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**Proceedings of the 14th Convention of the
German Evangelical Lutheran Synod of
Wisconsin and Other States held in the First
German Evangelical Lutheran Congregation in
Manitowoc, Wisc.**

Watertown

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Session II

Friday, May 27, 2:00 p.m.

Opened with a hymn and prayer by Pastor Th. Meumann.

The minutes of the morning session were read and adopted by resolution.

During the discussion concerning the extension of Pastor Bading's collection-journey the convention indicated its agreement with Pastor Bading's request, and resolved

- 1) that Pastor Bading be paid \$50 per month salary, beginning with last January;
- 2) that the wish of the synod be told Pastor Bading that he close the fund gathering at the time that he suggested;
- 3) that the thanks of the synod be expressed to him for his successful efforts.

A lengthier debate took place during the discussion on how best to dispose of the funds collected in Russia and Germany for the seminary. From a commercial point of view the advice was given the synod that it would be the safest either to deposit the collection money in a bank in Frankfurt a. M., from which, as necessity arose from time to time, withdrawals could be made, or that the collection funds be exchanged into U.S. currency with the funds being kept in our own hands. However, desiring to get interest as well as to have security, the synod declined to consider these two suggestions. The next recommendation for earning interest by letting the money be sent here and be converted into certificates was also not accepted because of uncertain factors; in addition, this was brought up, that interest at first looks good, but the prices of all wares and materials always rise as the price of gold rises. Therefore it seemed less risky to lend the money out on property, but the convention could not declare agreement to dispose of the money in this fashion either, because each time there would be a money crisis, the value of the property would also be affected. Then the convention was informed that Imbush and Mitchell in Milwaukee might well be inclined to have the money deposited in their bank and to pay interest, and that this would solve the concern of the synod about the security of the funds. So it was resolved:

- 1) that Imbush and Mitchell be asked to accept the collected funds for deposit under the condition that at anytime it be paid back in gold or on the basis of the

to remain in Germany;

- 3) that the Board of Trustees negotiate with the above named gentlemen.

Because of the importance of the general land-collection in Prussia, the granting for release of which had not as yet taken place, the convention desired next to have information on whether the explanation given the Prussian High Governmental Church Agency concerning the position of our Hon. Synod toward it was satisfactory. The respective document was read and a resolution was adopted by the convention that the officers of the synod write to the Hon. Prussian High Governmental Church Agency to clear up any possible misunderstandings.

During the discussion of the pastoral-substitution for Pastor Bading by Pastor Moldehnke, especially about the remuneration for the latter, the synod declared its agreement with the established agreement and resolved:

that \$150 be granted Pastor Moldehnke, and that this matter be referred to the regular finance committee.

The matter concerning Pastor Fachtmann was taken up. He declared that it was necessary for him to resign from the synod because of the paragraph in the constitution of his church in St. Paul, Minn., and he justified his frequently censured conduct for continuing his membership in the Wisconsin Synod for quite some time while indeed holding a pastorate in the Hon. Synod of Minnesota, by referring to the ambiguity which still at the time of the convention existed in respect to the relationship of the Synod of Minnesota with the Wisconsin Synod. The convention was satisfied with the explanation and resolved:

that Pastor G. Fachtmann be given an honorable release from the synod and that thanks be offered him for his work in our synod.

Pastor G. Fachtmann was then accepted as a delegate of the Hon. Synod of Minnesota and as an advisory member of the convention.

After a report on the proceedings of the recently held synodical convention of the Minnesota Synod by Pastor E. Moldehnke who was delegate there, Pastor Fachtmann was asked to present the resolutions of the Minnesota Synod in reference to the Wisconsin Synod. These are;

- 1) request the abandonment of the traveling preacher (*Reiseprediger*);
- 2) request that the Synod of Minnesota participate with the Wisconsin synod in its seminary;
- 3) request concerning the assignment of preachers.

Because of the lack of time these requests were not able to be considered at this time.

The synod resolved to adjourn to Saturday, 9:00 a.m.

Session III Saturday, May 28, 9 a.m.

Opened with a hymn, Scripture reading and prayer by Pastor H. Sieker. The minutes of the preceding session were read and adopted by resolution. Committee No. 7 handed in its report as follows:

The committee which was assigned to report on the implementation of last year's synodical resolutions takes the liberty to report to the Hon. Synod:

that the resolution concerning the incorporation of the synod has been implemented in a satisfactory manner, and it recommends to the Hon. Synod that the president be asked to inform the synod if steps were taken to achieve a closer union with the synods of Ohio, Michigan and Minnesota, and if so, what were they.

Respectfully, Pastors C. Braun, C. Gausewitz, M.H. Quehl.

Resolved that the report be adopted.

Further information from Pastor W. Dammann about the Ohio Synod shows the position of this synod as essentially in agreement with the Wisconsin Synod in doctrine and practice and that it would be desirable to have a closer relationship with this synod. Along with this, reference was made to the latest happenings in the General Synod and to the probable sooner or later split within this body and in light of this it was proposed that in case this conceivable split would take place, and as a result, on the basis of a more solid confessional foundation, a new larger union of synods would result, that a delegate from the Synod of Wisconsin be sent to such a meeting of organizing synods.

The proposal was supported and a resolution was voted on and adopted.

Committee No.2 handed in its report.

In reference to the acceptance of all applicant pastors, the undersigned committee takes the liberty to report that it, after careful examination of all written references and after conducting colloquies individually with all new pastors present, categorically:

- 1) recommends the acceptance of Pastors J. Brockmann, E. Giese, G. Vorberg, A. Opitz, G. Thiele and Mayerhoff;
- 2) that it regrets that it could not take up the acceptance of Pastor Richter because of his absence;
- 3) that it could not recommend the acceptance of Pastor Zwolanek until he receives a release from the *Kirchen = Verein des Westens* (Church Association of the West – a United Church type of synod);
- 4) that it requests the Hon. Synod to inform Pastor Werner of Ypsilanti, Washtenow Co., Mich., that it has no opening for him, and to advise him to ask for another working area within the Synod of Michigan, of which he is a member;
- 5) that it cannot recommend the acceptance of Teacher Gebhard of Wausau, Wis., now functioning as a pastor, until he appear personally before the synod and answer questions concerning himself.

Respectfully, Delegates J. Krueger and F. Baebenroth, Pastors E. Moldehnke, W. Dammann and H. Sieker

Resolved:

that the report be adopted, and that Pastors J. Brockmann, E. Giese, G. Vorberg, A. Opitz, G. Thiele and Mayerhoff be accepted as voting members of the synod.

Further resolved that also the other paragraphs of the report be elevated to resolutions.

The committee which is to report on the president's annual report takes the liberty to recommend to the synod:

- 1) to express its sincere thanks and appreciation to Vice-President G. Reim for his sincere and capable handling of the office during the past synodical year and to approve of the official duties which he undertook, and to support him in the steps he took against Mr. Roell in reference to removing him from his pastoral office, and for the publication of the same;
- 2) that special consideration be given the attempted departure from the synod of Pastor Leupp and his reentry, as well as to the departure of Pastor Waldmann;
- 3) to express to Pastor Bading its sincere thanks for his successful efforts for the good of our seminary and to assure him of our brotherly support and intercessions;
- 4) to thank very much Messrs. Struve and Bingham for their unselfish efforts in the matter of our charter;
- 5) to request the president for the latest information concerning the matter of uniting with the Hon. Ev. Lutheran Synod of Ohio;
- 6) to express our deepest sympathy to the widow of our deceased Brother Koester and to seek comforting strength for her from the Lord.
Respectfully Delegates J. Roepke and N. Shoof, Pastors W. Streissguth, A. Lange and M.H. Quehl.

The convention accepted the report by resolution.

Resolved concerning §1:

that the thanks of the synod be expressed to the president for his work. For the discussion of §2 of the report, the Hon. president gave a report on Pastor A. Leupp. The convention expressed its total disapproval over what he did, however recognizing that Pastor Leupp could not be exonerated without some action by the synod, it finally adopted the resolution offered by Pastor W. Streissguth and supported by Pastor A. Lange that:

the withdrawal and the not as yet re-acceptance of Pastor Leupp should not be taken for granted, whereas his relationship to the synod was not looked upon as having been separated until the matter with him was taken care of by the synod; this last should not be delayed until the next year's synodical convention.

The basic thought that a departure from the synod in any case and under all circumstances, at least on the part of the synod, should be carried out officially, was also brought up in the case of Pastor Waldmann; and so it was resolved:

that a release consistent with the circumstances be granted Pastor Waldmann.

In regard to §4 of the report it was resolved:

that the thanks of the synod be expressed to the Hon. Mr. Struve for giving the articles of incorporation to Mr. Bingham, and that the latter likewise be thanked for presenting them [to the legislature].

The expression of condolence recommended in §6 to the widow of the deceased Br. Koester was by a resolution referred to a committee, to which were named Pastors Ph. Koehler, C.F. Goldammer and A. Lange.

The committee on the seminary and college matter handed in its report:

The undersigned committee reports:

- 1) that the city of Watertown complied with the condition asked of it during the

- last year's convention – namely to bring up \$2000 if the seminary and college is to be established there;
- 2) that the committee proposes that the piece of land which Pastor Moldehnke rented be purchased with this money;
- 3) since the synod in the previous year elected Pastor Moldehnke as professor provisionally, and also, since Pastor Giese, recently from Berlin, is being proposed as a qualified person for this professorship, the synod must decide if it remain with last year's resolution or if it resolve something else;
- 4) that for enlarging the house a collection should be taken up immediately in all of the congregations and in the city of Watertown;
- 5) that a teacher fluent in the English language be appointed in addition to the professor;
- 6) that the committee considers it most evident that at all times men who in truth accept only the doctrines of our church be elected to the theological positions and that they be under obligation to all of the confessional writings of our church;
- 7) finally, that it recommends to the Board of Trustees:
 - a) to provide for the position of an English teacher,
 - b) to negotiate with the appointed lecturers about their salaries,
 - c) to propose a manner of procuring the required funds or to make resolutions for the same,

The committee on the seminary matter

Delegates G. Duwe and J. Roepke, Pastors Th. Meumann, H. Sicker and J. Ritter

Resolved that the entire report be adopted.

The convention proceeded to the discussion of the individual paragraphs and desired first of all a greater assurance that the city of Watertown had fulfilled the established condition. Delegate Gamm of Watertown furnished this information by presenting a book in which the Watertown contributions were listed. It was the resolved:

that §1 of the report be elevated to a synodical resolution.

It was to be expected that in the deliberation of §2 of the report the convention could not come to an agreement in regard to the purchase of a specific piece of property in Watertown; meanwhile, even again now, it was oddly enough brought up to make a trial beginning of the institutions and even of a trial-year. It was then that a spoken word given at the right time proposed that the expression "trial" be allowed to be dropped and that in God's name to make an energetic beginning of the institutions with the funds at hand. That the beginning, however, because of the conditions of the time, take place with prudence and discretion, was indeed evident to all. It was then resolved:

that it be granted the Board of Trustees of the seminary the right to purchase a suitable piece of property with the monies already collected, keeping in mind the limits of the funds.

Justifiably it was brought up that in addition to the interest in our institutions which is being reported from Germany, it be the duty of the synod to collect funds in a greater portion of our land. This point had to be put off for further discussion because the convention by resolution adjourned the meeting to 2:00 p.m.

Closed with prayer by Pastor F. Waldt.

Session IV

Saturday, May 28, 2 p.m.

Opening of the session with a hymn and a prayer by Pastor J. Ritter.

The minutes of the morning session were read and adopted.

The newly arrived brothers, Pastors J. Schladermundt, J. Hoffmann and F. Boehner were welcomed.

Resolved that Pastor T. [sic] Schladermundt be given a seat as advisory delegate.

Delegates Heyner from Naperville, Ill. and Fischer from Racine handed in their credentials and took their seats. Pastor J. Hoffmann handed in his parochial report. Pastor Fachtmann, at the continued discussion of the seminary matter, again brought up his proposal, offered previously in the morning. If the Synod of Minnesota were given the right to have their future pastors educated at the seminary of the Synod of Wisconsin, Pastor Heyer, the current president of the synod of Minnesota, would declare himself ready to undertake a collection-journey throughout the eastern portion of the United States. The convention was disposed to accept this offer after hearing such a fair proposal and, after recalling our own past experiences that the taking up of a collection by us outside our synod would hardly pay in relationship to what a well-known name could do in more distant circles, it was resolved:

that Pastor Fachtmann be asked to request Pastor Heyer to collect in the East for the seminary, to the best of his ability.

Then §4 was discussed. The necessity of a general collection in the congregations of the synod lies before us; the question is – how can it be done with the best results. From the various proposals made, support was given generally to the proposal that an announcement be sent to the congregations in which the matter of the seminary be laid on their hearts. After further discussion, especially after all recognized that the seminary must have in mind an interest in [parochial] schools, and after it was found wise to express this explicitly in the announcement under consideration, the following proposal was voted on and adopted:

that a committee be named to draw up such an announcement in which, on the one hand the necessity of a seminary for our synod is explained and impressed upon the hearts of the congregations, and secondly, the assurance be given that the seminary should as much as possible serve to develop interest in [parochial] schools.

To the special committee were named Pastors E. Moldehnke, W. Streissguth and Delegate Gamm.

Paragraphs 5, 6, and 7 of the report were elevated to resolutions by the synod and adopted.

The Hon. president then presented to the convention a letter from Pastor Richter in which he on the one hand was sorry that family matters prevented him from attending the convention, and secondly that, with a request for a later colloquy, he is seeking synod membership. The convention regretted on its part that it is not able to respond to this request because the synodical constitution requires the personal appearance of the applicant.

The committee on accepting applicant congregations handed in its first report.

The undersigned committee reports respectfully:

- 1) that up to the present time the following congregations have made application to be accepted into the Hon. synod:
 - a) the Evang. Luth. St. Immanuel Congregation in Farmington, Jefferson Co. Wisconsin,
 - b) the German Evan. Luth. St. Martin's Congregation in Town Farmington, Washington Co., Wisconsin,
 - c) the German Ev. Luth. St. John Congregation in Towns Wheatland and Hudson, Kenosha and Walworth Cos.
 - d) the Evang. Luth. Congregation in Saukville, Ozaukee Co., Wis.
 - e) the Evang. Lutheran Friedens Congregation, in Port Washington, Ozaukee Co., Wis.,
 - f) the Evang. Luth. St. Paul's Congregation in Ahnepee, Kewaunee Co. Wis. [today Algoma].
- 2) that the committee reviewed the conditions and constitutions of the above named congregations and
- 3) was satisfied that these six congregations could be recommended to the synod for acceptance.

The committee for accepting new congregation

Delegates A. Theilig and G. Gamm, Pastors C.F. Goldammer and J.D. Huber

Resolved that the report be adopted.

Resolved that the six congregations named in the report be accepted into synod membership.

At the occasion of the request of the Evang. Luth. St. Trinity Congregation in Caledonia Center, Wis. to be given a pastor as soon as possible, at least to be granted permission to be served on a regular basis by neighboring pastors, it was brought up that it now be necessary to discuss the filling of vacancies in congregations. The president responded by saying that it was not wise to bring up special items for discussion, and that in the filling of vacancies one must take into account special needs as well as the availability of pastors. Along with this Pastor Sieker recommended Pastor A. Leopold Benze to the Port Washington congregation. Delegate Egel of Port Washington stated that the congregation would indeed be ready to offer sufficient funds for Pastor A. Leopold Benze for his trip.

A proposal frequently offered by Pastor Moldehnke and offered anew that a quarterly publication be sent to the synodical brothers with information about the happenings of the synod brought about the resolution that such a publication be begun and produced by the secretary of the synod.

Pastor E. Moldehnke took the occasion to speak a few words about Indian mission work. The convention heard the report with sincere participation concerning work of the English as well as that of the German churches in the matter of Indian mission work and resolved:

that the congregations of the synod seriously keep in mind Indian mission work.

Committee 11 handed in its report:

The undersigned committee reports that the charter contains several provisions, the change of which appears to be desirable but also difficult, and consists of the following:

- 1) that only one charter, not two, exists for both the synod and the institutions;

- 2) that the name of the synod is changed in the charter;
- 3) that the relationship of the three visitors to the trustees does not seem to be divergent enough because of a fear of concurrence of jurisdiction, if the authority of each elected body is not separated from one another by bylaws;
- 4) that, all things considered, it would be desirable that the requirements of the theological instructors be included in the charter itself.

The committee on the charter

Respectfully Delegate J. T. Berndt; Pastors T. Meumann and Chr. Stark

P.S. Pastors A. Lange and C.F. Goldammer, who did not sign the report, were hindered from attending the committee meeting.

The report was adopted by resolution, however, discussion on the individual parts was postponed to the next session. The convention was adjourned to Monday, May 30, 9:00 a.m.

The session was closed with prayer by Pastor Ph. Sprengling.

Session V

Monday, May 30, 9:00 a.m.

The session was opened with a hymn, Scripture reading and prayer by Pastor C.F. Goldammer.

The minutes of the previous session were adopted.

The matter of the New Berlin congregation was brought up for discussion. Pastor D. Huber reported that he had definitely complied with the synodical resolution of the previous year, but as a result, the division between the Lutherans and the Uniteds in the congregation became greater than previously and a split is to be feared. He recommended conciliatory measures to the synod. Pastor Zwolanek agreed and expressed the hope that through instruction some good could be accomplished. It was resolved:

- 1) that it be left up to Pastor Zwolanek to win over the United group of the congregation to accept the Lutheran catechism;
- 2) that a committee deal with the congregation through correspondence.

