic position of the ELCA has always been: First Unity in doctrine and practice, then organic union."

Speaking of Thesis I, 4(e) of the Theses of Agreement, Pastor Kleinig states:

"Incidentally, that is one paragraph I would for my person never subscribe to, as I believe in that paragraph is the nigger in the wood-pile."

Pastor Kleinig here is referring to the OPEN QUESTIONS idea which is contained in these sentences. He then continues:

"As far as I personally am concerned, I believe that the real and essential difference between the two Lutheran Church-bodies in Australia consists in their differing attitude towards the 'Open Questions' affair, and unless this problem is solved in accordance with the Scriptures, there can be no true and lasting unity between them. And that means, the UELCA will have to alter its unscriptural and un-Lutheran attitude with respect to them. I am really amazed that in the Theses of Agreement there is no paragraph dealing with this vital and basic matter. I believe that unless this point is clarified and settled, and in the right way at that, for 1 Cor 1:10 rules out once and for all every 'Open Question' with regard to Scripture doctrine, all negotiations must prove fruitless and are more or less a waste of time. It certainly seems to me that it is on the basis of the 'Open Questions' theory that the UELCA refuses the idea of being tied down by the Scripture texts which rule out unionism in any shape or form."

It was during the 1962 Melbourne Convention of the ELCA that Pastor Kleinig fully realized how strong the push for union really was, and how many there were in the ELCA who were willing to unite and ignore the vital doctrinal differences between the two churches. Through his talks with laymen, pastors and Seminary Professors, he became alarmed as to the ignorance of many regarding CHURCH HISTORY, especially that of the Lutheran Church in Australia, and also their lack of understanding of the vital differences which divided the two churches.

About this time Pastor Kleinig began to take, both with his parish

and elsewhere in Queensland, a series of lectures on the history of the Lutheran Church in Australia. This was done in order to inform pastors and lay people about these vital matters. As well, matters connected with CHURCH FELLOWSHIP, Romans 16:17, and intersynodical negotiations were discussed thoroughly in the Queensland Pastoral Conferences from 1962 - 1965, with Pastor Kleinig and other pastors mentioned previously taking their stand on the position of the orthodox Lutheran Church. Much correspondence passed back and forth between this circle of concerned pastors, and many private meetings occurred to discuss the points at issue as well.

At the March 1965 ELCA Convention, Pastor Kleinig and other pastors made known their opposition to the Document of Union, but soon realized that in the face of the overwhelming push for union, the cries of those warning their church against this disastrous step would not be heeded.

Among the articles and papers put out prior to 1966 by Pastor Kleinig warning against a union based on compromise, we include the following:-

- (a) The Principle of the 'Open Questions' - outlining the history of the evil OPEN QUESTIONS principle in the UELCA and the way it is cleverly brought out in the Theses of Agreement and Document of Union.
- (b) Notes on the Document of Union - pointing out the many anti-scriptural statements in the Document of Union.
- (c) The Bible Doctrine of Church Fellowship.

Also many letters were written and much material from pastors and overseas theologians was passed back and forth, material which backed up the Scriptural stand in these matters. Pastor Kleinig received much encouragement and advice through such faithful confessors of God's Word as Pastor H. Romoser (USA) and Dr. Wm. Oesch. Both these men had been trained by old Missouri. Their letters not only confirmed him in the action he was taking but also helped him to stand fast amidst the many attacks he had to face.

On August 15th, 1965 Pastor Kleinig agreed to a public debate with the President Koehne (ELCA General President) and Pastor F. Noack (ELCA Qld. District President). It was requested by the Gympie Parish (of which Pastor Kleinig was shepherd) in order that their members could be shown "from the Scriptures whether or not we should join the proposed new church" (from Tape Recording of the Proceedings). Many visitors were also present. Speaking for the affirmative, Pastor Noack gave the gathering the assurances:

"We can't say anything but this: As to the Scriptures, as to co-operation with other churches, unionism, the UELCA has never stood as firmly on the basis of Scriptures as it does today."

"they (the UELCA, G.W) now acknowledge what they years ago (were divided on the issue) wouldn't acknowledge. This: we cannot work together with churches which are not one in doctrine with us as to the Gospel, and that as in the Augustana (our Lutheran Confessions) includes not only the Gospel in the narrow sense of the word but the whole Word of God in its truth and purity and the administration of the Sacraments according to Christ's institution. They are at one with us."

"The UELCA has changed its attitude in regard to open questions. Definitely!" (Taken from Tape Recording).

In view of the previous chapters, it can be seen that these assurances were simply untruthful and those who entered the union on the advice of their leaders were knowingly or unknowingly deceived.

Dr. Koehne also spoke for the affirmative. Pastor Kleinig, speaking for the negative pointed out his objections to the proposed union. He stated:

"Now in regard to the union of the two churches, I still hold the same position as I announced on the floor of the Toowoomba Synod. I don't want anyone for one moment to believe that I am against a union of the two churches provided that union is based fairly and squarely on the Word of God."

"This morning I told the two of them that I'm not stubborn about this business. I told them that if they can show to me that I am wrong and can point out to me from Scripture that I have need of no concerns, I shall not hesitate to say: Revoko, I revoke, I withdraw, I retract. Now what does cause me concern?"

Pastor Kleinig went on to explain his chief concern with the Document of Union, that the ELCA was prepared to change its position in regard to LWF membership and Overseas Fellowships in order to join with the UELCA. He also thoroughly examined the passage Rom 16:17,18, the change in the doctrine of church fellowship which had previously taken place in the ELCA, and the evil OPEN QUESTIONS principle of the UELCA.