The naming of the committee was given to the president.

Now the discussion of individual paragraphs of the charter report was taken up. That the presented charter identifies the Board of Trustees with the synod was not totally, yet predominantly the view of the synod; it was recognized as being desirable that, for the incorporation of the synod and the seminary there be a special charter which is not encumbered with overly difficult terminology. – Further discussion was stopped with the resolution:

that Delegate Meier, with the assistance of Pastor Chr. Stark, be authorized to consult with an attorney and get his opinion of the charter.

The committee on the validity of the excuses of absent pastors handed in its report: The undersigned committee takes the liberty to propose to the Hon. synod:

that Pastors W. Hass, P.A. Leupp, E. Strube, H. Warnke and Fr. Meyer be excused for being absent from the synod.* However Pastors E. Sauer and J.

Conrad are not to be excused because they did not send in an excuse.

[the * referred to a note at the bottom of the page which read:

P.S. Subsequently a letter came from Pastor E. Sauer, asking to be excused because

of illness.]

The committee for excuses of absent pastors.

Respectfully, Pastors A. Lange, C. Gausewitz, Chr. Starck.

The report was accepted by resolution.

The respective pastors who were excused by the committee were excused by a resolution after the reasons for the excuses were heard.

In the case of Pastors J. Conrad and E. Sauer, it was resolved that they not be excused.

The committee on the use of the word "*innere Mission*" [home missions] handed in its report:

The committee takes the liberty to propose simply to the Hon. synod that the word in the parochial reports be dropped and in its place the separate rubrics such as: for the synod treasury, for the seminary, for the hospital, etc. be used. In this way the report will not only be precise but also eliminate the question if this or that belongs under the rubric of "*innere Mission*." It appears to us to clarify what was covered by this word. In general, a congregation or an individual may say, we have done or given so and so for "*innere Mission*", however when it comes to be entered into the official report, it seems to us that exactness is essential.

Respectfully Delegate J. Krueger, Pastors C. Gausewitz, W. Dammann, C. Stark
The report was accepted by resolution.

At the debate of this subject, whether, as formerly, all money collected for "*innere Mission*" be recorded in the column under the heading "*innere Mission*" or in specific columns brings up the necessity again to designate into which branch of Christian charity, under the concept of "*innere Mission*" it is to be listed. It was then resolved:

that a member be selected to submit to the synod a special report concerning [the meaning of] "*innere Mission*".

Pastor Schladermundt will draw up this report.

Resolved that the convention adjourn to 2:00 p.m.

The session was closed with prayer by Pastor E. Giese.

Session VI

Monday, May 30, 2:00 p.m.

The session opened with a hymn, and prayer by Pastor G. Vorberg.

The minutes of the morning session were read and adopted.

Applications of several congregations were presented and referred to the respective committee.

Pastor Schladermundt reported on what is included by the expression "*innere Mission*."

Innere Mission includes all those activities which are a responsibility of the baptized members of Christian congregations which are necessary for the special welfare of the church, such as poor preachers and congregations, *Reiseprediger* support, Bible and Tract associations, correctional institutions, orphanages, schools for young children, youth agencies and hospitals. Through all of these institutions the kingdom of God will be built up under a branch of the church, which branch was alienated from it and which threatened to be lost to

heathendom in the midst of Christendom.

Respectfully, Pastor J. Schladermundt.

The convention accepted the report and found in further discussion of the same that the given enumeration of the individual branches of the *innere Mission* activity was so extensive that it is to be hoped that funds would be sufficient for the prevailing needs. Thereupon it was resolved:

that the synod's treasurer would also receive the incoming funds for home (*innere*) and foreign (*aeussere*) missions, and that the officials of the synod have the right to designate, according to their judgment, the recipients of those funds which are not designated for a specific purpose.

The ad hoc committee appointed in the morning session to take care of matters concerning the charter reports:

The committee appointed by the Hon. synod to consult with an attorney respectfully reports the following, after having met with him:

It is not to be denied that the relationship of the trustees of the seminary to the synod is unclearly stated in the charter as well as that of the three visitors to the trustees and this could lead to difficulties in the future over common rights and obligations. By means of a synodical resolution a more exactly stated charter – or two, one for the synod and one for its educational institutions – could be requested from the state legislature yet that is not absolutely necessary, since the educational institutions and all of their officials ultimately are under the control of the synod itself and both corporate bodies, the synod and the officials of the institutions would pursue a common purpose. It would be best that the same duties, such as rights and obligations of the above named parties, which were given just general mention in the charter, would be included in clearly stated bylaws and would be specifically assigned.

The undersigned committee recommends therefore to the Hon. synod, that a committee of qualified men be appointed, to which is given the obligation to carefully draft such suitable amendments for the charter and to present them to the next synodical convention for closer scrutiny and then for adoption.

The Charter Committee, Pastor Chr. Stark Delegate J. Meyer

Since according to the preceding report on the charter presented to the convention that the charter was not written with exact enough language, but that it was shown to be sufficiently adaptable so that by means of bylaws it could be fully acceptable, the naming of a committee was resolved which should be entrusted with the drafting of the bylaws. In order to give this committee an idea of what was necessary to be done, it was considered to be worthwhile to discuss the matter of the charter further. First of all the thought was brought up for discussion of the difference of the name of the synod as stated in the charter as Synod of Wisconsin whereas in the constitution it is the Synod of Wisconsin and Other States, and that this might lead to unfortunate circumstances. At this discussion it soon was evident that concerning this question a decision could only be reached on the basis of legal knowledge; the convention therefore resolved that the committee which had already brought in a legal report be given the assignment.

Pastor Schladermundt gave a report to the convention on the Protestant hospital in Milwaukee.

It gives me great pleasure to report to the Hon. synod, that the hospital referred to at the last year's convention in Milwaukee has become a reality by God's gracious hand and blessing. After checking out various places we succeeded in purchasing a suitable building for this purpose in the western section of the city near Spring Street, together with 10 acres of land, for a cost of \$12,000.00 The building has two stories and is built with an ample first floor. The place is the highest point of the entire area and overlooks the entire city and the lake. With faith in our Lord we took the chance to take this debt of \$12,000.00 upon ourselves; the Lord did not let us down, but blessed us in our painstaking efforts in collecting, so that we could pay off \$6000.00 on the capital debt, and also do some repairs of about \$400.00 late last year, and we could afford the furnishings for the large house, the necessary provisions and medications. What we have done in regard to taking care of the sick, I will now present to the Hon. synod for perusal:

With prayer and petitions to Him, from whom all blessings flow, we without fanfare opened our hospital with one ill patient on August 3 of last year; before the end of the month the number arose to six, and to the present day we have cared for 50 patients.

Twenty-five of these were German, seven Americans, four Canadians, six Italians, three Danes, two Norwegians, one Swede, a Scotsman and a black lady. In regard to religion, thirty-six were Protestant, thirteen were Roman Catholic and nine were of the Jewish faith.

The various illnesses were: tuberculosis, liver complaints, cancer, rheumatism, rheumatic fever, remittent and intermittent fever, erysipelas, eye operations, infections caused by stones, skin diseases, broken bones, and a variety of injuries.

Thirty were released as healed, six as improved, one as incurable, two deaths and six are still remaining in the hospital.

Eighteen paid for their treatments, thirty-two were treated and taken care of without payment. Sixteen were from outside the city and 34 from the city. Special thanks from the hospital is due the physicians who offered their services without remuneration. The undersigned also thanks sincerely the Brothers of the synod through whom we received donations and he urges the Brothers to seriously accept the matter of the hospital and to bring petitions to the Lord for this important work of *innere Mission*.

Milwaukee May 23, 1864

Respectfully J. Schladermundt, hospital superintendent

The report was received by the convention with thanks. Pastor Schladermundt added further comments about the spiritual blessings of the hospital and he again stated his request for active participation by the entire synod for this project.

It was then resolved:

that the synod has recognized with pleasure the successful progress of the Protestant Hospital in Milwaukee and it offers its thanks to God; it also urges the

congregations to take it upon themselves to support this institution with prayer and contributions.

Committee 9 handed in its report;

The report of the librarian indicates that the use of the library this year was less than that of last year, and the question might be raised: where can one find the reason? The committee believes that the Brothers who are in places farther away from Milwaukee, and who during the course of the year do not come to Milwaukee are refrained from using the library because of the high cost of postage.

The report indicates that in 1863-64 45 volumes were lent out, of which 10 were returned, thus 35 are still out. In addition to this, four volumes have not been returned from 62-63.

The financial report indicates:

Payments for borrowed books	98 cents
Church constitutions sold	37 cents
	1.35
additional income	45
	1.80

The committee Pastors A. Denninger, C.G. Reim, J.P. Sprengling

Resolved that the report be adopted.

Resolved: that the seminary be definitely situated in Watertown and that the library be designated for use by the seminary, that the library be brought to Watertown as soon as possible, and that the moving of the library be given over to the librarian and the synodical officials.

Resolved: that the librarian be given the warmest thanks for his labors.

Resolved: that it be up to the judgment of the librarian to lend several books all at once or for a longer period of time to Brothers who live farther away.

The report of the committee concerning the matter of the New Berlin congregation was not accepted as presented because the committee did not complete its assignment. To a committee to be named for this matter in accordance with an earlier resolution were named: Pastors F. Brockmann and C. Gausewitz, and Delegate Duwe.

Delegates N. Schoof and C. Kieckhoefer of Milwaukee, T. Berndt of West Granville, W. Heyner of Naperville, Ill., J. Wagner of New Berlin and G. Duwe of Columbus were by resolution excused at their requests. Pastor Chr. Starck and H. Quehl likewise requested permission to leave, which was granted. As a result of these requests to leave, which seem to indicate that we still have not found the right time to begin our conventions, a debate took place on whether we remain with the present schedule or return to the former time schedule. The debate ended with this resolution;

that the synodical sessions begin each time on Thursday morning with the synodical service;

to which was added the amendment:

that the celebration of Holy Communion take place on Sunday together with the respective congregation.

The convention was adjourned by resolution to Tuesday 9:00 a.m.

Closed with prayer by Pastor H. Bartels.

Session VII

Tuesday, May 31, 9:00 a.m.

Opened with a hymn, Scripture, and a prayer by Pastor J. Muehlhaeuser.

The minutes of the previous session were read and adopted.

The committee on drafting a message to the congregations presents the following report.

To our dear congregations.

“Knock and it shall be opened unto you.” We are following the admonition, we are trusting the promise of our Savior, therefore we are turning to you, dear congregations, in complete confidence, that you will be willing to continue to work with us in the work of the Lord and to help us wherever possible to establish a preacher-teacher seminary, the Holy Spirit’s workplace where He can train capable young persons and direct them to this type of service.

Not only for the scattered members of our dear Lutheran church in this northwestern part of the United States or for those lacking a shepherd, not only for the immigrants, but also for you, your children and descendants we have a concern for your salvation and blessings, and have with many prayers and petitions to our Lord resolved in the past year to establish a seminary for the education of capable Lutheran pastors and teachers, “in order to rear persons, adept to teach in the church. It seems to some that all that is necessary for a preacher is to be able to read German. But that is terribly false opinion. It is not an easy, in fact it is impossible that they have uneducated people teach and instruct others clearly and correctly.” “Nothing is higher or more noble than the Word and the preaching ministry,” says our dear Dr. Martin Luther; he adds in reference to the teaching ministry: “And I, if I could and must leave the preaching ministry, I would not want any other occupation than to be a school teacher and teacher of youths. For I know that this work, next to the preaching ministry is the most necessary, greatest and best work, and I do not know as yet, which of the two is best.”

If, with the help of the Lord, the pure doctrine of the sweet Gospel of Jesus Christ is to be preserved for the old and young – and that is the Lord’s will – then it is our duty to care for the education of faithful preachers and teachers. The urgent necessity of such a seminary has been taught you by your own experiences. For a long while you have yearned for shepherds, and the more a soul recognizes or experiences the grace of God which he grants us through the preaching ministry, the greater is the longing for it when it is lacking. By the grace of God you have been provided with preachers, even some of you with teachers; some of you have preachers that also conduct school for the youngsters; others, on the other hand, can be served with Word and sacrament only rarely, and must do without a regular school for your children – yes, many of our synod’s congregations have at present no preacher or teacher and cry out continually for help. “Man does not live by bread alone,” therefore when we look out at so many, many of our scattered fellow believers that have come to the west and are without any spiritual care, if we see the lambs of Jesus Christ grow up without Christian discipline and instruction, and torn constantly away by the flood of destruction, we hear the people bemoan this, and urgently call to us from deep within their hearts: come and help us. Along with that there is the coercive activity of the sects, who especially rush anxiously with haste among our shepherdless Lutheran brothers to lead them astray with their fanatical activity, and away from justification by grace; “therefore let us do good to all people, especially to

those who belong to the family of believers." — New immigrants arrive from the old German homeland in droves, our congregations grow and always need more preachers and teachers — "O Lord of the harvest, give it your attention; the harvest is great but the number of reapers is small." — Through the candidates from Germany, through the painstaking endeavors of our own preachers and through an established traveling preacher program we have endeavored to help, and we must recognize with thanks to the Lord that He has richly blessed our meager efforts. But a sufficient and adequate all-encompassing relief can only be achieved through the building of an institution at which preachers and teachers are educated. "And while from all sides the greatest cry, want and complaint is that people are lacking, yet we must not delay until some grow up; they will not be hewn out of stone or carved from wood; in like manner God will not perform miracles as long as one can get what one needs through other acquired means. For that reason we must set our mind to it and turn our efforts and costs to move forward and do it." Thus we have already made a beginning in weakness and have accepted some students. For that reason our last year's president, Pastor Bading, collected a substantial sum in Germany and Russia for our seminary. With new efforts we plan with the Lord's help to continue our work this year for the honor of the name of our Lord Jesus Christ and for the welfare of immortal souls. We await your willing help with cheerful confidence for the institution is to be there especially for your sake, "everything is done because of you."

We are all the more turning to you for help rather than to expect help for a Lutheran seminary from the English churches, even much less from other Lutheran synods for a seminary for the Ev. Lutheran Synod of Wisconsin. Above all we need your sincere participation, your zeal, especially your prayers, for young capable people. "If you do not want to lead your child in that direction, and if no father or mother will give up their child to our God, what will happen then to the ministerial positions and profession." Furthermore, we need money, provisions and necessary items for equipping the seminary. We refer you to examples of other branches of our Lutheran church, especially to the Norwegians who are building one institution after another, and of those from whom another synod recently gathered \$18,000.00 from its congregations without any outside help. If each family — and we hope that no family will abandon the work of the Lord — would do just a little, we could already now gather a significant amount from our synodical congregations. Now it lies in your hands to exercise immeasurable influence on the present and future generations with the help of the Lord. Help plant and water so that you and your offspring can enjoy the fruits as the Lord grants his blessing. "And may the Lord, our God, be gracious to us and further the work of our hands." Amen

Respectfully, Delegate G. Gamm, Pastors E. Moldehnke and W. Streissguth.

The announcement was adopted by resolution.

Resolved that the announcement not be printed only in the Proceedings, but in individual copies to the amount of 5000.

Resolved that the secretary make up a sheet on which the Brothers can indicate the number of copies needed by each.

The committee to compose a letter of condolence to the widow of the sainted Brother Koester presents the following report.

The committee takes the liberty to recommend to the synod the adoption of the following resolutions and to send them to the widow of our departed-to-heaven brother Koester:

- 1) that the synod acknowledges with sincere sympathy the death of Brother Koester and finds in the same a stern admonition to keep in mind that we have no enduring city here, but we are looking for the city that is to come;
- 2) that the synod expresses its sympathy to the bereaved widow of the departed Brother Koester and it asks her to keep in mind the great comfort of God's Word, that the Lord our God's will is to be the provider and protector of widows and that He will not forsake her;
- 3) that the synod hereby gives the widow of Brother Koester the assurance that it at all times will be willing and ready to assist her in word and deed, in accordance with the word of the Lord: to visit the widows and orphans in their distress.

Respectfully Pastors Ph. Koehler, A. Lange, C.F. Goldammer.

Resolved: that the report be accepted.

The matter of the charter was disposed of with the following resolutions:

- 1) that the charter which was presented to us be understood as legally valid;
- 2) that a committee be named which at the next synodical convention should present one or two separate copies. Completely revised, together with the added required bylaws.

The committee for auditing the treasurer's books as well as the seminary's books presents the following report:

Report I

The undersigned committee takes the liberty to inform the synod of the following:

1) annual report	income	\$298.34
	expenses	\$268.45
	on hand	\$29.89

Audited and found to be correct

- 2) the treasury books and addenda were in very good order.
- 3) the treasurer is due the thanks of the synod for his careful service.

The committee to audit the treasurer's books,

Respectfully, Delegate G. Gamm Pastors C. Wagner and C. Titze

Resolved that the report be adopted and that the individual paragraphs be elevated to synodical resolutions.

Report II

The committee assigned to audit the seminary finances takes the liberty to report the following to the synod:

- 1) Received by Prof. Moldehnke for books, gifts and
\$52.80 from the previous synodical funds \$60.86
Expenses \$62.20

Prof. Moldehnke therefore has a bill for the synodical treasury of \$1.34

- 2) The book firm of Schaefer and Coradi in Philadelphia is to be paid \$42.95, which the synod is asked to ratify.
- 3) Prof. Moldehnke is owed the thanks of the synod for his fervent efforts in behalf of the seminary.

Respectfully, Delegate G. Gamm Pastors C. Wagner, C. Titze.

- Resolved: 1) that the report be adopted;
 2) that the synod express its thanks to Prof. Moldehnke;
 3) that the financial report of Prof. Moldehnke be accepted.

The committee on accepting new congregations submits its second report:

The committee reports respectfully that the following congregations, on the testimony of Pastor Meyer, also be accepted into membership of the synod:

- 1) the Ev. Lutheran St. John Congregation in Portage City, Columbia Co., Wis.;
- 2) the Ev. Lutheran St. Michael Congregation in Lewistown, Columbia Co., Wis.

Also on the basis of their constitutions, the following two congregations are recommended for membership:

- 1) the First German Ev. Lutheran St. Paul Congregation in Town Eldorado, Fond du Lac Co., Wis.;
- 2) the German Ev. Lutheran St. Paul Congregation in Calumet, Fond du Lac Co., Wis.;

Respectfully, Delegates G. Gamm, J. Theilig Pastors C. F. Goldammer, D. Huber.

Resolved that the report be adopted.

Resolved that the congregations named in the report be accepted into synod membership.

In regard to the definite election of the seminary professor, which was already thoroughly discussed in the pastoral conferences, the Hon. president informed the delegates about the situation so that a final decision could be made. Resolved:

that Pastor E. Moldehnke remain as professor at the seminary.

For a further discussion of the charter, §4 was presented. The convention was convinced that the conflicts between the Board of Trustees and the three Visitors need not be feared since the former is a governing agency while the latter is an inspection body.

Resolved:

that each year one third of the Board of Trustees cannot be reelected in accordance with the state's statutes, and that to the present five a 6th be elected.

Mr. D. Kusel of Watertown was elected.

Then followed the election of the three Visitors with the following result: Pastor E. Giese, Pastor W. Streissguth and Delegate F. Berndt of West Granville.*

Resolved that the convention be adjourned to 2:00 p.m.

Closed with prayer by Pastor H. Sieker.

*[Earlier in the minutes Berndt was given the initial T., also T.F.]

Session VIII

Tuesday, May 31, 2 p.m.

Opened with a hymn and prayer by Pastor Kylian.

The minutes of the morning session were read and adopted.

In reference to the reworking of the charter (in reference to the two copies of the charter) and the required bylaws by an appointed committee, it was resolved after a brief discussion:

that the trustees without the Visitors make-up this committee.

Resolved: that the Hon. Synod of Pennsylvania and the Hon. Langenberg and Berlin Societies be thanked by the synod for their charitable contributions to our synod.

This was followed by a discussion of an Agenda, which led to the resolution:

that the synod recommend the Agenda of the Synod of Ohio to the Brothers for use.

Resolved: that the Hon. Pres. G. Reim go to the convention of the Joint Synod of Ohio as our delegate, and if he is hindered from going, that Pastor C. Gausewitz go in his stead.

Pastor Meyerhoff sought clarification in regard to an explanation to the congregation in Fond du Lac, that the daughter congregation of this congregation separated itself from the main congregation and does not want to be served by the latter's pastor any longer. Resolved:

that the synod state its wish that Pastor Mayerhoff together with the congregation in Fond du Lac continue to serve the daughter congregation.

Pastor Th. Meumann brought it to attention again that the congregation in Platteville had already in the previous year invited the synod to hold its convention there, but this invitation is not being extended this year; instead it will be extended the following year when travel to Platteville will be greatly improved.

Since no other invitations from congregations have been received, it was resolved:

that the selection of a place for the next synodical convention be left up to the officials of the synod, and that they give serious consideration for Watertown.

A frequently sought request for support for the congregation at West Bend was brought up for recall by Pastor Vorberg. Similar requests came from the congregations in Ripon and Wheatland.

Resolved: that 600 copies of the Synodical Proceedings be printed.

Resolved: that a committee of five, made up of trustees and instructors at the seminary, be named to form the committee to examine students applying for entrance to the seminary.

Resolved: that Pastors J. Bading, G. Reim, E. Moldehnke, D. Huber and C. F. Goldammer make up this examining committee, and that the previous standing committee for this purpose be disbanded.

Resolved: that the officers of the synod compose the letter to the congregation in New Berlin which was not carried out by an earlier committee.

Resolved: that the requests for acceptance into the seminary be directed to the professor of the seminary.

Resolved: that the person who receives the funds collected in Germany procure sufficient security for the same.

Resolved: that the standing committee for examining applicant preacher candidates be dissolved and that the president name a newly constituted committee consisting of one member from each district-conference.

Resolved: that the following be named to this committee: Pastors Ph. Koehler, Mayerhoff, W. Streissguth, A. Hoenecke, Chr. Starck, and that the president according to his judgment refer the newly arrived candidates to this committee.

Resolved: that the Dodge-Washington County conference be recognized and that Pastor E. Giese be named as the conference representative to the newly formed committee.

Resolved: that the synod postpone the acceptance of the closing paragraph of the synodical constitution to the next convention and therewith reserve for

itself the right to make changes in the constitution with a simple majority vote, but after that to follow the constitution in making changes.

Resolved: that thanks be expressed to the past secretary for his careful carrying out of his duties.

Resolved: that the president purchase a ledger for the minutes of the synodical proceedings, that the former secretaries enter previous minutes into this ledger and that the synodical constitution be written in the first part of the ledger.

Resolved: that short reviews of the synodical proceedings be furnished and that the president take care of this.

Resolved: that the convention adjourn itself until the Thursday after the first Sunday after Trinity Sunday.

The minutes of this session were read and adopted.

Closed with a hymn and with prayer by Pastor W. Dammann.

May the Lord however, whom we looked up to in our discussions and resolutions and whose kingdom we want to serve, bring everything to pass through his power for the blessing of his kingdom and the glory of his name. Amen

That the above are the proceedings and resolutions of the 14th convention of the German Ev. Lutheran Synod of Wisconsin and other States is certified by the signature below.

Adolph Hoenecke, secretary of the synod
Farmington Wis. June 22, 1864

“Those were trying years!”

Recollections of the “split”

Prof. Mark Braun, Wisconsin Lutheran College

Edward Fredrich in *The Wisconsin Synod Lutherans* recalled painful memories of what many referred to simply as “the split”—the events leading to the Wisconsin Synod’s decision to break fellowship with the Missouri Synod:

For those who were Wisconsin Synod members in the middle years of the twentieth century and lived through the long struggle to maintain the Synodical Conference on its historical confessional foundations, the loss of the battles and of the war will always remain the most significant and traumatic episode in their own personal version of their church body’s history. The struggle was long, stretching over a quarter century. The losses in cherished fellowships were large, touching personally most pastors, teachers and lay families of the synod.¹

Fredrich’s seventeen page article in the 1977 *Wisconsin Lutheran Quarterly*, entitled “The Great Debate with Missouri,”² and chapter eighteen of his synod history, which runs a little more than ten pages, are the only official telling of that momentous event, at least from the Wisconsin Synod’s side.³

Perusing volumes of that synod’s *Books of Reports and Memorials*, its *Reports to the Districts* and its convention *Proceedings*, as well as issues of its popular periodical

¹ Edward C. Fredrich, *The Wisconsin Synod Lutherans: A History of the Single Synod, Federation, and Merger* (Milwaukee: Northwestern Publishing House, 1992), 198. The official names of the two church bodies discussed in this article are the Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod (WELS) and The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod (LCMS). During most of the “trying years” documented here, the two synods were frequently referred to simply as “the Wisconsin Synod” and “the Missouri Synod,” although the Wisconsin Synod had congregations in 16 states in 1961 and the Missouri Synod had congregations in every state of the U. S. since the early 1930s. The Missouri Synod adopted “The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod” as its official name in 1947; the Wisconsin Synod changed its name to the “Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod” in 1959.

² *Wisconsin Lutheran Quarterly* 74 (April 1977), 157-173.

³ Missouri treatments of the breakup of the Synodical Conference include: George J. Gude, “A Description and Evaluation of the Pressures and Difficulties within the Synodical Conference Which Led its Destruction” (master’s thesis, Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, May 1986); Myron C. Maltz, “The Developmental Background and Analysis of the Termination of Fellowship with the Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod by the Wisconsin Synod” (masters’ thesis, Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, 1979); James R. Rusow, “An Examination of the Issues Which Led to the Suspension of Fellowship Between the Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod and the Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod in 1961” (master’s thesis, Concordia Theological Seminary, Springfield, IL, 1973).

The *Northwestern Lutheran* and its seminary's journal the *Theologische Quartalschrift* (later *Wisconsin Lutheran Quarterly*) from 1938 to 1963, provide valuable background information.

Fredrich wrote with the authority of one who had been there. The official statements and convention resolutions Fredrich cited provide a clear, consistent basis for the action the Wisconsin Synod took. But how well was this protracted debate understood and conducted "in the trenches"—by those pastors, professors, teachers, and laymen who lived through the events? Did they defend the doctrinal positions their church leaders championed? Were there local disagreements? What caused some Wisconsin Synod members to leave for the Missouri Synod? And what caused other Wisconsin Synod (and even some Missouri Synod) members to form a new synodical organization, which they named the "Church of the Lutheran Confession"?⁴

Many pastors who served during those years have files bulging with information—yellowing copies of conference papers, personal and professional correspondence, and homemade presentations devised to interpret the intersynodical strife to their congregations. Pastors from that time also share rich memories of the issues, personalities, and events involved.

In April 1997, as part of my research to complete a Ph. D. in historical theology from Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, I sent a short questionnaire to 105 Wisconsin Synod pastors. They graduated from the seminary as early as 1926, as recently as 1962. Most were retired. Many served on key district or synodical committees, or were present at emotionally charged Wisconsin Synod or Synodical Conference conventions.

The questionnaire contained eight questions:

1. *During your ministry, how would you describe your relations with neighboring Missouri Synod pastors, professors, or congregations?*
2. *Some observers have commented on a "triumphalist" or "cocksure" attitude in the Missouri Synod in previous generations, and a corresponding feeling of "small Synoditis" on the part of the Wisconsin Synod. Based on your experience, would you agree or disagree with that observation?*
3. *How would you characterize the attitude of your pastoral conference, district, or geographical area?*
4. *How many pastors and congregations from your area left the Wisconsin Synod, either to join the Missouri Synod, form the C. L. C., or become independent?*

⁴ At the 1955 Wisconsin Synod convention, delegates identified the Missouri Synod as a doctrinally erring church body, yet voted to postpone breaking church fellowship with the Missouri Synod until its 1956 convention. During and after that convention, a growing number of Wisconsin Synod pastors protested their synod's decision. Following the Wisconsin Synod's 1957 convention, when delegates rejected a resolution to break fellowship with the Missouri Synod, many of these protesting pastors felt they could no longer remain in good conscience in the Wisconsin Synod, and formed the Church of the Lutheran Confession in 1960. Hereafter, it will be abbreviated C. L. C.

5. *When did you detect changes in the Missouri Synod? In your view, what were the contributing causes of those changes?*
6. *Do you have any recollections of specific noteworthy incidents of any of the Wisconsin Synod or Synodical Conference conventions during the years of the dispute (1939-1961)? Did you serve on convention floor committees, or in an advisory role for any of those conventions?*
7. *Do you recall any significant opposition among Wisconsin Synod members or pastors to the Synod's position on Scouting, prayer fellowship, or the chaplaincy?*
8. *What effect(s) do you think the break of fellowship with the Missouri Synod has had on the Wisconsin Synod since 1961?*

Eighty-two of the 105 pastors surveyed responded—78%, an extraordinary response—many within days of receiving the survey.⁵ The typed transcript of their comments runs to 97 single-spaced pages. Few pastors in that age bracket use personal computers and word processing software; most typed their responses, and many replied in longhand. Respondents were especially generous in opening their personal files to me, forwarding conference essays, newspaper and magazine clippings, letters, study papers, and other artifacts, all of which help transport the reader back to those trying years.

The survey format offered respondents the opportunity to maintain the anonymity of their comments, but more than 90% chose the option, "You may use my name in connection with all of the comments on this survey." The surveys prompted telephone calls, additional correspondence, and personal interviews. There was a sense throughout that this "great debate with Missouri" constituted the weightiest battle of their lives, though many of these men were relatively young, inexperienced pastors in the 1940s and '50s. They wanted to tell their story. They remember many of the same stories, and when encouraged will talk further about them. As one pastor remarked in a follow-up letter:

Thank you for your interest in something which to many has become ancient history, but which played a very important role in the lives of some of us oldsters who are still around. I haven't read some of these papers in years. They bring back memories.

⁵ According to E. R. Babbie, *The Practice of Social Research*, 5th ed. (Belmont, CA: Wadsworth, 1983), 242, and D. R. Monette, T. J. Sullivan, and C. R. De Jong, *Applied Social Research: Tools for the Human Services* (New York: Holt, Rinehart, and Winston, 1986), 49, return rates are generally less than fifty percent, especially for surveys that contain no enclosed compensation or follow-up mailings. A return rate of fifty percent is often considered adequate, and rates exceeding seventy per cent are regarded as unusually good. Besides such practical suggestions as enclosing a self-addressed, stamped envelope and attaching a cover letter, W. S. Martin, W. J. Duncan, T. L. Powers, and J. C. Sawyer, "Costs and Benefits of Selected Response Inducement Techniques in Mail Survey Research," *Journal of Business Research* 19 (1989), 67-79, reported that respondents were more likely to answer surveys when "the importance and relevance of the survey [were] clear to the prospective respondent." All of the above data was contained in Lee Ellis, *Research Methods in the Social Sciences* (Madison, WI: Brown and Benchmark, 1994), 183-185.

For this article, the identity of all respondents has been kept confidential.

Some apologized for “slipping memories,” yet their recollections contain numerous specific details fixed in their remembrance decades ago. Some of their individual recollections contradict those of other respondents, and occasional comments challenge official synodical positions. Some differences may be attributed to regional variations as the intersynodical debates unfolded. What is significant is that their memories reflect their perceptions of what happened, and it was on the basis of those perceptions that they served their congregations and their synod, and helped shape one of the most defining actions in the Wisconsin Synod’s history.⁶

I will summarize responses to this survey, question by question. Additional information will be added only for clarification or elaboration.

1. *During your ministry, how would you describe your relations with neighboring Missouri Synod pastors, professors, or congregations?*

Pastors who graduated from seminary during the past three decades and who acquired assorted negative images of the Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod may be surprised to hear the many recollections of warm relationships between the two synods’ pastors. The survey offered Wisconsin Synod pastors five choices to describe their relations with LCMS pastors, professors, and congregations: 15 (18%) said strained; 17 (21%) said indifferent; 42 (51%) said cordial; 43 (52%) said cooperative; only 2 chose any other response.

Because relations with the Missouri Synod were changing, some listed more than one answer, based on the passage of time or on geographical variations. “Indifferent with some, cordial with others,” one remembered. “Indifferent after the break, cordial prior to the break” said another. Recollections of joint ministries were common. Before World War II, “with the blessings of my congregation, I met with Missouri pastors in fellowship and Bible study, visited their sick in the hospital, conducted both funeral and wedding services in the absence of their pastors.” Others looked back fondly on mixed pastoral conferences, Lenten pulpit exchanges, and social gatherings including pastors and their wives of both synods.

⁶ Robert Preus, in a review of John Tietjen’s *Memoirs in Exile: Confessional Hope and Institutional Conflict* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1990), in *Logia* 1 (October 1992), 65, admitted that “there is a risk in writing memoirs” because “memory is often fragile and not always accurate, even in the most scrupulous of men.” Preus quoted Jeremy Campbell, who observed in his book *Grammatical Man* that “we construct meanings and remember our constructions.” Campbell added:

“There is evidence . . . to suggest that we reconstruct information when retrieving it from memory. Only the gist of the information is stored. The details are added at the time of the recollection, on the basis of what we expect to have been true. Reconstruction may seriously distort that original information, but the rememberer may be quite unaware of the distortion. If the material given to us is consistent with our knowledge or expectations, it is more likely to be recalled correctly, but if it is inconsistent, then there are likely to be systematic distortions.” Jeremy Campbell, *Grammatical Man: Information, Entropy, Language, and Life* (New York: Simon and Schuster, Inc., 1982), 226.

Several longer responses illustrated that stereotypical “handles” characterizing either synod prove inaccurate. Respondents expressed a sense of loss at a once vibrant relationship, now gone forever.

In the Saginaw area, where I grew up, there was a very close relationship between the two synods. A good number of our classmates at Michigan Lutheran Seminary came from Missouri Synod congregations. . . . I came and went in [the home of a nearby Missouri Synod pastor] almost as though it were my own. The joint Sunday afternoon Lenten services held in the city auditorium regularly drew all the way from 2,500 to 4,000 worshipers. The farthest thing from anyone’s mind was that this could all one day come to an end.

Up until approximately the early ‘50s, the Missouri Synod’s Michigan District was very conservative. . . . In the Detroit area I had a warm and cooperative relationship with many of the Missouri Synod pastors. Most were middle-aged or older and can be best described as “old Missouri.” . . . They respected the Wisconsin Synod but had some reservations about what they considered its voyages into legalism. . . . The situation in the Saginaw Valley with but few exceptions was even more cordial than in the Detroit area. The Missouri Synod pastors for the most part were very, very conservative as were their congregations which had in almost every instance strong German-Bavarian backgrounds.

Even for those who felt a sense of closeness in Synodical Conference relations, however, it became apparent that a different spirit was developing among some younger LCMS pastors.