Finally he stated:

"I have not yet been convinced that all these things have been settled. Wouldn't it be, brethren and sisters, the correct thing to do, really to settle all this, and then unite?"

Pastor Kleinig was sorely disappointed when the many pastors who had rallied behind him (see Chapter XIII) soon fell away when pressure was brought to bear on them around March 1965. Yet the truths of God's Word meant so much to him that he was willing to cling to it even though he seemed to be alone and despite all opposition and hatred. Opposition certainly was great. Not only did many try to convince him that his position was false, but even many untrue charges were made against him.

Some claimed that he had a personal hatred towards the members of the UELCA. Others said he was senile and a religious fanatic. One of the favourite malicious slanderous lies which Pastor Kleinig's opponents threw at him was that in 1941 when he left the ministry of the ELSA he was supposed to have tried to become a member of the UELCA and they were supposed to have refused him. By his refusal to enter the union of the two churches the claim was made that this was his way of "getting his own back". During theological studies (1973 - 1975) an interview was recorded with Pastor Kleinig concerning this. The facts are: (1) he left the ELSA ministry because of the failure of the Queensland District President of the ELSA to support disciplinary action against stubborn errorists and malicious trouble makers in one of the congregations of the Kumbia-Kingaroy-Mondure Parish at that time; (2) Never, at any time, did he make any approach to the UELCA for membership; (3) at all times he opposed the doctrinal position of the UELCA as contrary to Scripture; (4) on a few occasions he attended services of the UELCA purely and only as an observer, without participating in the worship services; (5) as all his writings, lectures and sermons record, he was opposed to the Union solely on doctrinal and Scriptural grounds. But Pastor Kleinig showed that he was a faithful Lutheran Theologian by clinging to his position because he was convinced it was what God wanted him to do in His Word. At times Christians must be prepared to stand alone for the glory of God and His Word, and sacrifice earthly gain, in order that the Lord's Word in its truth and purity may remain with them uncorrupted.

When Pastor Kleinig saw that his church had adopted the Document of Union and thereby accepted for itself its false teachings; when he realized that despite objections on his part the ELCA had entered into an antisciptural fellowship with the UELCA, he saw that the ELCA had clearly departed from the teachings of God's Word. Despite admonition given to his fellow church members, the ELCA was set in its wrong ways (Titus 3:10,11) and refused to budge in its position, that it could see nothing wrong with fellowship and union with the UELCA. Therefore there was no other Scriptural action that he could take but to ask the question posed by Amos: "How can two walk together except they be agreed?" (Amos 3:3). About January 1966, he sadly severed fellowship from a once orthodox, now heterodox church body, the ELCA. Since most of the members of his Parish had decided to join the union, he could no longer be their pastor.

#### LAY PEOPLE LEAVE THE ELCA.

During 1965 and 1966 a number of members of Pastor Kleinig's Gympie Parish (Woombye, Gympie, Maryborough and Hervey Bay) heeded his warnings regarding the coming union.

A small number of people from the former Kumbia ELCA congregation, had decided not to enter the union of the two churches already before they knew what Pastor Kleinig intended doing. Already in 1959 Pastor

A.E. Schirmer had gone through the Theses of Agreement with the whole Kumbia congregations expressing his disapproval of it. Due to their study of the Word of God and the testimony of faithful pastors at Conventions prior to the union this small group believed the union to be on a sinful basis. They were even prepared to continue with church services as a separate body even without knowing the decision of Pastor Kleinig. However, when it became clear publicly at Conventions that Pastor Kleinig was determined not to enter the union because it was contrary to Scripture, they decided to investigate more fully his position. But Pastor Kleinig left the decision to separate from the ELCA entirely up to them. Recognizing in Pastor Kleinig an orthodox Lutheran pastor who had separated from the ELCA, they turned to him for pastoral care after they withdrew from the ELCA.

As well, a number of people from other areas in Queensland had contacted him and asked various questions concerning the stand he was taking. Pastor Kleinig considered it his God-given duty to give answers to these cries for knowledge from God's Word (1 Peter 3:15). When these lay people had become convinced that their Church had departed from God's Word, they severed fellowship from their former congregations. The only congregation which itself left the ELCA was the Woombye Congregation in which the majority of members refused to be a part of the union.

Many of these people were charged with false motives for leaving the ELCA, personal differences with their pastors or congregation, blind loyalty to Pastor Kleinig, hatred of the UELCA, lovelessness and lack of toleration. In order to show that these charges were untrue, we quote from two letters (whose authors we will allow to remain anonymous) of lay people who later on became members of the ELCR.

Letter one states:

"I think to join such a Church would be an act of disobedience to the Word of the Lord. I will tell you my chief reasons. First of all Point 8 (of the Document of Union, GLW) states, 'Differing judgements may be expected here and should be tolerated in love'. This flatly contradicts 1 Cor 1:10 which demands 'that ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgement.' Secondly, with reference to the LWF, where one party says it is not against the Word of God, the other says that it is, again contradicts 1 Cor 1:10, which requires 'that ye all speak the same thing.' As you can see....this fact would not be changed even if they omit these words when they reword the Document. Actually, they would only be hiding a fact, which is worse. As I see it, the Document appeals for toleration. But toleration is the essence of Unionism. Therefore, the United Church, on the basis of the Document cannot be anything but unionistic. The Lord says (Rom 16:17), 'Avoid them'. That is His command. Obedience is one of the outstanding marks of the children of God. The Lord says, Luke 6:46, 'Why call ye me, Lord, Lord, and do not the things which I say'."