In the late 1940s and early 1950s these old Missouri stalwarts began to retire or were called to their eternal home. The younger men succeeding them were mostly a different breed, particularly those trained at Concordia Seminary, St. Louis. They were very public relations conscious and carried the idea of being “all things to all people” to extremes. . . .

Many of these Missouri pastors simply couldn’t envision their Synod getting seriously caught up in more liberal biblical interpretation and practice. . . . There were exceptions. . . . By the time it became clearly apparent what was really occurring, many of these conservative pastors had retired or been called home. . . . They were gradually replaced by younger men who in their training had been exposed [to] and affected in varying degrees by the new approaches and understandings.

As this change in Missouri’s outlook became more evident, relations with Wisconsin Synod pastors grew “increasingly chilly.” One respondent remarked on LCMS pastors’ “unwillingness to discuss [issues] on the basis of Scripture.” Another recalled paying a courtesy call on the neighboring Missouri Synod pastor, who compared the WELS to a “toy poodle yapping at the LCMS, the hound dog of orthodoxy!” He mentioned a comment in *Dialog* magazine labeling the Wisconsin Synod “a drag on Missouri’s move toward ecumenical participation.”⁷

Another remembered a free conference in North Dakota in the late '50s where "the Missouri men could not and would not say that the papacy is the Antichrist." To this pastor it became clear at that conference that "the break with Missouri involved much more than a difference in doctrine concerning fellowship; it involved a difference in doctrine concerning Scripture itself." After accepting a call to a new location, another pastor wrote:

I was informed that I had a number of Masons in the congregation and Scouts. The Missouri Synod started a mission in the public school only a block from my parsonage and only a half mile from our church. When the congregation faced the problem of the Scouts quite a number of members solved the problem of Scouts by going to the Missouri mission. I asked the pastor of the mission to sit down with me and show me where I was wrong on this matter. His response was to bring the slim booklet on Lutheran Scouting and tell me, "Some of the best minds in our Synod worked out this deal. Who am I to disagree?"

Some respondents acknowledged that Wisconsin Synod pastors themselves sometimes aggravated tensions with the Missouri Synod by their strong reactions. Some felt "there was little use of continuing doctrinal discussions since Missouri's concern for sound doctrine was in their opinion waning dismally." Others began to adopt a "no holds barred interpretation of Romans 16," insisting "there was little or no time interval to be permitted between 'marking' and 'avoiding.'" ⁸ A growing number of Wisconsin pastors were "suspicious of anything a Missourian said."

One longer comment provided revealing insights on *both* synods:

We had a mixed conference in the area [in the early 1950s] which met twice each year. In addition there were several of us, about half from each synod, that occasionally got together socially. One of the LCMS pastors became a pretty good friend. He regularly attended meetings of the so-called Chicago Study Club, a group of conservative pastors which met frequently to consider the ills of Missouri. He, in fact, was the one who told me everything that was wrong in Missouri as early as 1950. If things were really as bad as he said they were, it seemed to me that he would have to get out of the synod almost immediately. The fact is that he died in the LCMS about two years ago. Now that I better understand Missouri's Doctrine of Church and Ministry, I can see how it was possible for him to do that. At the same time one of my neighbors was a

⁷ "Autopsy," *Dialog* 1 (Winter 1962), 70, likened the Missouri Synod's regret over the dissolution of fellowship with the Wisconsin Synod to the sadness one might feel when a long ill patient finally died. Insisting that doctrinal unity in the Ev. Lutheran Synodical Conference of North America had been only "a pious fiction" for some time, the *Dialog* editorialist added, "It was no secret that, among other things, the Wisconsin Synod had been a drag on Missouri's moves toward ecumenical participation."

⁸ An intensely debated passage throughout the "trying years" was Romans 16:17-18: "Now I beseech you, brethren, mark them which cause divisions and offenses contrary to the doctrine 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" (*King James Version*).

Wisconsin Synod pastor whose wife had come from a prominent Missouri family. He also regularly filled me in on all the ills of Missouri. He was the kind of man who could start with any text and end up with Romans 16:17. His wife was very nice, but my wife hated to go there to visit, because after exchanging a few pleasantries he would get me into the study. . . . If I had stayed in that environment my own life might not have taken the direction that it did. . . . [Sometimes] more theology is determined by one's neighbors than by Scripture.

2. *Some observers have commented on a "triumphalist" or "cocksure" attitude in the Missouri Synod in previous generations, and a corresponding feeling of "small Synoditis" on the part of the Wisconsin Synod. Based on your experience, would you agree or disagree with that observation?*

The expressions used in question # 2 were not invented specifically for this survey. Each appeared in previous descriptions of the two church bodies, individually as well as in relation to one another.

In a review of Carl S. Meyer's *Moving Frontiers: Readings in the History of the Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod*,⁹ Leigh Jordahl suggested that a "sharp motif of 'triumphalism'" pervaded Missouri Synod history.¹⁰ Jack Treon Robinson, a Missouri Synod pastor who completed his doctoral dissertation at Vanderbilt University, initially dismissed Jordahl's comment as "sour grapes, so often found as a Lutheran of one synod reviews the book of a Lutheran of a different synod." But in examining the immense Theodore Graebner Manuscripts Collection at Concordia Historical Institute, Robinson concluded, "The spirit which pervaded the life and work of the Missouri Synod was the spirit of triumphalism."¹¹ In an article highly critical of the Missouri Synod's past (but withheld for publication until after his death), Graebner wrote:

That there is in Synod a tendency to give undue weight to the opinions of the fathers is evident. . . . No discussion of any doctrinal subject has taken place within the past thirty years which has not operated with quotations from Luther, Walther, Pieper, and the first thirty volumes of *Lehre und Wehre*. I challenge anyone to look into the literature of any church but our own to find anything parallel to this situation. . . . We are hardly aware of the fact that in all the wide world no one proceeds in such a manner to make good a claim of soundness or correctness. The method is absolutely unique. *It is not found in the Wisconsin Synod.* . . . Yet it is in common use in our discussions of doctrine and churchly practice. . . .

Why does an organization which like no other stresses the absolute authority of

⁹ (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1964, 1986).

¹⁰ *Una Sancta* 22 (Pentecost 1965), 51-56.

¹¹ Jack Treon Robinson, "The Spirit of Triumphalism in the Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod: The Role of 'A Statement' of 1945 in the Missouri Synod," (Ph. D. diss., Vanderbilt University, Nashville, May 1972), iii-iv.

the inspired Word stand not only in awe but in abject fear of its own pronouncements of the past?¹²

“The term *spirit of triumphalism*,” Robinson explained, referred to a “deep and abiding motivating force” that colored the life of the LCMS for more than a century. Robinson called it “a spirit which looked for the final conquest of all its opponents” and that “required perfect harmony among those who would conquer”—a kind of spiritual “Manifest Destiny.”¹³

Survey respondents were not necessarily expected to recognize this definition of the term “triumphalism.” (One remarked, perhaps a bit tongue in cheek: “‘Triumphalism,’ like beauty, may be in the eye of the beholder.”) Wisconsin Synod pastors were familiar with J. P. Koehler’s warnings in “*Gesetzlich Wesen Unter Uns*” [“Legalism Among

¹² Theodore Graebner, “The Burden of Infallibility: a Study in the History of Dogma,” *Concordia Historical Institute Quarterly* 38 (July 1965), 88-89; emphasis added. C. F. W. Walther was a chief founder and major influence on the LCMS for almost half a century, from before the synod’s founding in 1847 until his death in 1887. After his death, the mantle of Missouri Synod leadership was handed to Franz Pieper, who also exerted profound influence on the LCMS until his death in 1931. *Lehre und Wehre* [Teaching and Defending], the Missouri Synod’s monthly journal for pastors, began publication in 1855.

¹³ Robinson, “The Spirit of Triumphalism,” 18.

¹⁴ In his “Anniversary Reflections,” written in 1923, Pieper remarked on “the Missouri Spirit” that resulted from “the extreme narrowness” of its almost exclusive use of “dogmatic-practical education” learned from Walther. “It was psychologically inevitable that a bad attitude became entrenched in many in the synod. The boast is made that Missourians are the only ones who are completely orthodox and competent. Everything that does not come from Missouri is *eo ipso* more or less false or worthless.” The Missouri Synod demonstrated that attitude, according to Pieper, not only toward Lutheran bodies outside its fellowship “but also toward those which in the course of time were recognized as sufficiently Lutheran”—undoubtedly a reference to the Wisconsin Synod. August Pieper. “Anniversary Reflections,” in Curtis A. Jahn, comp. ed., *The Wauwatosa Theology*, 3 vols., (Milwaukee: Northwestern Publishing House, 1997), III:266-267.

Koehler, recounting Walther’s “infatuation” with the idea of a uniform Lutheran church organization, seminary, and university, wrote that “his Missourians” were “devoted disciples” and behaved typically as members of “a well-disciplined, single-minded, large successful body.” This stood in contrast to the early Wisconsin Synod’s “inferiority complex” and “continued insecurity.” John Philipp Koehler, *The History of the Wisconsin Synod* (St. Cloud, MN: Faith-Life, 1970), 166. In “*Gesetzlich Wesen*,” Koehler wrote that legalism infiltrated “in the form of *bragging about orthodoxy*,” which he defined as “adhering to orthodoxy where the stress is shifted from *faith to correct faith*,” and which fed on “the *factious spirit* which opposes the *ecumenical spirit*.” While Koehler typically meant such criticism to result in a self-examination within the Wisconsin Synod, he undoubtedly also had Missouri in mind. J. P. Koehler, “Legalism Among Us,” in *The Wauwatosa Theology*, II, 239; emphases in the original.

Us”] and his *History of the Wisconsin Synod* against “cocksureness” or “bragging about orthodoxy” and traditionalism in doctrinal forms. Koehler and August Pieper left little doubt they saw such attitudes in the Missouri Synod before 1930.¹⁴

“Small synoditis” was the title of an editorial by Carleton Toppe in *The Northwestern Lutheran*. Written only months before the Wisconsin Synod’s vote to sever fellowship with the LCMS, Toppe commented:

Small synods can easily develop inferiority complexes. They see the grand scale on which larger church bodies carry out their projects, the impressive totals they run up, the variety and scope of their activities—and they feel like apologizing for their own efforts and achievements. . . . Synod members that make constantly unfavorable comparisons between the modest progress of their synod and the impressive accomplishments of a larger body, risk contracting the malaise of defeatism. They are in danger of making only half-hearted efforts at furthering new undertakings; they may even lapse into a do-nothing attitude. . . . Our Wisconsin Synod is not a large church body, but it is large enough to move forward. It is large enough to do more and greater things in the kingdom of God than it has done in the past. And, under God, it will be more likely to accomplish them if it values the talent God as supplied to it than if it sighs for the ten talents it supposes God has given to another.¹⁵

These perceptions, then, had been voiced by others; survey respondents were asked to what extent they agreed or disagreed. Five (6%) strongly agreed, 38 (46%) agreed, 8 (10%) were neutral, 10 (12%) disagreed, and 2 (2%) strongly disagreed.

Of the 52% who agreed or strongly agreed, more considered it an accurate characterization of the Missouri Synod than of the Wisconsin Synod. “It might be,” observed one pastor, “that some in Missouri did bask in their synodical heritage as if that put them a step above others, but that never bothered me.” Another thought the remarks true for perhaps “a minority” in Missouri; others granted that while such attitudes could have been present, “I did not personally encounter any of them to any significant degree.”

For some, the LCMS as “big sister” was a positive perception, not a negative one. “Sure, Missouri was about ten times larger than Wisconsin, but that was the way it was.” Institutional viewpoints were tempered by personal friendships: “I grew up close to the LCMS. My dad’s golfing buddies were Missouri. My best friend at MLS [Michigan Lutheran Seminary] was the son of a Missouri pastor. I spent many happy days in that parsonage.”

Others expressed “strong agreement” with this characterization of the Missouri Synod. “There was a ‘cocksure’ opinion that emphasized THE Missouri Synod,” came one answer, and another: “When at Mequon and we had correspondence from St. Louis, they would address us with lower case letters.” Several pastors remarked on “an agreement” between the two synods, assumed if not formalized, that each synod would refrain from carrying out its ministry in the other’s area. By the 1950s, however, the Missouri Synod “was starting missions in cities like Appleton [Wisconsin] and New Ulm [Minnesota] with the excuse that their members were not at home in our churches.” As this writer remembered it, the attitude of the Missouri pastors was, “I am big and you are small; we will eat you up.” This respondent further recalled:

¹⁵ Carleton Toppe, “Small Synoditis,” *The Northwestern Lutheran* 47 (6 November 1960), 355.

At conventions [in the 1950s] when our synod was tearing its guts apart over the fellowship issue, Missouri would send two representatives to our conventions who were not able to really assure us of anything. At the same time they sent 18 representatives to the ALC [the American Lutheran Church] convention. One had the impression that our fellowship with Missouri was small potatoes compared with what other synods could offer. The Missouri Synod did not seem at all concerned about our distress.

Because the surveys focused predominantly on the critical years of the 1940s and 50s, most respondents addressed that time frame. The remarks of Missouri men such as Theodore Graebner, Jack Treon Robinson, and others, however, suggest that an attitude of superiority may have existed farther back in Missouri Synod history. One Wisconsin Synod respondent reflected on that larger history:

When the Saxons emigrated to America they were convinced that they, under [Martin] Stephan's leadership, were the last true Lutherans left. I have heard others tell of instances in more recent times in which Missouri officials and pastors spoke of Missouri as the only true or orthodox Lutheran Church, not even bothering to include other Synodical Conference synods.¹⁶

Another respondent remembered:

When I attended NWC¹⁷ [in the late 1920s and early 1930s] a book circulated [called] *Little Journeys of Dr. Martin Luther in America*. The gist of the book was that there was a statue of Luther in Washington D. C. that came to life, and Luther tried to gain membership in the various synods. He was not accepted. Various doctrines were discussed, [such] as election. But here is the point: when going to the colloquy the Missouri pastors kept in step by saying, "*Ich bins, ich bins, ich bins*" ["I am, I am, I am!"]. So already by the turn of the century they were triumphalists. The author, whose name I can't recall, was from the East. Luther had to return to the statue. The Wisconsin Synod was not mentioned.¹⁸

¹⁶ Fred W. Meuser, "Business as Usual—Almost, 1900-1917," in E. Clifford Nelson, ed., *The Lutherans in North America* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1975), 378, cited Friederich Bente's editorial marking the 50th anniversary of Missouri's *Lehre und Wehre* in 1904, in which Bente insisted that *Lehre und Wehre* had been kept untarnished by false teaching and had therefore no cause to repent or seek forgiveness for what it taught because "that would be to accuse God Himself, indeed, to mock God, who has commanded that these very doctrines be taught." F[riederich] B[ente], "Vorwort," *Lehre und Wehre* 50 (January 1904), 1-20]. Meuser also mentioned, in "The Twenties—Continued Change, at a Slower Pace," 433, that the new Concordia Seminary in St. Louis dwarfed all other Lutheran seminaries in beauty, excellence and cost, calling it "a monument to the Missouri Synod's reaffirmation of its heritage and confidence for its future." Its 1926 dedication, widely covered by the press and attended by 75,000 people, was preserved on film for posterity to mark "a new stage in Missouri's sense of permanence and mission." Having built the best, the Missouri Synod "was determined to remain the best as far as strict Lutheranism was concerned."

"Small synoditis," of course, is a somewhat pejorative term. More than a mere admission that the Wisconsin Synod was clearly the little sister to the LCMS, the phrase suggests a sense of inferiority. But such a designation could also be worn as a badge of distinction. For decades it seems generally to have been conceded that "Missouri did the towns and we did the country."¹⁹ Typical, perhaps, of the Wisconsin Synod's self-understanding as the less sophisticated, more rustic synod, the author recalls several conversations early in his ministry with older pastors and their wives who would say, with a mixture of pride and resignation, "Missouri always had the ministry to the big cities. Our churches were usually out of the way, off the main highways."

In an oft-quoted remark, Adolph Hoenecke told Koehler in 1878 that there was "something sectarian" about the Missouri Synod.²⁰ Though appreciating the doctrinal accord of the two synods, Hoenecke's comment suggested the awareness of cultural and personality differences between the church bodies. One pastor recalled his grandmother's remark, "*Dieser Missouriianer, sie hatten schliff!*" ["These Missouriians—they had polish!"] August Pieper's assessment of his synod is also relevant: "*Wir sind in der Wisconsin Synode; wir machen kein 'show'*" ["We are in the Wisconsin Synod; we don't put on a show"].

¹⁷ "NWC" refers to Northwestern College in Watertown, Wisc., which served the Wisconsin Synod for 130 years, 1865-1995, providing a pre-seminary curriculum with a strong emphasis on the liberal arts and the biblical languages. In 1995 Northwestern College was amalgamated with Dr. Martin Luther College in New Ulm, Minn., and a single new college, Martin Luther College, was created on the New Ulm campus.

¹⁸ The full title of the book was *Little Journeys With Martin Luther: A Real Book wherein are printed diverse Sayings and Doings of Dr. Martin Luther in these latter days when he applied for Synodical Membership in the United States. Carefully set down in writing at that time By Brother John of the Order of Poor Brethren, commonly known as Lutheran Pastors*, written by William Nicholas Harley and published in Columbus, Ohio, in 1916. The respondent recalled correctly the premise of the book: on a Sunday evening in 1898 a bronze likeness of the Great Reformer in front of Luther Memorial Church in Washington came to life and sought membership in various Lutheran synods in America. The respondent was also correct that the Wisconsin Synod was never mentioned, but the book's estimation of the Missouri Synod was not as complimentary as the respondent recalled. In the preface of his book, Harley wrote that the goal of his writing was to contribute his "mite" to the cause of Lutheran union by exhibiting "in a novel and striking manner the folly, shame, and sin of schism, discord, and contention." While admiring Missouriian devotion to the Lutheran Confessions, Harley directed more criticism than praise to the synod of C. F. W. Walther.

¹⁹ Herbert Birner, "The Saga of a Mission District: Dakota-Montana, the First Eighty Years, 1880-1970" (paper presented at the Dakota-Montana District Convention, Wisconsin Synod, June 14-16, 1994), 16.

²⁰ Koehler, *History of the Wisconsin Synod*, 251. Leigh Jordahl, author of the introduction to Koehler's *History*, xxiv, commented: "Neither Hoenecke in making the remark nor Koehler reflecting upon it intended to fault the doctrinal position of the Missouriians but both rather had reference to a certain mind set."

Few respondents commented directly on the Wisconsin Synod's purported "small Synoditis." Although one man wrote that comparative synodical size "was not an issue in my circle," another countered that Missourians he knew took the attitude, "I am big and you are small. I will eat you up." Responses to this and other questions betray occasional feelings of resentment regarding Wisconsin's treatment as the smaller synod. One respondent remembered the remark of a Nebraska WELS pastor that "our synod was like a little rowboat tied to an ocean liner that was getting into dangerous waters." Another recalled Missouri "smugness" that seemed to say, "Whatever we do must be OK." Yet another remembered "a reluctance," almost disdain, for "what little WELS [had] to say." Reflecting on the escalating disturbances of the 1950s, another concluded, "We couldn't help but think that we were being jilted by a former very dear friend. We seemed to be too small for them to bother with." Such comments indicate that an "inferiority complex," or perhaps a sense of betrayal, runs deeper among some Wisconsin Synod pastors than they might readily acknowledge.²¹

A couple respondents noted haughtiness on the Wisconsin side. One recalled that, as seminary students, his classmates were not unanimous regarding the split. He remembered his own and other students' shallow thinking, an attitude of "my synod, right or wrong." Another recalled that "those closely related to members of the LCMS were not arrogant or smug," but "those who did not have intimate ties tended to be somewhat haughty."

One respondent offered a different, thought-provoking response:

It depends on what you mean by "previous generations." If you mean pre-break, my answer would be disagreement. I didn't detect any "small Synoditis" while at the Seminary from men like [President Edmund] Reim and [Prof. Carl] Lawrenz. My feeling is that the disease of "small Synoditis" is of later origin. Some time ago an article appeared in the *Northwestern Lutheran* comparing evangelism during the "sword in one hand" era and now. The myth that there were few if any adult confirmations during those days was mentioned. . . .

That is poor memory, not fact. The fact is that if you compare adult confirmations per pastor in the 1956-61 era with the time the article was written, you have to go to the second place after the decimal point to note a difference. . . .

²¹ Gude, "A Description of the Pressures and Difficulties within the Synodical Conference which Led to its Destruction," 177-179, discusses the "deep sense on the part of the Wisconsin and Norwegian Synods that they had been hurt by the Missouri Synod." Among the examples he cites: E. E. Kowalke's statement at the 1954 Synodical Conference Convention that the Wisconsin Synod's objections and warnings to the Missouri Synod were regarded as "a heedless rush into separation"; the understanding that the LCMS would correct misquotations and misrepresentations of their objections to the *Common Confession*, only to find that Missouri had made only minor corrections and placed them at the end of the book; W. J. Schaefer's editorial, "Boy Scouts and the Missouri Synod," *The Northwestern Lutheran* 32 (10 June 1945), 122, citing a *Lutheran Witness* news item announcing that the Missouri Synod had the third highest number of boy scout troops and cub packs among Lutheran bodies. Upon reading the item, Schaefer said, "We were shocked beyond measure," and later wrote, "This action of the *Lutheran Witness* hurts beyond the ability of expressing it," and, "We are sick at heart."

It seems to me that the disease of "small Synoditis" is a disease of today more than a disease of the fifties.

3. *How would you characterize the attitude of your pastoral conference, district, or geographical area?*

The answer depended on where you lived. While 78% of those surveyed characterized their immediate geographical area as being "mildly in favor" or "strongly in favor" of breaking with the Missouri Synod, there were varying responses in different locations of the synod—"often," said one, "at the same time."

One pastor remembered serving in several districts and conferences "where relations between Missouri and Wisconsin differed greatly." Another pastor, whose ministry stretched well beyond the split and whose service afforded continued contacts with Missouri Synod pastors and officials into the 1980s, described relations between the two synods as "*strained* on the East Coast, *indifferent* on the West Coast, *cordial* in the state of Michigan, and *cooperative* with LCMS mission administrators."²²

In the American southwest, where the synods had previously agreed that the Missouri Synod would take California and the Wisconsin Synod would serve Arizona,²³ tensions arose in Globe and Tucson, Arizona, in the 1950s when the LCMS "invaded our agreed-upon territory." Right up to 1961, Wisconsin's Arizona-California District was "sharply divided on the issue," attributable to the actions of its district president, who "waffled sometimes" on Scouting, the chaplaincy, and prayer fellowship.

In the Pacific Northwest District of the Wisconsin Synod, the last joint conference for pastors of the two synods was held in 1953. At that conference, most Missourians expressed a preference for open Communion "but they wanted to check with St. Louis first. The West Coast was as *avant garde* as the East Coast in Missouri."

According to one of its district officers in the 1950s, the Wisconsin Synod's Dakota-Montana District had a "distinct doctrinal atmosphere," considering itself "ahead of" the eastern districts of the synod, the seminary, and synod administration. The district's "officially fostered view" early on was to break fellowship with the Missouri Synod. Seminary professors and the Wisconsin Synod's larger districts to the east treated discussions with the LCMS as a work "still in progress," requiring more time, but in Dakota-Montana "the prevailing view was that the question was already settled." Union questions "dominated the discussions of the conferences," often providing "excellent application for any paper given," or "woven into every report."

²² The respondent's comments concerning "strained" relations on the East Coast must refer to the time following Wisconsin's break with Missouri; the oldest WELS congregation in the synod's North Atlantic District is in Falls Church, Va., established in 1965. Statistical Report of the Wisconsin Ev. Lutheran Synod for 1968 (Milwaukee: WELS, 1999), 50, 52.

²³ This "agreement" may never have been as formal as such a comment makes it appear. According to one respondent, the agreement regarding the division of labor between Arizona and California may have occurred when Wisconsin Synod pastor E. Arnold Sitz met a Missouri Synod pastor from the area on board train and suggested that each synod work in the corresponding area.

It would be incorrect to say that the District did not endeavor to meet with Missourians on a grass roots level, and endeavor to solve the union problems. We had the Bismarck Study Club. During these discussions, it was soon noticed by everyone that the Missourians were being kept completely in the dark over the union questions so that the Wisconsin men were first obliged to inform them and then a discussion could be held. So well did our Church Union Committee keep our constituents informed that often the issues could be discussed with statements by the Missouri Synod written by conservative theologians. Then, of course, they too could see what a big "switch" was going on in St. Louis. It must be said that these Missourians also complained to their leadership about this. For all of which they were dubbed by their liberal wing "the cry babies of the Missouri [River] slope."²⁴

By the late 1950s, amid stormy meetings—both official and unannounced—and the rumored takeover of Northwestern Lutheran Academy at Mobridge, S. D., by disgruntled pastors, the district "was in effect asked by its president whether it wanted to continue with the Wisconsin Synod or form a new church body. It wasn't as cut and dried as that, but that's what it amounted to."²⁵ The president failed to sustain the support of his district, resulting in his departure from the synod. One of its pastors remarked that the president's "fall from grace" was "not entirely a disagreement with his theological position, but also, in part, a reaction to his dictatorial relationship with the candidates moving into his district."

Wisconsin's Nebraska District also strongly favored breaking with the Missouri Synod by the mid 1950s. Im. P. Frey was thought to have lost his office as district president to Hugo Fritze in 1958 because Fritze "was considered to be a hard-liner." A pastor who served in Nebraska's Southern Conference from 1949 to 1954 recalled the professional and personal agony of the time:

As it became evident that the Missouri Synod was traveling a different path, the more the pressure to split with Missouri became more pronounced. . . . Both Hilbert and Winfried Schaller pastored congregations in the conference. On the basis of Romans 16:17 they argued that we should break with Missouri, and then talk about our differences. . . .

As time went on the matter of the split with Missouri became the major topic of discussion at every one of our get-togethers. [Hilbert] Schaller believed that the only way to deal with the matter was to split with Missouri, and then to meet with them. He was very persuasive in his arguments. . . .

²⁴ Reginald E. Pope, "The C. L. C. in South Dakota: 'The Turbulent Years'" (paper presented to the Eastern Pastoral Conference, Dakota-Montana District, Wisconsin Synod, October 26-27, 1987), 3-5.

²⁵ Pope, "The C. L. C. in South Dakota," 4-5. Birner, "The Saga of a Mission District," 54.

I believe the matter came to a head in our Southern Conference, when our congregation hosted the Conference. The exact year escapes me (1953?), but I do recall the incident very vividly. Before we even began the meeting with a devotion and prayer, the Schallers asked for the floor. They immediately aired their views concerning severing our ties with synod, if synod would not break with Missouri at its next convention. The matter was discussed the rest of the morning, sometimes very heatedly. When the noon recess arrived, those who followed the Schaller view would not pray with us.

Following the meal, it became evident that there were three decided groups: Those favoring an immediate split, those going along with synod, and those who had just graduated from the seminary, not knowing which group to follow. It was a pathetic sight to see such division among our called workers. As a result the conference did not have an evening service with the celebration of Holy Communion.

After that, those who were not in favor of the Wisconsin Synod position absented themselves from the devotions and prayers, and from the communion service. Fortunately, we never did have to face holding a conference at one of the churches, whose pastor was against synod's position.

Those were trying years—distrust was present—friendships strained. . . . At times those who were not of synod's persuasion would not recognize transfers of memberships from those still standing with synod. . . . The ridicule and rudeness, which came your way, all because you would not follow their way, at times was rather difficult to take. You were soon labeled a "liberal," one that needed to be "straightened out."

New Ulm, Minn., home to Dr. Martin Luther College and Dr. Martin Luther High School, was in one respondent's recollection "a hotbed of future C. L. C. pastors in our area, and those few monopolized conference time." A core of Wisconsin Synod pastors at Sleepy Eye, New Ulm, Nicollet, Mankato, and Sanborn strongly supported breaking with the LCMS, "and because it didn't come soon enough for them, they all left to form the C. L. C." Much of the rest of the Minnesota District had similar sentiments, except the St. Croix Conference, which just as strongly opposed the break.

The Western Wisconsin District of the Wisconsin Synod was also home to two synodical training schools, Northwestern College and Northwestern Preparatory School in Watertown. Popular professors who were teaching or had taught in Watertown—Martin Franzmann, Richard Jungkuntz, Ralph Gehrke, and Hilton Oswald—all eventually left, but for the LCMS, not the C. L. C. Western Wisconsin's district president was described as having "close Missouri ties," hoping never to see a break. One pastor who accepted a call into Western Wisconsin at the height of the dispute remembered that some synodical issues received much less emphasis there than in Dakota-Montana, Nebraska, or Minnesota.

In Wisconsin's Northern Wisconsin District, the Winnebago and Rhinelander conferences strongly favored breaking with Missouri, but 65 pastors from the Fox-Wolf

River Conference, with about equal representation of Wisconsin and Missouri Synod pastors, adopted a resolution, with only two dissenting votes, that their conference "ask [their] respective Synods to continue intersynodical discussions to prevent dissolution of the Synodical Conference."²⁶

The Southeast Wisconsin District of the Wisconsin Synod, containing many large Milwaukee congregations and the seminary, was less inclined to break because Missouri pastors in the area tended to be more conservative.²⁷ None of the Southeast Wisconsin conferences went on record in support of a conference-wide resolution for splitting with the Missouri Synod, or even submitted a memorial to the synod. In the Dodge-Washington County Conference opinions varied; the majority generally "accepted and supported the judgments and recommendations of the Standing Committee on Matters of Church Union." A mixed Wisconsin-Missouri pastoral conference met in Dodge county until 1956, suggesting good local relations remained between the synods. "At least some of [the Missouri Synod's] pastors were opposed to Scouts (but they remained loyal Missourians)."²⁸

The Wisconsin Synod's original Milwaukee City Conference was surrounded by the

²⁶ Letter, the Fox-Wolf River Conference, Wm. G. Zell, secretary for the Wisconsin Synod, J. R. Westphal, secretary for the Missouri Synod, to The Honorable Ev. Lutheran Synod of Wisconsin And Other States, Assembled in Convention, May 14, 1956; Oscar Siegler files from the Commission on Inter-Church Relations of the Wisconsin Ev. Lutheran Synod, file # 2, October 1955-August 1959, Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary, Mequon, WI, archives.

²⁷ One correspondent put it in a less complimentary way: "In the Milwaukee area liberals in the Missouri Synod were not as recognizable as in other areas, with the exception of the pastors in the English District."

²⁸ The fact that some Missouri Synod pastors seemed to endorse Wisconsin Synod views rather than those of their own synod, yet chose to remain members of Missouri, was noted by several respondents. Recalling a neighbor Missouri pastor who "told me everything that was wrong with Missouri," one remarked: "If things were really as bad as he said they were, it seemed to me that he would have to get out of the synod almost immediately. The fact is that he died in the LCMS about two years ago. Now that I better understand Missouri's Doctrine of Church and Ministry, I can see how it was possible for him to do that." Two respondents, in a post-survey interview, remarked that a lot of Wisconsin Synod pastors would have loved to continue relations with the Missouri Synod because of their friendships with solid theological conservatives, but "Missouri loyalty" kept Missouri pastors in that synod rather than coming our way. "That," one added, "and their pension."

In a 1953 letter, a member of the Wisconsin Synod's Standing Committee on Church Union speculated "to what extent Missouri's pension system has now shut the mouths of its older pastors" on intersynodical matters. "It would certainly seem to be a dangerous situation for individual and church alike—when one's lifelong earnings are tied up with synodical loyalty and under the administration of synodical officials." Letter, Oscar Siegler to John Brenner, June 4, 1953. Oscar Siegler, File # 1, Union Committee, March 1952-August 1955, Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary archives.

Eastern Conference, also known as the Horseshoe Conference. One respondent remembered the Eastern Conference as mildly opposed to breaking with the LCMS; another recalled "some rather prominent Wisconsin people" who opposed the split. Good local relations colored evaluations of the synodical situation. The Southern Conference, however, in Racine and Kenosha counties strongly favored breaking with the Missouri Synod, influenced perhaps by its proximity to Missouri's conservative Chicago Study Club.

Wisconsin's Southeast Wisconsin District was also less inclined to break with the LCMS because the two synods shared numerous mutual interests, notably Milwaukee Lutheran and Racine Lutheran high schools, the Lutheran Children's Friend Society, the Home for Aged Lutherans, the Lutheran Institutional Ministry, and a joint radio broadcast on Milwaukee radio station WTMJ-AM.

The contrast between the readiness of the Wisconsin Synod's western districts to break with the Missouri Synod and the reluctance toward such action in the east is best illustrated in its Michigan District. Until the early 1950s the Michigan District of the Missouri Synod was "very conservative," its pastors "troubled over the theological shifts slowly transpiring" among them but "tending to take the attitude of the proverbial ostrich." Intersynodical relations were especially cordial in the Saginaw Valley and Detroit; Missouri Synod pastors in both areas "for the most part were very, very conservative as were their congregations which had in almost every instance strong German, Bavarian backgrounds." Many "simply couldn't envision their Synod getting seriously caught up in more liberal Biblical interpretation and practice." Pastors and laymen of the two synods shared personal friendships and confessional commitment, and they joined one another in men's clubs, youth groups, joint worship, mission festival invitations, retreats, excursions, and mixed pastoral conferences.²⁹

Charges of LCMS false doctrine, voiced boldly out west, embarrassed some Wisconsin pastors in Michigan. The Wisconsin Synod had not had a proud history of confessional soundness in Michigan. As one story had it, when a Missouri Synod pastor in Michigan told his elders in 1961 that the Wisconsin Synod had broken fellowship because of Missouri's false doctrine, the elders snickered; for years members of their congregation, disciplined for lodge membership, had fled to the local WELS congregation where they were eagerly welcomed.³⁰

There was even a persistent if unfounded rumor that, should the Wisconsin Synod sever its relations with the Missouri Synod, Wisconsin's entire Michigan District would defect to the LCMS.³¹ By the late 1950s, however, relations had grown more strained between the synods throughout the state; in Saginaw voices grew especially insistent that the Wisconsin Synod make the break. But in southwest Michigan "Wisconsin and Missouri men also in these years were still much of one mind and spirit" concerning intersynodical issues.

²⁹ James P. Tiefel, "A Few Faithful Men," in Forrest L. Bivens, Richard A. deRuiter, and Daniel L. Schaller, eds., *Michigan Memories: Things Our Fathers Have Told Us* (Saginaw, MI: Michigan District of the WELS, 1985), 295.

³⁰ Tiefel, "A Few Faithful Men," 295-296.