Letter two (written to this person's former pastor) states:

"We have stated that we cannot join in the fellowship with the UELCA, because we conscientiously believe that the matters of membership in the LWF, and Fellowships with other overseas bodies have not been settled in a God-pleasing way. Since you have been by Pastor, I feel it but right to show you how I have reached my decision.

"From the outset, I want to assure you that we hold no personal grudge against any member of the ELCA or UELCA, and it is personally a great sorrow to me that our decisions have been different. As you know, we each had to decide whether the Document of Union was a correct basis for fellowship, and it would seem fair, that a decision either way would be respected, provided that Scriptural reasons were given, for here consciences are involved.

"As regards the LWF, it is wrong, ~~and~~ for what it does, that is, member churches co-operate in missions, Christian education, worship, prayer and so on, which is allowed only to Churches in fellowship. We cannot fellowship with the heterodox churches which form the LWF, so to be members of the LWF and do these things would be contrary to God's Word. If some other church cannot see this, it is surely a doctrinal problem which must be settled before fellowship is granted. The Document of Union gives right to both views. To compromise with a man-made arrangement is, in my opinion, trifling with God's Word. Pastor Noack's essay, read at Kingaroy Synod, 1956, explains the position capably. I quote: 'The UELCA by its membership in the LWF, and its co-operation with unionistic organizations, is involved in unionism. By establishing Pulpit and Altar fellowship, our Church would also be involved in unionism. We would also expose our Church to the constant and grave danger of losing the truth of God's Word. Again, how can we establish Pulpit and Altar fellowship with the UELCA when we are not agreed on the question of unionism which strikes at the Scriptures and the Confessions? The prophet Amos asks 'Can two walk together except they be agreed?' Amos 3:3.' In another place, he (Pastor Noack, GLW) writes, 'Not only does God forbid unionism, but He demands also that every safeguard be provided, that not even the slightest opportunity be left for unionism to enter the Church'. Today the position is basically the same, except that there has been an agreement to compromise. We cannot agree to this.

"As regards the fellowships, it was wrong to break off Fellowships which bind together those who preach the Word of God in its truth and purity, merely for man's convenience. And just whom will the new Church fellowship? Surely not ALC, a member of W.C.C. No good business man would sign an agreement unless all details had been worked out, yet in this so important matter, these matters are left undecided."

"So it is our strong conviction that we cannot enter into the fellowship with the UELCA. The hurtful part is that we must break with our local congregation and Pastor, who see no wrong in the Fellowship and are happy to belong to the New Church, which we cannot join with a good conscience. For we believe that the deciding step of the Union (the Fellowship) has been taken, and the actual amalgamation is but an agreement on organizational arrangements. To put off action would prolong the tenseness and discord which occurs when two parties in all earnestness each try to show the other the rights or wrongs of the situation. This would perhaps spoil the good relations we have always enjoyed in our congregation. Also each should be able to worship without feeling of disquiet and tension.

"So Pastor, please accept this decision as made in all sincerity and with a good conscience.

"We shall endeavour with God's help, to continue in His pure Word, as taught and practised by the old ELCA."

Though it brought them great sadness to leave congregations they had belonged to for many years, these former ELCA members felt conscience bound to put God's Word first, before earthly considerations.

During the later part of 1965 and the first months of 1966, a number of these former ELCA people formed themselves into small congregations. Congregations were established at Kumbia, Murgon, Maryborough, Gympie, in addition to that already at Woombye. Lay-reading services were begun. Since Pastor Kleinig was the only former ELCA pastor who refused to be a part of the union, he was the one these shepherdless sheep looked towards for pastoral care. Each of these congregations asked him to serve them.

#### FORMATION OF THE E.L.C.R.

(It is not our aim to go into every detail of this historic event, but simply to outline several points pertinent to our study. The ELCR hopes to produce a history of its existence from 1966 to the present in the future).

It was at the request of Pastor Kleinig that the independent congregations previously mentioned met together at Kilkivan on March 20, 1966. A Committee was here appointed to draw up a proposed constitution for this church body. After this task had been completed, the constitution was adopted at the Constituting Convention, May 29, 1966 at Kilkivan. The name chosen for this church body was the "Evangelical Lutheran Congregations of the Reformation". It still meets regularly for its annual Convention towards the beginning of each year. In July 1966, Pastor Kleinig began publishing a Church Paper which was entitled "STEADFAST in the Word and faith." God has richly blessed this Church for its courageous stand on the Scriptures and has wonderfully preserved with it God's Word in its truth and purity.



Regarding its doctrinal position, the ELCR does not hold to any new doctrines, has not invented any queer or strange teachings of its own, but simply clings to those teachings formerly held by the ELSA in its heyday, especially those teachings which were gradually given away by the ELCA during the latter days of its downfall. These were the same teachings held to by the orthodox Missouri Synod in the days of Walther and Pieper, before it too forsook the Scriptures for false teachings which have become so popular in modern churches today. All the members of the ELCR wanted to do was to have God's uncorrupted Word taught to themselves and their children, the right to worship the Lord with a clear conscience according to the principles of the orthodox Lutheran Church and the privilege of proclaiming this pure Water of Life to lost and condemned souls who are thirsty for it.

For this privilege, the members of the ELCR had to suffer many hardships. Some said: "Your church won't last long; your numbers are so small; your pastor is aged (66 years old in 1966, GLW); it won't be long before you come back to the LCA on your knees." Others regarded the members of the ELCR as being fanatics, intolerant, loveless and even fools. Many ignored them, refused to speak to them and regarded them as outcasts. But this was regarded as a fulfillment of the Lord's prophecy, "If they have persecuted Me, they will also persecute you." (Jn 15:20). Since God's pure Word meant so much to them they were willing to suffer taunts and ridicule for the sake of maintaining it.