³¹ While others beside Tiefel have referred to this rumor, one respondent disagreed forcefully in a follow-up interview, "I was there, and that was never true."

4. *How many pastors and congregations from your area left the Wisconsin Synod, either to join the Missouri Synod, form the C. L. C., or become independent?*

According to a 1974 study based on Wisconsin Synod *Statistical Reports*, 82 pastors, 8 professors, 12 teachers, and 8,065 communicants left the Wisconsin Synod between 1957 and 1964. Numbers for communicant members were admittedly incomplete and relatively unreliable because in some places only a few members withdrew from a congregation with their pastor, while others may have left one WELS congregation to join a neighboring church or to form a new congregation.³²

As one respondent pointed out, pastors also moved to the Wisconsin Synod. Undoubtedly the most well-known and influential of former LCMS members was Dr. Siegbert Becker, who left Concordia Teachers College in River Forest, Ill., in 1963 to serve on the faculties of Milwaukee Lutheran Teachers College, the old Wisconsin Lutheran College, and Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary for more than twenty years.³³

Though most respondents could recount fewer than five pastors or congregations in their neighborhood that left the synod, in Wisconsin's Pacific Northwest eight of twenty pastors and seven congregations left. In the Dakota-Montana District, one pastor recalled around ten men "who left or were pushed" into the C. L. C. "Some of them did not really want to leave, but after the big power shift in the district, they were disfellowshipped. Those were scary days. It was three strikes and you were out."

Respondents remembered the pain of this separation. "Unfortunately he took his large congregation with him," said one. "Two from my Seminary class," said another. "Two from the Seminary class immediately ahead of me. One from the Milwaukee area." Another could count five classmates who left. In another area two large congregations, each with more than a thousand members, were lost to the LCMS because the pastors had served previously in the Missouri Synod "and had money in their pension fund." One concluded:

My own class is an interesting case study. One went to the C. L. C. and on the way back bypassed WELS and died in the Missouri Synod. Another, who was a real left wing renegade in school, is today a hawk in the C. L. C. One came from the Missouri Synod and never served in our Synod. Another had a mother

³² Mark Krueger, "The Cost in Pastors, Professors, Teachers, and Communicants in Connection with our Severance of Fellowship with the Missouri Synod," (senior church history paper, Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary library, April 30, 1974), 8. Krueger concluded that as a general rule, those who left before 1961 joined the C. L. C., while those who left after 1961 were more likely to join the Missouri Synod or remain independent.

³³ Beginning in 1959 the Wisconsin Synod maintained a teacher training junior college in Milwaukee named Wisconsin Lutheran College or Lutheran Teachers College—Milwaukee. Students completing two years at this college then transferred to Dr. Martin Luther College in New Ulm. Dr. Becker taught at this college from 1963 until its closing in 1970. In 1973, a Milwaukee-based federation of individuals and congregations established a liberal arts college "not synodically funded or operated for worker-training purposes," which was also named Wisconsin Lutheran College. Fredrich, *The Wisconsin Synod Lutherans*, 235-236, 249.

who came from Missouri. He bypassed our Assignment Committee and engineered a call for himself from Missouri. Another came back to the WELS. Another went to the LCMS via the E. L. S. [Evangelical Lutheran Synod]. Another went to Missouri because WELS did not recognize his talents. I suspect there may have been others, who might have been called to our seminary at the time when they thought they should have, who would have turned out quite differently.

5. *When did you detect changes in the Missouri Synod? In your view, what were the contributing causes of those changes?*

"The common perception in my experience was that Missourians away from the heartland, both East and West, were more influenced by ecumenism and higher criticism," one man observed. This may have occurred "because of isolation and a determination to break free of stuffy doctrinal restraints, to 'play with the big dogs' (nicer than we thought) in the denominations."³⁴ By the 1940s "Missouri was extremely conscious

³⁴ Karl Krauss remarked in 1956 that the Missouri Synod's unofficial periodical *The American Lutheran* had "for quite some time exuded and promoted a liberalistic and unionistic doctrinal and practical theology." Although subscribers and supporters of the *American Lutheran* lived throughout the United States, the perception persisted that such tendencies were more prominent in areas outside Missouri's heartland. Karl F. Krauss, "The Voice of the C. U. C. [Church Union Committee]: On the Credit Side of the Ledger," *The Northwestern Lutheran* 43 (13 May 1956), 153.

³⁵ By contrast, the Wisconsin Synod's disinterest in, even distrust of, publicity is readily apparent in a comment by Egbert Schaller following a favorable portrayal of the synod in an editorial in the New Ulm *Daily News* following the synod's 1951 convention. "We are able to quote the approving words with good grace," wrote Schaller, because "the testimony of the *Daily News* was neither expected nor solicited." Schaller considered it characteristic of his synod that "we do not desire to have our virtues extolled, nor do we seek to try our case in the public press." Though not naming the LCMS, Schaller charged: "There are church bodies who live by the publicity they can achieve, sensational, sordid, or otherwise." By contrast, the Wisconsin Synod usually found itself embarrassed by approving comments because "the friendliest appraisal of our Synod on the outside rarely reveals an understanding of the real character of Synod's pronouncements and objectives." E[gbert] S[challer], "Newspaper Reporter's Opinion of the Wisconsin Synod," *The Northwestern Lutheran* 38 (9 September 1951), 274. Carleton Toppe, "A Time-Honored Warning Against Present Dangers to the Church from Pharisaism," *Theologische Quartalschrift* 48 (April 1951), 125, compared "the publicity craze in the Lutheran church today" to "the publicity the Pharisees loved so much." Toppe faulted "many of our zealous Lutherans, who want the public to 'sit up and take notice' of what the Lutheran Church is doing" for "craving and soliciting public approval and admiration." Citing an example of favorable publicity in a Pennsylvania newspaper devoted to a three-state Lutheran conference, and the obvious pleasure it gave the church reporter who noted it, Toppe wrote: "The Lord is in danger of playing second fiddle to the Lutheran Church."

of its public image," noted another. A third saw the Missouri Synod in the 1950s exhibiting "a strong concern about their P. R. or public image. They wanted to be, and be looked on, as one of the major American denominations."³⁵

Still another noticed "a growing dissatisfaction with the status quo" (by which he meant "a confessional Lutheran church with growth determined by the Spirit") and "a desire to become 'big' like the other Lutheran churches." The Missouri Synod seemed "embarrassed by its immigrant, parochial status," feeling "it was entitled to a larger role on the Lutheran stage." Said another, "I have never got past the sense that [Missouri] wanted to stop being 'immigrants,' 'different,' 'strict,' and start being 'American,' 'Protestants,' 'accepted.'"³⁶

For others, a telltale indicator of Missouri's transformation lay in its "toleration of [a] liberal interpretation of Scripture." At least one contributing cause of changes in the LCMS was "the 'liberal' theology of many on the faculty of the St. Louis seminary." Missouri changes "came with a growing unwillingness to endure the criticism from less orthodox and unionistic church bodies." One Missouri Synod pastor was heard to ask, "Why must we always swim against the stream?"³⁷

One Wisconsin Synod pastor, who received part of his education in Missouri Synod schools, recalled that the faculty of Concordia Seminary, Springfield, "respected our Synod's position and welcomed us from Wisconsin." In their classes faculty members commented on "the liberal, left-ward thoughts and actions of such groups as 'the forty-four,' the American Lutheran Publicity Bureau, the Atlantic and English Districts, and some St. Louis professors," and they noted with approval "those who opposed and sought to curb the liberals." Walter W. F. Albrecht, Clarence Spiegel, and Martin Naumann were remembered for censuring such trends. But some saw "a smugness that took the attitude: 'We are the Missouri Synod, whatever we do must be OK.'"

One pastor, while a student at the Missouri Synod's Concordia College in Milwaukee, recalled reading in *The Seminarian*, the student journal of Concordia Seminary, St. Louis about a visit made by Concordia students to a non-Synodical Conference seminary. The article called it "uplifting" to take communion there and to see "the old separations passing away." The pastor recalled thinking, "If they can print that, I guess the

³⁶ Elmer Kiessling, who in his published reflections displayed a more congenial, less contentious outlook on most of life's vicissitudes, remarked: "An increasing number of Missouri Lutherans believed in what Pope John later called *aggiornamento* or accommodation to the needs of the modern era." E. C. Kiessling, *History of the Western Wisconsin District* (Watertown, WI: Northwestern College, 1970), 35.

³⁷ Edmund Reim quoted Missouri Vice-President Arnold Grumm who asked at a Lutheran Laymen's League rally in Milwaukee, "As a Lutheran Church we are in the stream of American life—why must we always say no-no-no?" Reim felt Grumm's comment "shed a great deal of light" on the intersynodical problem: "We of Wisconsin are often charged with being too aloof from the highways and byways of life, and therefore from the men whom we are to win for the kingdom. And we must grant that there is more than a grain of truth in this accusation. But it is another matter entirely for a Church to find itself 'in the stream,' and to take pride and find satisfaction in that unaccustomed role." E[dmond] Reim, "As We See It: Two Necessary Questions," *The Northwestern Lutheran* 42 (17 April 1955), 120.

profs there must be in agreement with it."³⁸

Numerous Wisconsin Synod respondents cited the Missouri Synod's participation in the military chaplaincy program, its approval of Scouting, and its change in prayer fellowship practice, but one added, "I don't know whether one should call a change in fellowship doctrine and practice a cause of changes or the effect of change. Really both." But Wisconsin pastors noted other contributing causes. "Missouri's Doctrine of Church and Ministry made it difficult if not impossible to deal with problem areas." This reluctance or inability to carry out doctrinal discipline was frequently cited in connection with Missouri's *Statement of the 44*; said one pastor, "After the '44' had published their statement and through it had done much damage, instead of exposing its 'new' ideas and practice, Missouri simply allowed the subscribers to withdraw the statement from further discussion without retraction." It seemed, he concluded, that Missouri "was finding it easier to sweep religious aberrations under the rug than to face them."

One pastor, a St. Louis graduate who subsequently switched synods, remembered that when he entered Concordia in 1950 "the clouds were on the horizon," and that "the JEDP"³⁹ movement and Higher Critical Theory played a large part, since it stemmed from European theologians. European theologians were the rage at the time." Another felt Missouri Synod's seminaries "became too impressed with advanced degrees for their professors rather than sound theology." Former Concordia St. Louis professor Paul Kretzmann was heard to remark that the shift came about as "the result of calling Ph. D.s

³⁸ Writing in *The Seminarian* in 1949, editor Martin Marty, although not mentioning reception of holy communion, commented favorably on the Association of Lutheran Seminarians, through which students could promote "organized communication" and "good and pleasant unity" with other Lutheran seminarians. Martin Marty, "Wartburg: A. L. S. Unofficial impressions by an official visitor," *The Seminarian* 41 (16 November 1949), 11-12. Carl S. Meyer, *Log Cabin to Luther Tower: Concordia Seminary During One Hundred and Twenty-five Years Toward a More Excellent Ministry, 1839-1964* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1965), 228-229, recounts the significant role Concordia students played in the Association. Formed in 1946 at Wartburg Seminary in Dubuque, Ia., by representatives of ten Lutheran seminaries, the Association received the St. Louis seminary's support despite protests from Missouri pastors and a plea that the seminary discontinue its membership. By contrast, Concordia Seminary in Springfield, when invited, gave an "inadequate response." Bethany offered no reply, and the Wisconsin Synod's Thiensville seminary considered it "inadvisable" for its representatives to attend. Concordia's membership in the Association provoked debate at the 1950 Synodical Conference Convention.

³⁹ "JEDP" is shorthand for a theory of authorship of the first five books of the Old Testament. The theory, also referred to as "source criticism" or the "multiple source" theory of authorship, suggests that Genesis-Deuteronomy was not written by Moses but that four separate sources, often referred to by the initials of their assumed authors, J (Yahweh), E (Elohim), D (Deuteronomist), and P (Priestly), were woven by later editors into the present books of Genesis-Deuteronomy. Those who espouse the JEDP theory of authorship of the Pentateuch believe that little if any of the content these books was written by Moses. For a brief summary of the JEDP theory, see Mark Braun *The People's Bible: Deuteronomy* (Milwaukee: Northwestern Publishing House, 1993), 3-6.

instead of Th. D.s to the St. Louis Seminary.” Another respondent commented in greater detail:

I believe that the practice of sending promising theological students off to Harvard, Yale, the University of Chicago, etc., led to these men coming back to teach what they were taught. Doctrinal statements were appearing and not being quashed which were certainly not in accord with Missouri’s doctrinal confessions. I had the assignment of writing a paper on [St. Louis Professor Gilbert] Thiele’s paper about [the] immortality of the soul and the resurrection. Following the lead of [Oscar] Cullmann, Thiele denied any life of the soul between the time of death and the resurrection. His treatment of the Bible and his whole attitude of “prove me wrong” was most disturbing.⁴⁰

Still another remarked on “a growing high church tendency” in the LCMS, “which almost inevitably breeds doctrinal indifference.”⁴¹

One respondent offered the theory that the Missouri Synod “went astray” because of “a reliance on [its] leadership instead of grass roots reliance.” By “grass roots reliance” he meant “each individual going back to the Word of God on his or her own and coming to a conclusion.” While admitting that this is “sort of like re-inventing the wheel,” he added, “When it comes to the Bible, I feel each and every one of us must reinvent the wheel.”

6. *Do you have any recollections of specific noteworthy incidents of any of the Wisconsin Synod or Synodical Conference conventions during the years of the dispute (1939-1961)? Did you serve on convention floor committees, or in an advisory role, for any of those conventions?*

⁴⁰ Karl F. Krauss, pastor in Wisconsin’s Michigan District and former first vice-president of the Synodical Conference, was often heard to remark, “The Missouri Synod went down by degrees.”

⁴¹ Toppe, “A Time-Honored Warning Against Present Dangers to the Church from Pharisaism,” 124-125, noted “the growing emphasis on ritual and ceremony under the guise of going back to Luther’s day when the Lutheran Church was just crawling out of its Roman Catholic shell and still outwardly observing many Roman Catholic ceremonies.” Toppe faulted Synodical Conference churches, where “we hear of perpetual lamps burning, custodians crossing themselves before exhibiting sacramental vessels to visitors, altar boys, marriage communion for the bride and groom, and, in general, the dangerous tendency to crowd out the sermon by expanding the liturgy.” No wonder, Toppe observed, that a young man who left a Lutheran congregation to join the Catholic Church “felt very much at home in it.” See also H. C. Nitz, “‘High Church’ Practices,” *The Northwestern Lutheran* 46 (13 September 1959), 291; and “High Liturgical Fences,” *The Northwestern Lutheran* 50 (15 December 1963), 395, for complaints about “certain Romanizing externals” that were “creeping into some Protestant churches,” including use of the term “sacrifice of the mass,” employing a sanctuary lamp (“we have seen them in Synodical Conference churches!”), genuflecting at the altar, and the use of incense.

The Wisconsin Synod met in convention every odd-numbered summer (1939, ‘41, ‘43, ‘45, ‘47, ‘49, ‘51, ‘53, ‘55, ‘57, ‘59, ‘61), the Missouri Synod every three years (1938, ‘41, ‘44, ‘47, ‘50, ‘53, ‘56, ‘59), and the Synodical Conference in even-numbered summers (1940, ‘44, ‘46, ‘48, ‘50, ‘52, ‘54, ‘56, ‘58, ‘60). World War II forced cancellation of the Synodical Conference convention in 1942. The Wisconsin Synod held special recessed conventions in 1953 and 1956. The Synodical Conference held special recessed conventions in 1954 and 1961. Each synod maintained its own committee on doctrinal unity, and each placed representatives on the Joint Doctrinal Unity Committee. The Conference of Lutheran Theologians, comprised of theologians from Europe and Australia, and understandably nervous over stateside intersynodical strife, met in 1959 and 1960 in a last effort to hold the synods’ crumbling fellowship together.

Living almost a half century after those trying times, we find it hard to untangle the knot of conventions, conferences, letters, overtures, replies—putting in order who met last, who would meet next, and what the current status of the major questions was. But, as Edward Fredrich noted, “at the time, when the matter was being discussed was a burning issue and had been one for some years, the intricate argumentation was not difficult to follow.”⁴²

Some remembered personalities more than dates or events. “I still recall the patience of Minnesota District President M. J. Lenz and Wisconsin Synod President Oscar Naumann,” said one. Another recalled Naumann’s assurances to delegates in 1953, upon accepting the presidency, that the course of the “barge” (the synod) would remain as it had been under the leadership of the man he was replacing, John Brenner.

More often men recalled disagreements between synods and within the Wisconsin Synod.

I remember the period as one of extreme tension. People’s ministries were judged by their position on the intersynodical controversy. It became *the* consuming issue. People who sat on the same side of the issue sat together, ate together, held rump sessions to plan strategy. I remember a plea at one meeting of the Former Synodical Council by the late President E. Arnold Sitz in which he pleaded with the brothers to mix up during the lunch hour and talk about something else for a change.

⁴² Fredrich, “The Great Debate,” 164.

⁴³ See footnote 17. When the separate Lutheran synods of Minnesota, Wisconsin, and Michigan federated in 1892 to form the *Allgemeine Evangelische-lutherische Synode von Wisconsin, Minnesota, Michigan und anderen Staaten* [Federated Evangelical Lutheran Synod of Wisconsin, Minnesota, Michigan, and Other States], one of its stipulations was that Northwestern College in Watertown, Wisc., retain its function of providing pre-seminary training for pastors, and that Dr. Martin Luther College in New Ulm, Minn., would focus on training teachers for the synod’s elementary schools. Although the possibility of amalgamating these two schools into a single college was discussed at least twice prior to the 1990s, a proposal to amalgamate the two colleges was approved in a somewhat surprising vote at the 1993 WELS synodical convention. Significant opposition arose to the amalgamation following its approval, and although the new college opened in 1995, tensions remain.

Comparing those events to a more current synodical upheaval, one respondent said, "The hot and sometimes bitter 'amalgamation' struggle does not approach that [of the] late '50s and early '60s for paranoia."⁴³

Synodical Conference conventions proved fruitless in resolving intersynodical differences.⁴⁴ In 1952 at St. Paul, Wisconsin's President Brenner was "treated shabbily on the floor of the convention" and "hooted down when he tried to bring some brotherly admonition to Missouri." Another, who served on the Synodical Conference Floor Committee on Church Union in 1950 or 1952 recalled meeting with the individual doctrinal committees of all the synods and drawing up "what I considered to be a reasonably good report." When presented to delegates, however, "the liberal-minded movers and shakers of the Missouri Synod, sitting in the front section of the convention hall (I believe by design), made a motion to table the report," and "the report never returned, being effectively consigned to outer darkness." Such developments "did little to sweeten the dispositions of the conservative sector in Missouri and especially of the WELS and ELS contingents." By 1956 at Chicago "the WELS and ELS delegates had their own opening communion service in the ELS church while the LCMS and Slovak delegates worshiped at the scene of the convention."

In 1952 Wisconsin Synod delegates declared themselves *in statu confessionis*, a state of protesting fellowship; the following summer Wisconsin in full convention ratified that position. When the Missouri Synod appeared unwilling to abandon its support of the *Common Confession* in 1954, the stage was set for a turbulent convention in 1955.⁴⁵ The chairman of the Wisconsin Synod's 1955 Floor Committee # 2 on church union recalled vividly the turmoil of that service, calling it "the most trying week in my professional life."

After "countless hours of meetings and discussions, often running late into the night," his floor committee drafted a unanimous report, but the chairman then insisted, "purely out of courtesy," that the floor committee meet with the Synod's standing committee on church union "to just read the report to its members," but hoping "there would be absolutely no discussion of the report." The report had scarcely been read to the standing committee "when it seemed that 'all hell' broke loose." Presidents of the Dakota-Montana and Pacific Northwest districts "demanded that there be discussion, obviously to sabotage the report." Soon members of the standing committee were seen "marching" floor committee members "up and down Court Street in front of Michigan Lutheran Seminary, obviously remonstrating" with them.

When the floor committee did meet later in executive committee, it was readily apparent that what had been perhaps an uneasy unanimity had been lost. We were now a divided committee which, of course, resulted in majority and mi-

⁴⁴ Fredrich, "The Great Debate," 165-166, explained that the Synodical Conference "never presumed to be an umbrella-type organization that sheltered any and all brands of Lutheranism," but that "it presumed the full doctrinal unity of its member synods." The Missouri Synod's insistence on following an "errant pathway" was "not something the Synodical Conference caused or failed to prevent but simply had to recognize."

⁴⁵ Fredrich, "The Great Debate," 167: "One would have to go back as far as 1868 for a synodical convention to equal that of 1955 in significance for the interchurch relations field."

nority reports being presented to the Synod. Their presentation to the Synod constituted a long and trying day and morning. The up-shot, after sometimes rancorous discussion, was a decision to adopt the majority report but to hold the action in abeyance pending a special convention the following year. This led to a parade of individuals who had insisted on a break with Missouri on a march to the rostrum to sign formal protests over the Synod's sinful actions.⁴⁶

Remembered by many at the 1955 convention was that, following the delegates' decision to postpone breaking with the LCMS until the following year, Wisconsin's seminary president Edmund Reim offered his resignation from the seminary and the synod on the convention floor. "I was strongly moved by his speech," said one pastor. Two years later in New Ulm, when the resolution to break from the Missouri Synod failed by 16 votes, Reim again announced "that he could not in obedience to the Word of God accept the resolutions of the convention" and felt "compelled to discontinue his fellowship with the Synod."⁴⁷

By 1961, a clear majority concluded that "to maintain ties [with the Missouri Synod] could have led to worse things," and voted 124-49 (71.7%) to break fellowship. Still, "debate was lengthy and emotions ran high." Coach Leonard Umnus of Northwestern College, a delegate to the convention, later called it "the most difficult decision he ever had to make."

The vote came only after significant opposition. As it grew increasingly clear that church fellowship would be *the* issue to separate the synods, some pastors challenged

⁴⁶ The respondent also reflected on the residue of his 1955 decision: "I received some mail [that showed] little evidence of a Christian spirit as it conferred on me the title 'liberal'—a kind of sobriquet that resurfaces even to this day. I was comforted, though, by a letter from a young pastor who stated: 'Prof. John Meyer doesn't know any theology and neither do you.' The comfort came from lumping me with John Meyer. I concluded that I must know more theology than I thought I did."

⁴⁷ In 1955, Reim said from the convention floor, "I can continue in fellowship with my Synod only under clear and public protest." Under such conditions, he resigned his position as secretary of the synod's Standing Committee on Church Union, and, "since I cannot change my stand and teaching in order to conform to the synodical policy" laid down for the 1955-56 school year—to postpone breaking with Missouri until 1956—he resigned as president and professor at the seminary (*Wisconsin Proceedings, 1955, 87-88*). According to one respondent the seminary's board of control voted not to accept Reim's resignation, but board minutes contained his announced resignation as well as a question raised by one of the board's members: "Do we vote our personal convictions or the will of the Synod in convention?"

In 1957, after the vote to break with Missouri failed 61-77, Reim cited his 1955 statement, that stated that the convention's action not only failed to remove the occasion for his protest, but "increases and confirms it." Since his "clear and strong" protest to the synod "has been disregarded," Reim found himself "compelled to discontinue [his] fellowship with the Synod," adding: "I trust that you will realize that I take this step, not in anger, but in deepest sorrow, and because I am constrained by the Word of God (*Wisconsin Proceedings, 1957, 144-145*).

what was now being called the Wisconsin Synod's "unit concept" of fellowship, in which church fellowship was defined as "every joint expression, manifestation, and demonstration" of a common faith. The "Overseas Delegation," involved in the Conference of Lutheran Theologians, favored an approach emphasizing the marks of the church as a basis for fellowship.⁴⁸ Said one proponent: "Fellowship to me was a state or condition created by God through the Means of Grace, rather than an activity of faith with proof by inference [instead of] by direct application of Scripture." Supporters "spoke frequently from the floor," and although one later called justification for the convention's decision "inevitable," he wrote, "I still can't agree with the *reason* given in 1961 for the split of the Synodical Conference."⁴⁹

In a prepared statement presented just before the vote, Milwaukee pastor James Schaefer said he had listened to "contradictory counsel" from men "of equal stature, of equal acumen, of equal scholarship, equally devoted to the Holy Scriptures and to the Lutheran Confessions," but insisted:

There is nothing in the past history of this controversy that would tend to indicate to me that today, 4:30 P. M., August 17, 1961, and no other day, we must break fellowship with the Missouri Synod. The case today is no more hopeless, no more hopeful—than it ever was before. . . .

Schaefer insisted that each Wisconsin Synod delegate must be so convinced that fellowship with the Missouri Synod must be broken that "it would be as preposterous to vote on that proposition as it would be to put the Trinity to a vote."⁵⁰

Perhaps the most poignant recollection for many of the 1961 Wisconsin Synod convention involved the brother against brother face-off of Martin and Werner Franzmann. Raised in a Wisconsin Synod parsonage in Minnesota, Martin had taught at Northwestern College in Watertown before accepting a call to Concordia Seminary in St. Louis, 1946, while Werner remained a Wisconsin Synod pastor. The differing views of their synods had now turned brothers into opponents. At one microphone, Martin pleaded

⁴⁸ See E. H. Wendland, "Church Fellowship—A Unit Concept?" (paper presented to the Southwestern Conference, Michigan District, Wisconsin Synod, January 1961). E. H. Wendland, "The Biblical Concept of Church Fellowship: paper written to answer questions related to the Wisconsin Synod's Doctrinal Committee on matters relating to the Fellowship Theses," (February 1961).

⁴⁹ According to newspaper accounts of the convention, the overseas theologians charged Wisconsin's fellowship theses with being "unscriptural." One Wisconsin Synod pastor suggested that confusion among delegates might indicate the inadequacy of the synod's presentation. Another expressed doubts whether all avenues of negotiation had been exhausted. "Lutheran Unity Impasse Cited," *The Milwaukee Sentinel*, 10 August 1961. James Johnson, "Lutheran Split Theses Rapped as 'Unclear,'" *The Milwaukee Sentinel*, 17 August 1961. David A. Runge, "Delegates Divided on Synod's Stand," *The Milwaukee Journal*, 16 August 1961. David A. Runge, "Sharp Debate Erupts at Lutheran Meeting," *The Milwaukee Journal*, 17 August 1961.

⁵⁰ James P. Schaefer, "Statement to the WELS Convention, August 17, 1961," typed manuscript; letter, William J. Schaefer to Mark Braun, 17 September 1996.

with Wisconsin's delegates not to break; at the other, Werner, chairman of the floor committee on church union, replied that the time for patience had expired.⁵¹ A third brother, Gerhard, recalled, "Since I loved and admired both brothers, it was a very wrenching experience." One delegate recalled Martin explaining that it was easy for a small synod like Wisconsin to take a firm stand, but it became more difficult if not impossible when a synod became as large as Missouri. Another remembered meeting Martin in a hallway off the convention floor and asking him, "How can you do what you're doing?" Franzmann answered, "You can't play with coal without getting your hands dirty."

Martin Franzmann delivered an "impassioned" good-bye speech to the assembled delegates, "quite lengthy," and "shortly thereafter" took a call to England. "After a short time Martin died. Was it because of a 'broken theological heart'?"⁵²

7. *Do you recall any significant opposition among Wisconsin Synod members or pastors to the Synod's position on Scouting, prayer fellowship, or the chaplaincy?*

Five respondents answered, "No." One added two exclamation points—"No!!"—intimating, perhaps, that internal dissent was either inconceivable or not to be mentioned. "Not in our district," said one pastor. "No significant opposition among the con-

⁵¹ According to a *Milwaukee Journal* article the day after the split, Werner Franzmann said: "We have gone the long mile of Christian love with the Missouri Synod with the course and kind of admonition we have given until now. Today a sterner kind of admonition and love is required." David A. Runge, "Wisconsin Synod Votes to Split With Missouri," *Milwaukee Journal*, 18 August 1961, 1, 4.

⁵² Martin Franzmann remained at Concordia Seminary until 1968, then accepted the preceptorship at Westfield House of the University of Cambridge, England, retiring in 1972. He died on March 28, 1976. Gerald Hoenecke, in his obituary in the *Wisconsin Lutheran Quarterly* 73 (July 1976), 226, cited Franzmann's contributions to statements on the doctrine of Scripture and the Antichrist, but also noted that Franzmann was chief author of Missouri's statement on fellowship in 1960, "which led to an impasse in our joint discussions and subsequently in our Synod's resolution to suspend its highly cherished fellowship of 90 years with its former sister synod."

A. L. C. union proponent E. C. Fendt remarked in his memoirs that "the man who suffered more pain and anguish than any other in my acquaintance" over the intersynodical strife was Martin Franzmann. Finding himself out of synodical fellowship with most of his family members, former classmates and associates "weighed heavily on his mind and heart." Fendt recalled Franzmann telling about his son, still attending a Wisconsin Synod college, who would no longer have prayer fellowship with his father when he came home from school. As tears fell from his eyes, Franzmann said, "There must be something wrong with the synodical resolutions when they destroy prayer fellowship in the family." E. C. Fendt, *The Struggle for Lutheran Unity and Consolidation in the U. S. A. from the Late 1930s to the Early 1970s* (Minneapolis: Augsburg Publishing House, 1980), 191-192, 317.

gregation members I served," said another. "Not really," said a third. "Where I served there was great unanimity."

Several respondents credited thorough, ongoing instruction by Wisconsin Synod leaders with keeping synodical disagreement to a minimum. "Our doctrinal commissions and Seminary faculty kept our members and pastors well-informed with Scripture-based studies." Another added, "The more we studied the questions on the basis of Scripture, the more sure we became that our position was the Biblical and correct position." Helpful to pastors was that it could clearly be demonstrated "that it was not the Wisconsin Synod that had changed its position on these matters, but the Missouri Synod."⁵³ Observed one respondent, who entered the ministry in the late 1950s: "All of us were opposed to Scouting and chaplaincy *union* services. Fellowship with other churches was not condoned."

Other respondents answered, "No," but then hedged: maybe there was *a little* disagreement with synodical positions. Opposition existed "in very small pockets," but was "not widespread." One pastor could not remember "any overt opposition," another could not recall "any particular opposition that was repeated over the years." There may have been "a feeling of unease, but in general there was agreement with the basic underlying principles of opposition to (excessive) unionism as reflected in some of these things."

Others conceded disagreement mostly from laymen, who displayed "some lack of understanding" and were "unfortunately uninformed" on Scouting. There was "a pastor here or there who did not agree completely," or "a few pastors" who had "difficulty accepting the 'unit concept' concerning prayer fellowship." Or "here and there some WELS pastors expressed the thought that the military chaplaincy was a matter of government control and thus out of our hands."

Still others acknowledged more deep-seated disagreement. "There were pockets of resistance in many areas of the Synod," answered one pastor, adding that pastors Oscar Siegler and Oscar Naumann from Wisconsin's Commission on Church Union "were traveling extensively to put out the fires." Said another, "There were many individuals, as well as 'pockets' of individuals, who very vocally took exception to the stance of the WELS on any and all of the above." Two respondents recalled that some opposition voices came from pastors "who had received training in Missouri, especially at the Springfield Seminary," or from "those who had deep family ties with LCMS pastors and members," or from those who operated joint high schools and grade schools with neighboring Missouri Synod congregations. Both hastened to add, however, that some Wisconsin Synod pastors who had received training in LCMS schools, and even some Missouri Synod pastors, supported Wisconsin positions, because they "saw what effects the creeping loose and liberal practices were having on the church."

One pastor related "an almost humorous incident" which occurred at a pre-convention delegate conference.

⁵³ In the 1962 *Dialog* article cited previously, the author considered Wisconsin Synod frustration "certainly understandable" in view of the Missouri Synod's "paternalistic denials" and its "apparently deliberate attempts to slant or suppress the evidence" of synodical change: "Wisconsin was ultimately forced to conclude that the representatives from Missouri either were incredibly ignorant of the state of affairs in their own churches or were deliberately glossing the troublesome differences and making promises they could not, or did not intend to keep."

I had been given the assignment of reporting on intersynodical matters. The [synod's] Church Union Committee was recommending a break [with Missouri], and I simply reported what the book said. After I was finished a layman got up and said, "Now that we've heard from the prosecution, I move that we also hear from the defense."

Other recollections were neither humorous nor pleasant. "My brother who was in the Army thought that an army without the problem-solving power of the chaplaincy was unthinkable." Uncertainties over prayer fellowship "caused constant friction among the brethren because of close ties with Missouri Synod congregations and people in many areas." Prayer fellowship "was hot enough that we invited Carl Lawrenz and Oscar Siegler to present [the] WELS position in an open meeting, and the church was filled. The presentation did not do much good." One pastor recalled "little opposition to ending prayer fellowship with the Missouri Synod," but "a lot of opposition to the 'unit concept' when it came to praying with other Christians in a family setting."

Most outspoken on fellowship was this comment:

Prayer fellowship was highly confusing. From reading the study on fellowship principles and applications of the same, I think there was much to be desired. I felt sorry for our members upon whom a great burden was placed—in some cases, quite needlessly. It was through this unfortunate use of the fellowship principles as a club of righteousness that we required an attitude of "stand-offishness," rather than being known for the three *solas*, and positively moving forward.

Another respondent estimated that "more than 50% of the Wisconsin Synod's lay members were out of step with Synod's leadership," citing Wisconsin's 1955 convention at Saginaw, in which "the overall vote against breaking fellowship with the Missouri Synod was 2 to 1 against."

Scouting "was not a doctrinal problem for members, but a social convenience for their children." Another wrote, "I think back to the days of my childhood. We were members of a Wisconsin Synod congregation with a Christian Day School, but also had a Scout troop at that time." His father refused to allow him to join the Scouts because "in his youth [the father] was a member of the Missouri Synod churches and that church was opposed to Scouting." This same pastor heard a presentation at the St. Croix Pastoral Conference in Minnesota in which a neighboring pastor praised the good features of the Scouting program and was never criticized for his remarks. "Personally," he recalled, "I feel that this was done to antagonize a new member of the Conference—a super conservative pastor, who had replaced a liberal pastor at one of our churches."

Some arguments employed against Scouting "were almost ridiculous." The Scout problem "was blown way out of proportion" and became "much too important an issue at the time." Said another, "Many of us felt that 'Scouting' was raised to the level of the 'shibboleth' of the Wisconsin Synod."⁵⁴ It was a subject used by other Lutherans to make us look bad—and thus it was a deterrent to growth." Two respondents recalled hearing district presidents remark that "Scouting was not originally meant to have any religious aspects," and that "the Confessions don't mention Scouting, so we should not say anything."