#### CORRESPONDENCE ELCR/ELCA.

At a Special Convention of the Queensland District of the ELCA held at Toowoomba on May 6-7th, 1966, a number of rather striking comments were made, including an article entitled - ANSWER OF PASTOR NOACK TO PASTOR KLEINIG - Why Pastors and People should not leave our church at this time. We do not have space to quote in full from the Report of this Convention, but will bring a few contradictory and striking statements which it brings.

On the one hand it is stated: "That there is unity in doctrine is proven by the Theses of Agreement and the Document of Union...we are also agreed in regard to the doctrine on unionism." (Answer of Pastor Noack to Pastor Kleinig, Report p.45).

On the other hand it is admitted:

- "We also heartily agree with you that the matter of fraternals, joint funeral services, lodges, and the modern dance should have been tackled before the Document of Union was submitted for adoption and discipline should have been exercised more earnestly." (Answer of Pastor Noack to Pastor Kleinig, Report p.47).
- "We still have many matters to consider and to act upon in connection with the highly important fellowship position as laid down in the Document of Union." (General President's

Report, p.49).

- "10(a), the earnest pledge and sincere promise that a Commission of Theology will consider doctrine and practice in the new Church as speedily as possible." (Resolutions, p.53).
- "Both Churches have been at work on the basis of Scripture to remove any and every doctrinal difference..." (Answer of Pastor Noack to Pastor Kleinig, Report p.45).

Surely this sums up to the self-contradiction,

- : We are one in doctrine; we are not yet one in doctrine and admit there are many differences yet to be decided.

What clearer evidence can there be that the ELCA departed from the orthodox Lutheran principle: UNITY FIRST, THEN FELLOWSHIP, in uniting with the UELCA?!

Pastor Kleinig replied in detail to the Qld. District Convention, ELCA, Oct 7-10, 1966. As well as pointing out the unbiblical nature of the Document of Union, he ably showed "the root-cause of all the troubles which now beset the ELCA" - the change in the doctrine of Church fellowship and attitude towards Rom 16:17-18. Towards the end of this lengthy letter, Pastor Kleinig stated:

"Following Luther's line, I now in similar fashion issue a public challenge to the writer of the 'Answer'. If ever and whenever he can bring irrefutable proof concerning the four grammatical points in the Greek text of the New Testament as mentioned above, which he must do in order to maintain the correctness of his interpretation and application of the passage Rom 16:17-18, I hereby commit myself to pay promptly and without demur the sum of five hundred dollars (\$500.00) into the Treasury of Concordia Memorial College, Toowoomba, Qld." (STEADFAST, Nov 1966 p.5)

Never was this challenge accepted.

In conclusion, Pastor Kleinig stated:

"To conclude, just a few words about the plea to reconsider our severance of fellowship from the Qld. Dist. of the ELCA. Our step is not absolutely irrevocable, and by unanimous resolution passed by all congregations of our ELCA we place before you the following conditions for the re-establishment of fellowship with you:

- "1. That the Document of Union of 1965 be declared null and void;
- "2. That Altar and Pulpit Fellowship with ALL heterodox Lutherans be terminated;
- "3. That the 1948 Jindera Interpretation of Romans 16: 17,18 which is the root-cause of the present trouble and confusion in regard to Church Fellowship within the E.L.C.A. be declared erroneous

and unconditionally retracted, and that all unionistic practices which have resulted from the afore-mentioned Interpretation, such as Joint Prayer and other forms of Joint Worship and Fraternization with heterodox Lutherans be discontinued;

- "4. That God-ordained scriptural Church Discipline which was instituted for the salvation of the sinner's soul (1 Cor 5:5), both on the Congregational level (Matt 18:15-18) and in the area of Doctrine and Practice (1 Cor 1:10) be not given merely pious lip service, but actually practised according to the Lord's instructions;
- "5. That all manner of sinful and soul-destroying worldliness, including ballroom dancing, be earnestly combated and dealt with according to Matthew 18, and, if necessary, carried unto the final stage (verse 18), as commanded by the Lord of the Church.

"If and when the afore-mentioned five points are accepted and put into practice, we, the E.L.C.R. shall be happy and willing to re-establish Fellowship with the Qld. District of the E.L.C.A. Otherwise there can be no thought of Fellowship between you and us."

(Steadfast, Nov 1966, pp5,6)

#### OFFER OF ELCR TO LCA.

Occasionally members of the LCA mention to our members: Why don't you forget the differences and come back again and join us?

First of all, it was the former ELCA members who left the old orthodox Lutheran position and joined with the UELCA. The members of the ELCR did not leave the old Scriptural Lutheran position. We confessed the same Scriptural position and still do today as our Lutheran forebears.

Unfortunately over the years since the Union, the LCA has increasingly degenerated into further error and false practice. The situation is just like that which a former Chairman of our Federation when asked, "Is there any chance of the ELCR and the LCA ever getting together?" once replied, "No, the gap between us is increasingly wider!"

Because we are living in the last days of the great falling away (as recorded in Matt 24 and Luke 21) and because the majority in the LCA are fixed or set in their erroneous ways, the only way that the ELCR will be back in the LCA is if the members of the ELCR depart from the Scriptures and throw aside the precious treasure of the Word which those members at the time of union fought so hard and sacrificed so much for us to enjoy. May God preserve us from such apostasy!