8. *What effect(s) do you think the break of fellowship with the Missouri Synod has had on the Wisconsin Synod since 1961?*

Clearly "there were prophets of doom" who predicted separation from the LCMS would occasion the demise of the Wisconsin Synod. Richard Jungkuntz, professor at Northwestern College in Watertown, took the Wisconsin convention floor just before the 1961 vote and announced dramatically, "Brethren, it is one minute to twelve for the Wisconsin Synod."⁵⁵ Fears were voiced that Wisconsin "in Linus-like fashion" would take its "doctrinal security blanket of anti-Scouting/chaplaincy/ecumenism/theological conservatism and sit in the corner sulking."

The split proved "far less disastrous than I possibly feared at first," said one, "at least outwardly." Many saw the decision to go it alone as "all positive," "one of the best things that ever happened to our Synod," "the right thing to do," an action that had a "most salutary" and "very wholesome effect" because it "definitely made Wisconsin stronger."

Chief among its benefits was that "during the years of controversy, pastors, teachers, and lay members studied the Scriptures. Not that study hadn't been done before," but at that time "we were reminded to know what Scriptures taught and how to apply them." The controversies "compelled our theologians to get back to the scriptures and do some real digging. Each generation has to take possession of scriptural doctrine for itself, not rely upon the 'fathers.'" It provided "good training" by making pastors and members

⁵⁴ According to Judges 12:4-6, Ephraimites could not correctly pronounce the word *shibboleth*, saying *sibboleth* instead, and thus identifying themselves as from a different tribe than the Gileadites. *The American College Dictionary*, C. L. Barnhart, ed.-in-chief (New York: Random House, 1966), 1116, defines *shibboleth* as "a peculiarity of pronunciation, or a habit, mode of dress, etc., which distinguishes a particular class or set of persons"; then, in a metaphorical sense, "a test word or pet phrase of a party, sect, etc." Armin Schuetze, "Foreword—1978: Shibboleths," *Wisconsin Lutheran Quarterly* 75 (January 1978), 3-5, used the same word but as a positive indicator. Citing examples of creation "in the course of six normal days" and the historicity of Jonah, Schuetze acknowledged, "The implication is that the Wisconsin Synod is too much concerned about insignificant matters; it lets what is inconsequential divide it from other Christians who believe as the Wisconsin Synod does in whatever really counts." But such instances "provide an opening for some aspect of the historical-critical method of Bible interpretation that must be resisted at the beginning. The time to be warned is when we hear a 'sibboleth' in place of a 'shibboleth.' Once the enemy has crossed the Jordan, he may be beyond resistance."

⁵⁵ Jungkuntz and Ralph Gehrke resigned their professorships at Northwestern College shortly after the 1961 convention. E. E. Kowalke, *Centennial Story: Northwestern College 1865-1965* (Watertown, WI: Northwestern College, 1965), 270, reported that one of the two (not identifying which) said simply, "I share the Missouri position." Jungkuntz accepted a call to the Missouri Synod's Concordia Seminary, Springfield, Ill., Gehrke to Concordia College, River Forest, Ill., following the 1961 convention. Northwestern's Board of Control refused to grant them a peaceful release of their calls, citing their "public rejection of the Synod's position regarding the principles of church fellowship."

"fully aware of the importance of God's Word and their sole reliance upon the promises in the Word for our very existence as a synod." The break "unified and strengthened our Synod in its present scriptural position." One pastor, who left the Missouri Synod for the WELS, remembered what "a real treat" it was "to experience the doctrinal unity among the pastors"—something he had not experienced in the LCMS. The break made Wisconsin men "thankful for the faithfulness of Prof. Lawrenz" and others like him.

The understanding of Scripture came, not all at once, but was "a process." Paraphrasing something Carl Lawrenz told him, a pastor wrote, "The Word of God is clear, but that does not mean it is clear to me as I read it. I have to read it many times before it gets through my thick skull." Though they had been trying times, this pastor regarded the experience as a positive thing, and he questioned whether later generations of WELS pastors, absent those stresses, study the Scriptures with as much intensity.

The struggle forced a generation to reread and reread, to study and restudy the Bible. I think an interesting sidelight to your paper would be a comparison of the amount of time and effort spent studying the Word of God we preach as opposed to how to preach the Word in the conferences and conventions of those days with the conferences and conventions of today.

The controversy "cleared the air as to the direction our Synod would take in fellowship matters." Those who disagreed withdrew from the Synod; their departure "removed much ambiguity" and provided "a catharsis that rid the WELS of extremists on both sides," resulting in "a truer church." Ended were "the long debates, the uncertainties, the growing antagonisms." Although they lost cherished friendships and support from Missouri, "when the dust had settled we found a new kind of close fellowship within the Synod." What emerged was "a deeper fraternal spirit of cooperation among pastors and teachers and laity," and "more appreciation of whatever fellowship we have." This fellowship "helped prevent us from being swept up in a tide of false ecumenicity" and "preserved us from the influences of what was once called 'neo-orthodoxy.'"

Before the break, "WELS was somewhat tied to Missouri and the Synodical Conference," but the break "made WELS more self-sufficient and independent," more able "to stand on its own two feet." Realizing that "we could no longer lean on 'Big Brother' in our mission priorities, we became more independent in accepting these responsibilities," which "has worked out to our advantage." Reflecting the "small Synoditis" syndrome mentioned earlier, one respondent said, "I believe it helped the WELS shed its ugly duckling complex." Another added, "We no longer have to be the squeaking mouse intimidated by the roaring lion, LCMS or ELCA [Evangelical Lutheran Church in America]." Breaking with the Missouri Synod was "a wonderful thing. It was as if somebody took our water wings off, and we found out, 'Hey, I can swim!'" The WELS "emerged a more viable church body, no longer in LCMS' shadow."⁵⁶

The break made the Wisconsin Synod more mission-minded. Previously it had been "fairly common to let Missouri or the Synodical Conference take care of outreach, while we hung back." No longer able simply to transfer members to Missouri Synod congregations around the United States, "we became more conscious of outreach opportunities."⁵⁷ Wisconsin was compelled to recognize that "without the Synodical Conference, the WELS would itself be obliged to preach the Gospel to every creature." The break with the LCMS "put us all on notice that the remark of one Missouri pastor was very much in place: 'The WELS is holding the *reine Lehre* [true doctrine], and is sitting on it!'"⁵⁸

Thus in the 1960s and '70s the WELS became "a haven for those dissatisfied with liberalism" and "a refuge for those outside our circles who were troubled by unionism." Quite suddenly, the Wisconsin Synod, which for more than a century had been exclusively a regional church body, with congregations in 16 states in 1961, found itself announcing mission openings across the United States. "In our district it provided a new zeal and energy for mission outreach. The Missouri Synod no longer had 'squatter rights' to promising fields and areas in which they were located."⁵⁹ Unfortunately, former Missourians who endured the traumatic experience of a church body "changing out from under them" sometimes brought with them to their new synod fears that any change

⁵⁶ James P. Schaefer, "Stewards of the Mysteries of God in Today's World," *Wisconsin Lutheran Quarterly* 74 (October 1977), 301, agreed that the Wisconsin Synod "gained an identity." Wisconsin could no longer lean, "carefree and comfortable, on Missouri's strength," nor could it comfortably escape wider notice. "Now its mission was clear: it was the last Lutheran church body of any size—I do not wish to slight the Evangelical Lutheran Synod—to maintain a confessional Lutheran posture, unyielding in its subscription to the Lutheran Confessions and to the theology of classic Lutheranism. It had moved out of Missouri's shadow. And the next decade dramatically documented the move."

⁵⁷ Schaefer, "Stewards of the Mysteries of God in Today's World," 302: "Such transferring after 1961 was no longer possible. Pastors could no longer commend Missouri Synod congregations as 'sister congregations.' Furthermore many of Missouri's pulpits were occupied by pastors who had received their seminary training under precisely those professors who were propelling Missouri into the ecumenical mainstream and experimenting with the historical-critical method."

⁵⁸ Dr. Siegbert Becker was a powerful exponent that since the WELS was now the last remaining orthodox Lutheran body, a debt of responsibility fell to it. In "2 Timothy 4:4—An Apt Description of Truth's Treatment by 'Modern' Theologians of the Lutheran Church" (essay read to the Minnesota District Convention, Wisconsin Synod, New Ulm, August 1, 1966), 18-19, Becker said:

"We are only a handful of people, but we are the largest Lutheran body in the world that has remained loyal to the Word in these days of apostasy. We are being called upon to share this gift in widespread areas of our country and of the world, and just because we are a small church body, our pastors, our teachers, and our laymen must learn to pray and to work and to give as we have never given and worked and prayed before in all our history. . . . We know that what is written in the Bible is no fable. We know that it is the infallible, inerrant Word of our God, made known to the world for the salvation of men through the vicarious atonement of our Lord Jesus Christ. A church which carries that conviction in its corporate heart ought not to be able to rest until it has done every last thing that it is able to do to share it with others. Humanly speaking, the next decade will be a crucial one for the Wisconsin Synod, and this is no time for anyone in the Wisconsin Synod to be sitting on his hands, or on his pocketbook, for that matter."

⁵⁹ See Robert C. Hartmann, "The Growth of the WELS Through the Years," *WELS Historical Institute Journal* 9 (Spring 1991), 37-38, on Wisconsin Synod growth in the 1960s and '70s.

in church methodology, however incidental, were bellwethers that "Wisconsin will go just like Missouri did." One respondent commented on this mixed blessing.

I remember several LCMS pastors coming to our Synod and District, but quite a few of them didn't come just for doctrinal reasons. We inherited some problem cases with them, so that they didn't stay in the ministry and were asked to resign. They were of a different spirit.

The break fostered theological growth and increased the synod's appreciation for what it had been given. It helped "develop and utilize more fully the tremendous spiritual gifts with which God blessed WELS." The WELS became "better able to distinguish law and gospel in practice." It "spurred us on to value scholarship," helping the synod realize that "we had true scholars in our midst." This in turn stimulated scholarly activity that "strengthened our seminary program" and led to ongoing graduate study at the seminary. The break "stimulated publishing." The Synod "had to prepare our own devotional material," and now had more of its people "writing religious books and commentaries on the Books of the Bible." Stewardship programs improved. "We had major building programs undertaken in our Synod's schools of higher learning," building a new Lutheran high school in Milwaukee, adding more than a dozen Lutheran high schools and a Lutheran college around the country.

On a more sobering note, one respondent wrote, "If the Wisconsin Synod had not broken when it did, we would have followed the ways of Missouri. Or the Synod would have fallen to pieces." Had the Wisconsin Synod voted in 1961 to remain in protesting fellowship, hundreds of pastors may have left. Would Wisconsin have had the fortitude to carry on?

Not all viewed the split entirely in positive terms. It "created strained relations among relatives and friends" where there had been strong Wisconsin-Missouri family and working ties. Though acknowledging positive effects for the WELS, one respondent noted a "de-emphasis on doctrine" and an "increasing emphasis on practical training of pastors as opposed to theological grounding." Some wondered whether the same forces at work in the LCMS a generation ago were now brewing in the WELS. As the Wisconsin Synod has become "more centralized" and "more self-assured," it has also been "trying to show itself as modern and progressive." The respondent remarked: "It is disquieting to read, hear, and note language, articles, and actions similar to those things which took place as Missouri was getting set to fall." Another noted that "humanism began taking over the Missouri Synod, that is, the emphasis on man to do the job, 'we don't need God,' " as well as "the use of gimmicks, instead of the Word, to get and keep people in the Church," and added, "Some of these same tendencies now exist in our own Synod, sad to say."

Other respondents, however, wondered whether breaking from a "more liberal" Missouri Synod had caused the Wisconsin Synod to become more reactionary. Being separate has made Wisconsin "more independent and aggressive" but also "somewhat more legalistic for a time and negative as a result."

WELS tended to look in some respects to Scripture as a kind of encyclopedia [of doctrine and practice] with the result that every issue had to be tied in a neat ribbon and put in its proper pigeon-hole. WELS has the ability to lay out basic principles very clearly but can get fouled up in application.⁶⁰

Another said: "The pendulum has swung far to the other side concerning Theology of the Word and Theology of Fellowship."

The same respondent who appreciated that Wisconsin had not been swept into the false ecumenicity of the late twentieth century also felt the break from Missouri "has contributed to a spirit of parochialism." In elaborating on his comment, this respondent recalled Jesus' words that his disciples were to be "in the world but not of it," which the respondent took to mean that "we are to insulate ourselves from the world without isolating ourselves from it." Parochialism "tends to substitute isolation for insulation, or at least to confuse the two." He feared that some WELS pastors today regard clergy from other denominations with suspicion, figuring "it's better to be safe," and so "we aren't even cordial [to them], as though cordiality would compromise our confessionalism."

Another way parochialism manifests itself is in the practical way of recognizing the church.

We all confess to believe in the holy Christian church, the communion of saints, but we have a problem translating that belief into any kind of positive action—as though maybe there aren't any real saints outside the WELS. In applying fellowship principles we want to be sure to be on the safe side. We over-react. In doing so we exhibit behavior that in part gives credence to the stereotype people have of us. We live and work in an ecclesiastical ghetto, and act as though we think that is one of our strengths.

The spirit of parochialism "operates with a ghetto mentality," which "obscures the love Jesus wants us to have for one another, even for our enemies."

In a 1996 essay presented to pastoral conferences in the South Atlantic District, former synod president Carl Mischke remarked on the oft-repeated adage that "the WELS is always twenty years behind Missouri," adding, "I don't ever recall anyone saying it because he wanted to pay the WELS a compliment." Usually the person who made the remark "was referring to something in the WELS that he didn't like and then would point out that he had observed the same thing in Missouri already 20 years earlier." If the Missouri Synod changed its practice of church fellowship, struggled over the doctrine of Scripture, and succumbed to the desire of being more of a "big player" in the larger American Lutheran picture, and if it is true that "Wisconsin is twenty years behind Missouri," it would then be reasonable to assume—and to fear—that Wisconsin is destined to follow that same path.

But if, by separating from the Missouri Synod, the Wisconsin Synod preserved and espoused a more conservative outlook on fellowship and Scripture, then for the WELS the danger of legalism and a reactionary spirit may be greater than that of following Missouri's path. Mischke addressed that concern at the conclusion of his essay:

Legalism presents a special peril to a confessional Lutheran synod that wants to be faithful to the full truth of God's Word, and WELS is no exception. We want to be keenly aware of legalism's potentially menacing impact as we seek to deal evangelically with the challenges faced by the church in today's changed and rapidly changing environment. We will want to say all that Scripture says but also no more than Scripture says. We will need to distinguish

⁶⁰ This respondent's warning echoes a comment James Schaefer was frequently heard to make before his death in 1995: "The Wisconsin Synod has become more rabbinic."

carefully between what is descriptive and what is prescriptive in Scripture. We will need to be aware that on occasion more than one scriptural principle has a bearing on a given case. We will want to guard against making applications not supported in Scripture. We will need to understand that not everything in life is clearly black or white, that not everything fits into a predetermined, carefully-defined pigeon hole.⁶¹

Students of church history are well aware, as Samuel L. Stone expressed it in his great hymn, that we now see the church "by schisms rent asunder, by heresies distressed."⁶² In the time of the Judges the writer lamented that "everyone did as he saw fit" (Judges 21:25), and "in those days the word of the Lord was rare" (1 Samuel 3:1). The New Testament church in the book of the Acts experienced insult, persecution, imprisonment, hypocrisy, factionalism, and martyrdom—and it had not yet even left Jerusalem. There is much in the story of the Wisconsin Synod of the mid-twentieth century to provoke sorrow instead of delight.

Yet the account of these trying times also displays clear-headed leaders, fiercely-held convictions, powerful emotions, ardent wrestling with the truths of Scripture, and unexpected blessings. Against this backdrop the Lord of the Church worked through fallible men to have his kingdom come and cause his will to be done. Though we struggle on in a divided Christendom, we look forward to the day when Jesus will bring to reality what he prayed for in John 17, "that they may be one."

⁶¹ Carl H. Mischke, "Twenty Years Behind Missouri—A Caution for the WELS" (essay presented to two pastoral conferences in the South Atlantic District, Wisconsin Synod, Fall 1996), 1, 24-25.

⁶² Samuel L. Stone, "The Church's One Foundation," *Christian Worship—A Lutheran Hymnal* (Milwaukee: Northwestern Publishing House, 1993), 538:4.

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from the editor . . .

by Arnold O. Lehmann

Sincere thanks to the Rev. Prof. Mark Braun of Wisconsin Lutheran College for his well researched article on the "split" that took place in mid-20th century between the Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod and the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod. As one can see from the excellent bibliography, Prof. Braun's research was extensive and inclusive, which is much appreciated. Part I of the 1864 *Proceedings* may be found in the October 1999 issue of the *Journal* (Vol. 17, No. 2). Back issues may be obtained by writing to the Synod's Archives at Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary.

Just a word to remind our readers that the WELS Historical Institute will host the annual meeting of the Lutheran Historical Conference to be held on October 19-21, 2000. Further information may be obtained from Prof. Dr. James Kiecker at Wisconsin Lutheran College, Milwaukee WI.

Again a reminder, that articles of historical interest and importance on American Lutheranism, especially of the WELS, are welcomed, and may be sent to the undersigned. Do not let matters of historical importance in your area be lost for future generations. Especially this year when the WELS celebrates its 150th anniversary of existence, such articles ought to appear or be made available. It is expected that they will be well written and well researched however.

Please send comments, articles or other written or photographic items of historical interest to:

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