Nevertheless we make the following offer: If the LCA is willing to accept the above conditions, as well as reject the errors taught by

the former UELCA and tolerated by the Theses of Agreement, as well as to reject in a Scriptural manner the doctrinal errors that have arisen in the LCA since 1966, we would with a glad heart be willing to consider establishing fellowship with them. But while the LCA holds to these soul-destroying errors the ELCR can not and will not enter into fellowship with the LCA. Nor does the ELCR intend to enter into extended doctrinal negotiations with the LCA, as its Constitution states:

"Since the Doctrinal Basis set forth in Article III is Scriptural and clear, long-extended doctrinal 'negotiations' which can lead to dangerous digressions and suspensions of judgement (Preface to the Christian Book of Concord, Triglot. pp.23.25), shall not be the policy of this Federation in issues relating to fellowship and membership. (See also Titus 3:10: 'A man who chooses to be different in his teaching warn once and a second time, and then don't have anything more to do with him')."

(Constitution of the ELCR, Article IV, para 1).

If others wish to know what our doctrinal position is, we are more than happy to explain it to them. If they accept it totally and promise to abide by it in doctrine and practice, they are more than welcome to join with us. But according to Scripture we cannot offer membership or fellowship to those who even in minor points depart from the teachings of the Bible. God Himself has placed this sacred duty upon us. (Matt 28:20; Acts 20:27).

CHAPTER XV.

FORMATION OF THE L.C.A. - A WORD TO CONCERNED L.C.A. MEMBERS.

With the declaration of fellowship on Nov 28, 1965, the path was prepared for full amalgamation of the two church bodies to form the Lutheran Church of Australia. Organic union of the Synods took place at Tanunda, South Australia, from October 29 to November 2, 1966.

It had been made clear that since the 1864 - 1874 declaration of fellowship between the Fritzsche and Kavel groups had so easily been destroyed by severance of fellowship, this situation would be avoided in the 1966 union. Leading officials of both churches realized that if it was left a simple declaration of fellowship, and later on former ELCA congregations became disturbed and wished to leave, it would be relatively easy for a majority of ELCA congregations to sever fellowship with the UELCA or for a concerned ELCA congregation to leave its former body. However, when full amalgamation had taken place, where the two bodies involved ceased existence and formed a new church then it would be much more difficult to achieve a division if doctrinal differences arose, parishes having been realigned, congregations now composed of people from both Churches. If a group of concerned people were forced to leave the new church and started out completely afresh, they would have to do so without their property and church building. Church leaders realized this would be a great hinderance to disturbed members leaving the proposed merger and therefore adopted the policy: AMALGAMATION AND NOT JUST A DECLARATION OF FELLOWSHIP.

Significant also is the fact that the 1965 Lutheran Herald (Nov 13th ed.) had a picture of the two Presidents, Dr. M. Lohe (UELCA) and Pastor H.D. Koehne (ELCA), signing the Document of Union. A third man is seen in this picture, Dr. F. Shiotz (President of the ALC and LWF) giving his blessing to the event taking place. This certainly signifies the sad departure the ELCA made from its former position and its capitulation to the UELCA.

And so the "answer to many prayers" had taken place, the formation of a new Lutheran Church, larger in size, larger in prestige, having more money and thus being able to devote more to mission and welfare work. But sadly this answer to "prayers" was similar to that given by the Lord to the Israelites as the Psalmist records, "And He gave them their request: but sent leanness into their souls (Heb: gave them a wasting disease)". The "wasting disease" in the LCA today is the poison of false teaching which as the Scriptures describe (Gal 5:9), if not checked will spread further and further. When this church today permits and condones attacks by its leading men on the doctrine of the Inspiration and Inerrancy of the Bible, when it willingly dialogues with the Church of the Antichrist (the Roman Catholic Church) and has also drawn up statements of supposed agreement on vital doctrines of the

Bible such as the Lord's Supper with them, when it openly permits other errors to be tolerated in its midst (e.g. women voting in congregations, modern dance, evolution, denial of word 'day' in Genesis 1, unionism, open questions); it surely is clear that the LCA has fallen away from the Word of God in these points. Unless there is a turning back to the Word of God and its teachings (Is 8:20), unless those who hold to false teaching are Scripturally disciplined, this false doctrine will only spread all the more. Satan's final aim is to destroy the teaching of the way to salvation in a Visible Church through the spread of false teaching; for he knows that in this manner he can gain many for his kingdom.

#### A WORD OF SCRIPTURAL ADVICE AND WARNING TO DISTURBED LCA MEMBERS.

Occasionally disturbed LCA members approach our pastors and ask: We are unhappy about the false teaching in our church, but what can we do?

In answering this question, we are not motivated by the desire to gain members or make the ELCR a large church. The ELCR has been unjustly accused from different quarters of deliberately going out of its way to gain members from the LCA to increase its numbers. This is untrue. God judges a church not by its large numbers or its prestige before the world, but BY ITS FAITHFULNESS TO HIM AND HIS WORD. This then has been the chief aim of the ELCR, to see to it that GOD'S WORD IS RETAINED IN ITS TRUTH AND PURITY, that this WORD may be taught to and used by those souls who sincerely desire it. If there are those who are for valid reasons dissatisfied with their church and come to us and ask: WHAT DOES YOUR CHURCH TEACH?, we are more than happy to explain this to them. If they are willing to accept totally our doctrinal position and promise to abide by it, they are more than welcome to join. But God's Word forbids a Pastor or lay person deliberately going to the sheep of another shepherd and trying to gain them for his own flock behind that persons back (sheep stealing).

On the other hand, we recognize that there are many LCA members who are dissatisfied with the false teaching in their church and are able to see its doctrinal position declining more and more. They must realize that this does not involve just an isolated instance of false teaching, but that the whole doctrinal basis of their Church, the Theses of Agreement and the Document of Union, is contrary to the Word of God. Because these documents permit and allow teachings contrary to God's Word they must be condemned and rejected as such. In fact all of the false teachings which are condoned in the LCA today have their root cause in the evil OPEN QUESTIONS principle which was basic to the merger in 1966. Since this union was not on a sound and Scriptural basis, and the matters of difference on God's Word were not settled before union, all manner of diverse opinions in doctrine have arisen since that time. Since, according to Thesis I4(e), such "differences of interpretation are not divisive of church fellowship" there is little that can be done if such false teachers appeal to their interpretation of the Scriptures to back up their errors. If concerned LCA members still believe that these statements as well as many put out since that time are soundly Lutheran, there is little

hope of their being able to retain confessional Lutheran teaching, for any of the water of Lutheran doctrine they are able to hold, will soon leak away through the many holes these compromise statements contain. Therefore, above all else, such people must with a sincere heart admit that the union was contrary to the Bible and unionistic, and that therefore they now belong to a false teaching church, thoroughly riddled with error.

Concerning the question: WHAT IS A CHRISTIAN TO DO WHO RECOGNIZES HE BELONGS TO A FALSE TEACHING CHURCH?, the Scriptures are clear in their reply.

They tell him that if a Christian sees false teaching in his church, those who are responsible are to be patiently instructed and admonished from God's Word. (Gal 6:1; Titus 3:10-11). If it becomes clear that they refuse to repent of their error and retract it, and the church as a whole permits him to remain in his error and condones it, then it is obvious that they are set in their wrong ways, have become heterodox. The Christian then has no other choice if he wishes lovingly to obey his Saviour, but to separate from his church. This God makes clear in passages like Matt. 7:15,16; Titus 3:10,11; Romans 16:17; Amos 3:3; 2 Cor. 6:17. There are many excuses which we have heard for ignoring this command of God.

-- Some say: We believe it is our duty to stay in and correct our false teaching church. (Comment: Where does God in the Bible place such a duty before the Christian? The Scriptures do not condone such action of staying in a false teaching church and witnessing, but as we have shown, quite definitely forbid it. Dr. Janzow in an article (previously quoted in Chapter XIII) dealing with this erroneous hope commented:

"For God's sake let no one therefore permit himself to be fooled by this aim of union". (ATR. Vol I, No. 4, p.129f).

Although the motives of such people may seem to be quite genuine, their actions God condemns. Commonsense tells us that one or two good apples in a case of bad ones will not make the bad ones good, but the reverse. The Scriptures teach likewise (Gal 5:9; 11 Tim 2:17). Therefore the desire of correcting a false teaching church from inside, though genuine, is vain and foolish and cannot meet with God's final blessing because it ignores His commands.

The Scriptural and best witness to the truths of God's Word is made by separating from false teaching. Upon such action the Lord will bring His blessing.)

-- Others say: We cannot desert our church now. The Battle is just starting. We must stay in to help all those who have not as yet woken up. (Comment: (1) In clinging to their church organization, are such ones not guilty of deserting God's Word and commands? The Christian must not promise blind loyalty to a church organization, but loyalty

alone to Christ's Word. (2) It is a form of idolatry to put the church organization ahead of obedience to the Word. (3) When God's Word commands 'Separate', we must show more love for God than for anyone else. More help can be given by testimony and example of leaving than by staying in. As well, the believer is obeying God's Word. To stay in is disobedience. (4) By staying in such ones are condoning and tolerating error. (5) The 'battle' began long ago when the 'negotiations' commenced. The conservatives have suffered many defeats by entering and staying in the Union. The longer they stay in the closer looms total defeat. For, spiritually, the LCA is a sinking ship. How can one successfully do battle with the enemy, when by remaining in the Union, the enemy's cause is aided, abetted and strengthened? (6) One could stay in a heterodox church a lifetime and many will not wake up. God's command is clear: Leave a church when it, after faithful, patient instruction (surely twenty years is long enough) deliberately clings to error.)

-- Still others reply: If we leave now, our witness against false teaching will all be lost. (Comment: By remaining in a false teaching church, by that very fact one gives consent to the errors of the false teachers. When they are admonished they have every right to reply: 'You still belong to the church. The church does not object to what I teach. If you are unhappy, why don't you get out?' Surely a much greater Scriptural witness to God's Word can be given by separating from error and in all points clinging to and obeying God's Word. Then others will say: That person is really sincere in what he confesses. The earthly proverb also applies here: Actions speak louder than words. Concerning this same false argument of those who use this excuse for remaining in the heterodox LWF (the same applies to the heterodox LCA), Pastor F. Noach (former President of the Queensland District ELCA) wrote:

"Another argument that is advanced is, that there is far greater opportunity for testimony inside of the L.W.F. than outside. We answer: Should we do evil to do good? Should we join a unionistic organisation to have greater opportunity for testimony, when we from the very outset, by the mere fact of our membership, are committed to a public assent to activities in which orthodox and heterodox bodies have equal voice and influence? We cannot do so with a good conscience.

"Next, and as for the argument that there is greater opportunity for testimony against false doctrine inside the L.W.F. than outside, this is a fallacy. Matters, also doctrinal matters, are decided by a majority vote and there the matter ends. In this connection we do well to bear in mind that the very fact of being separated from the heterodox is a most powerful testimony against their false doctrine. Church history proves to the hilt that as long as the orthodox keep apart from the heterodox, so long, in the long run, will the damnamus, that is, we reject and condemn, be actually and energetically exercised against the errors of the heterodox.

"Finally, it is an incontrovertible fact that if the orthodox stay in an organisation which is unionistic, instead of separating from



it, their testimony grows weaker and weaker and their protests at last become inaudible. Those who gain the victory are not the orthodox, but the unionists. None other than the gentle, but nevertheless heroic, defender of the truth over against the Reformed and the composer of many of the glorious, deathless Lutheran Chorales, Paul Gerhardt, raises a grave note of warning when he says: 'A unionist cannot be trusted'.

"In this connection the Prussian State Church, now the Evangelical Church Union of Germany, is a classic example. In the last century many orthodox Lutherans, instead of coming out of this Union, resolved to stay and testify and protest, hoping that they would gain the victory. What happened? Their testimony became weaker and weaker and they grew more and more indifferent towards the truth and the errorists waxed more and more indifferent over against their errors."

(The Lutheran World Federation and New Guinea, Essay to 1956 Qld. District Convention, ELCA, Report, p.21)

-- Some have fears for the future and say: Where will we go? Who will look after our spiritual needs? There is no other church in our area. If we leave our numbers will be only small and we will not be able to make much of an impression on others. (Comment: The Lord does not require the Christian necessarily to belong to a church with large numbers. He does require of the Christian faithfully to cling to His Word and to abide by it. John 8:31-32; 2 Thess 2:15; Jude 3; Acts 2:42; Eph 4:3. So far as the future is concerned, the Christian is admonished simply to put his trust in the Lord; He has promised to look after and provide for all his spiritual and bodily needs, Ps 118:8; Prov 3:5; Matt 6:33. If people genuinely want faithful pastors to teach them God's Word, Pastor Kleinig often referred to the Lord's promise in Jer 3:15, "I will give you pastors according to mine heart which shall feed you with knowledge and understanding.")

Let such people also heed the following word of WARNING. While the Lord is well-pleased when Christians obediently follow His Word, He is justly angry when His Word is ignored, despised or disobeyed. He says: "That servant, which knew his Lord's will and prepared not himself, neither did according to his will, shall be beaten with many stripes." (Lk 12:47). "He that is of God heareth God's words; ye therefore hear them not, because ye are not of God" (John 8:47). "He that rejecteth Me, and receiveth not My words, hath one that judgeth him: the word that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day." (John 8:47). See also Heb 10:26,27.

It is also God's judgement that those who deliberately and wilfully disobey His commands have their hearts hardened to His pure Word and soon become accustomed to false doctrine. This is a part of the "strong delusion" which God permits to come upon those who do not love and follow His Word (2 Thess 2:11,12). It is interesting to see how this

has come to pass amongst many who were concerned at the time of the union. Many pious promises were made about separating from their church if ever it should refuse to heed their admonitions against false teaching. But many of them have become accustomed and acclimatized to false doctrine and twenty years later are nowhere nearer separating from false doctrine.

We also comment that if conservatives take a stand NOW, there still are enough confessionally minded pastors and also concerned lay people to form a sizeable independent church. Many lay people have commented to us that they are eager to see a former ELCA pastor with enough determination to take the lead, make a stand on God's Word and if it is not abided by, separate and form a church of their own. There are still pastors trained in the better days of the ELCA who could serve this church. A Seminary could quickly be formed to train conservative Lutheran pastors which would then be the core for quite a conservative Lutheran group. Since God would be highly pleased that His commands regarding severance of fellowship with the heterodox are being abided by, He would provide for this group and grant them His blessing. But the vital message is: ACT NOW BEFORE IT IS TOO LATE. The number of those alarmed is not growing larger. Older former ELCA pastors are more and more retiring and growing old; their numbers are becoming fewer and fewer. The majority of pastors in the LCA are now from the new, liberally-minded Luther Seminary. Their numbers will increase and opposition to false teaching will quickly dwindle. In twenty years time all hope of forming a conservative Lutheran group will have faded. The Lord especially in these last days requires decisive action from His followers. He who hesitates in the fight will soon falter and fall.

### CONCLUSION.

As a word of advice to the Federation, none better can be given than that by Pastor Kleinig at our tenth anniversary in 1976.

In answer to the question, "Now what about the future of the ELCR?" he states:

"If we, both as a Federation and individually 'keep the Word of His patience' we may be sure that the Lord will also keep His promise: 'I will also keep you in the hour of temptation which is to come upon them that dwell upon the earth' (Rev 3:11). So, brethren and sisters, remain faithful, even unto the end! Take your religion seriously.

"Parents, spare no effort in your homes to bring up your children 'in the fear and admonition of the Lord'.

"Young people, be not conformed to this world (Rom 12:2), neither in manners, customs or behaviour. The dangers are ever increasing. Satan is working harder than ever before, particularly also to mislead you.

"Pastors, remain faithful to the Word. Preach and teach it as it should be done, rightly dividing the Word of Truth. Keep on studying.

"Federation as a whole, appoint only pastors in whom you can have confidence. Remember Walther and Fritzsche. They trained their own men with wonderful results. It is always risky to call a minister from the outside. In the 1930s the late Dr. Janzow was General President of the E.L.S.A. as well as pastor of his large Adelaide congregation. Due to pressure of excessive work he had a nervous breakdown. His congregation and the Synod thereupon granted him a year's leave in order to recuperate. Another pastor was appointed to carry on the work in the congregation. But unfortunately that pastor caused great damage in the Adelaide congregation. He even brought about a split. When Janzow returned and saw what had happened, he wryly remarked: 'A billy-goat was appointed as my gardener'. Let us learn a lesson from this! Be careful not to appoint billy-goats as gardeners in our Federation, otherwise results will be disastrous.

"From all that I have written may we learn our lesson: especially keep on reminding yourselves of the Words of the Lord:

'Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life' (Rev 2:10);

and

'Hold that fast which thou hast, that no man take thy crown' (Rev 3:11).

"And now may the grace of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all! Amen."

(The History of the ELCR 1966-1976, by Pastor F.G. Kleinig, pp 16,17).

A HISTORY OF THE DOWNFALL OF THE ELCA.

- 1921 Formation of UELCA; based on evil "OPEN QUESTIONS" principle.
- 1926 - Dr. Hamann (Snr.) comes to Australia.
- 1927 - Discussions between the two churches fail.
- 1929 - Professor Koch dies of an incurable disease.
- 1930 Professor Zschech: "A new spirit is entering our church; we are no longer the old ones".
- 1938 - Formation of Australian Lutheran Association - danger sign.
- 1941 - Introduction of "new" interpretation Romans 16:17,18.  
- Dr. Janzow replaced as President.
- 1942 - Union negotiations recommence.
- 1948 - Jindera Pastoral Conference (NSW) -  
- Change in doctrine of Church Fellowship. "New" interpretation of Romans 16:17,18 unofficially adopted by ELCA. Janzow gives dissent.
- 1948 Drawing up of Theses of Agreement.
- 1953
- 1956 Theses of Agreement adopted by UELCA.
- 1959 March 5-12, Albury, ELCA adopts Theses of Agreement.  
August Pastor Kleinig called to Gatton Parish, ELCA, Qld.
- 1959 Deadlock regarding oversea's fellowships, LWF and New Guinea.
- 1964
- 1961 October 29, Australian Lutheran Association meeting, Walla Walla.  
Lohe(UELCA): not necessary to agree in all points of doctrine.
- 1962 March. Melbourne Convention of ELCA. Deadlock: Overseas Fellowship, LWF and New Guinea.  
September. Pastor Kleinig's reply to Koch (Letters of Temmeand Priebbenow).
- 1963 April - Pastor Kleinig's reply to Lohe's charges against his church history lectures.  
September - Kloeden on Rom. 16:17.
- 1964 August - Pastor Kleinig moved to Gympie Parish.  
December 30 - Document of Union ready.
- 1965 January 11 Document of Union adopted by Joint Committees.  
January 19-21 Greenwood Pastoral Conference of the Qld. District, ELCA, opposed Document of Union.  
February - release of Crossroads.  
February 13 Proeve "Who Gave In" Lutheran Herald, p.37. No change in LWF position by UELCA.  
February 26 - Lutheran Union - Zweck. (Opposition in Queensland).  
March 12-19 - General Convention of ELCA. Document of Union adopted.  
June 20 Hamann Snr's. letter - "Who Gave In?"  
August 15 Debate at Gympie: Pastor Kleinig vs. Koehne and Noack.  
October 20-26 UELCA adopts the Document of Union.  
November 28 Declaration of Altar and pulpit Fellowship.
- 1966 January Early ELCR members withdraw from ELCA.  
March 20 First gathering of ELCR, Kilkivan.  
May 29 Constituting Convention, ELCR.  
October 29-November 2 Organic union of UELCA and ELCA to found LCA.

- ADDENDUM II -

After the completion of the writing of this book, the following rather significant letter came to hand. It was written by Dr. CL. Hoopmann, General President of the ELCA until 1965. We regard its contents as striking in the light of the public assurances that were given by a number of the leaders of the ELCA that all the doctrinal differences had been Scripturally settled. This letter shows that these assurances were in many cases known to be false and were made to lead unsuspecting lay people and pastors into a union they otherwise would have rejected. As we here see, these leaders privately held deep reservations, but in order not to halt the push for union decided to publicly keep their concerns quiet, allowing their church to be led into an unscriptural union. Such we regard as a betrayal of their church to false doctrine and a denial of the pure teaching of God's Word.

We now quote to you this letter.

"Rev. Oscar J. Naumann,  
President, Wisconsin Ev. Luth. Synod,  
3624 West North Avenue,  
Room 208, Milwaukee 8, U.S.A.

Dear Pastor Naumann,

At our last joint intersynodical committee meeting held last Monday, the 11th inst., a "Document of Union" was adopted which is to be presented to our Triennial Convention at Toowoomba, Queensland, in March (12-19) and and to the UELCA Convention at Horsham, Victoria, in October.

I am sending a copy of this document to the heads of all Churches with which we have been in fellowship for purposes of information, also to solicit your prayers.

The document is based to a great extent on an agreement reached by the theological faculties of Immanuel Seminary (UELCA) and Concordia Seminary (ELCA) concerning Church Fellowship and Co-operation especially as applied to ELCONG and LWF.

The "Document of Union" does not settle all matters in dispute. Dr. Hamann Sen. and I would be happy if these matters could be settled before the actual union takes place, but we were not able to persuade the other committee members.

Next month, Dr. Theod. Nickel, second Vice-President of the Missouri Synod, Rev. F. Mayer (India) and missionaries from the Highlands of New Guinea will be in Adelaide to discuss the intersynodical situation both here and in New Guinea. I pray that God may bless these discussions. It is a difficult situation and we certainly need God's help and guidance.

With every good wish in Christ,

I remain,  
Yours sincerely,  
CL. E. Hoopmann."

[Underlining ours].

**1941** : Introduction of "New" interpretation  
of Romans 16: 17.

**1948** : Change in Doctrine of Church  
Fellowship.

**1956** : Adoption of Theses of Agreement.  
H. Sasse : "The Theses . . . . are a compromise."

**1965** : Document of Union adopted.  
H. Hamann (Snr.) : "(the ELCA) abandoned the  
position previously held."