

The Wisconsin--Missouri Break:  
A Result of Doctrinal Compromise.

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Jesus said, "Do not suppose that I have come to bring peace to the earth. I did not come to bring peace, but a sword." Mt. 10:34 Christ separated between the true and the false. There is a tremendous difference between those who confess Him in accordance with His whole Word and those who do not. In other words, there is a great dichotomy between the man who teaches rightly and he who distorts, even subtly, the Word of God. Jesus went on to say:

For I have come to turn a man against his mother, a daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law--a man's enemies will be the members of his own household. Anyone who loves his father or mother more than me is not worthy of me; anyone who loves his son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me; and anyone who does not take his cross and follow me is not worthy of me.

When christians follow Christ and obey His Word they will have to make unpopular stances. These may even separate households. Nevertheless the call of Christ to hold fast to His teachings is clear for the child of God. A while ago a whole body of christians, who had decided to obey Christ's Word took an unpopular stance. This not only divided some

households, it divided a long standing confessional fellowship. In 1961 the Wisconsin Synod broke fellowship with the Missouri Synod. They believed Missouri was not correctly confessing Christ in doctrinal and practical matters. There was no peace between the two synods, only a sword. What brought about such a condition?

The sword was drawn already back in 1938-39. This was the beginning of difficulties between the Synods. It is the object of this paper to explore these beginnings of strife and to define them as the seed from which the break with ~~Missouri sprouted.~~

The problem between the two synods began over the subject of fellowship (or we may more correctly say, bad fellowship practice of the Missouri Synod, otherwise classified as unionism). Missouri had stated in the Brief Statement of 1932:

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

But only six years later Missouri began to pursue a course of action contrary to this. And, in turn, their unionistic trend led to a break with the Wisconsin Synod. By the summer of 1938 Missouri had held six meetings with the ALC. Attempts at a basis for fellowship were made, but it was done at the expense of true doctrine. The Wisconsin Synod objected to this basically on three counts. Missouri made the basis for fellowship with the ALC three documents instead of one. Secondly, there was no agreement reached on certain "non-fundamental" doctrines and this was said not to be divisive of church fellowship. Thirdly, the ALC maintained its fellowship in the AL Conference (members of which did not stand four square on Biblical Lutheran doctrine), and had other unscriptural fellowship practices. Professor Fredrich brings out these three points clearly:

In the same year (1938) the American Lutheran Church reacted in three ways. It declared the brief statement "viewed in the light of" its Declaration not in contradiction to the "Minneapolis Theses." It asserted that it was "firmly convinced that it is neither necessary nor possible to agree in all non-fundamental doctrines." It insisted that it would not give up its American Lutheran Conference membership. <sup>2</sup>

It is surprising to see how much Missouri was willing to give up in order to join hands with another Lutheran Body. But it was this attempt at a union without a sufficient basis that brought about Missouri's later problems and the break with the WELS. Let us look at and analyze the three:

- I. Missouri's Basis for Fellowship With the ALC. (not three documents but one).

After negotiations with the ALC the Missouri Synod, in its 1938 Convention, resolved:

That we raise our grateful hearts and voices to the Triune God, thanking His mercy for the guidance of the Holy Spirit by which the points of agreement have been reached and imploring His further guidance toward the consummation of the efforts to bring about church-fellowship between the Missouri Synod and the American Lutheran Church, even though we believe that under the most favorable circumstances much time and effort may be required before any union may be reached.<sup>3</sup>

In the following year the Wisconsin Synod warned Missouri that under existing conditions further negotiation for establishing church fellowship (with the ALC) would involve a denial of the truth and would cause a confusion and disturbance in the church and ought therefore to be suspended for the time being.<sup>4</sup> Thus, clearly, our synod was asking Missouri to step down from its venture at fellowship with the ALC, especially because of the ~~basis of fellowship~~ between them. Again, Missouri resolved at its 1938 convention:

That Synod declare the brief statement of the Missouri Synod together with the Declaration of the representatives of the American Lutheran Church and the provisions of this entire report of the committee no. 16 now being read and with synod's actions there upon be regarded as the doctrinal basis for future church-fellowship between the Missouri Synod and the American Lutheran Church.<sup>5</sup>

Wisconsin's convention of 1939 responded to this by saying:

Not two statements should be issued as a basis for agreement; a single joint statement, covering the contested doctrines thetically and antithetically and accepted by both parties

to the controversy, is imperative; and, furthermore, such a doctrinal statement must be made in clear and unequivocal terms which do not require laborious additional explanations. The sincerity of any theoretical statement must be evidenced by a clear church practice.<sup>6</sup>

Thus Wisconsin **opposed** Missouri in their attempt to unite with the ALC. The ALC was a church body reaching towards orthodoxy at the time. But it did have a few problems. As was mentioned before, they used three documents in attempting to establish church fellowship with Missouri. One was the Brief Statement of the Missouri Synod (1932), another was the "Declaration of the ALC, and still another was the report of the floor committee No. 16 at Missouri's Convention of 1938. The Wisconsin Synod saw that an agreement on the basis of these documents would be ambiguous and confusing. Thus they urged Missouri to make one document the basis of fellowship.

## II. Non-Fundamentals

This was not the only point of contention with Missouri. A second problem arose when Missouri and the ALC agreed that certain doctrines were non-fundamental and therefore not divisive of church fellowship. These non-fundamentals were: The doctrine of the Antichrist, the conversion of the Jews, the physical resurrection of the Martyrs, and the fulfillment of the thousand years. These will be explained more fully later. It is interesting to note at this point that these so-called non-fundamentals are actually doctrines of Scripture and therefore very fundamental to our faith.

At the convention of 1938 Missouri's floor committee No. 16 reported on the issue of non-fundamentals. This report synthesized Missouri's "Brief Statement" and the ALC's "Declaration." This is how committee No. 16 began its report on the area of non-fundamentals:

In some non-fundamental points concerning the doctrine of the Last Things, the "Declaration of the Representatives of the American Lutheran Church" asks tolerance for certain teachings and interpretations which have been rejected in our circles.<sup>7</sup>

As we shall see, Missouri did give the ALC tolerance. We shall also see that committee No. 16 shows that both a Scriptural and an unscriptural position can shake hands in agreement, even if this agreement is against Scripture itself. We will look at each of the non-fundamentals in depth and demonstrate how Missouri compromised its own Scriptural stance for the sake of outward unity. How often it comes to mind the thought that in all this Missouri was agreeing to disagree.

The Antichrist. The ALC stated in its "Declaration" that "the Pope is the very Anti-Christ." Yet it added:

The answer to the question whether in the future that is still before us, prior to the return of Christ, a special unfolding and personal concentration of the anti-christian power already present now and thus a still more comprehensive fulfillment of II Thess. 2 may occur, we leave to the Lord and Ruler of the Church and world history.<sup>8</sup>

Why do they have to add this second part? If the Scriptures show the Pope to be the Anti-Christ then it is his office alone that is the Anti-Christ described in

II Thess. 2. Missouri explained their decision to unite with ALC on this in their periodical The Lutheran Witness of July 23, 1940:

The ALC raised the question regarding those who accept the Pope as the Anti-Christ, but who believe that there is a possibility ("may occur," proceeding, p. 223, B1) that ~~BE~~ before the end of the world some "personal concentration of the anti-Christian power already present now" in the Papacy will arise. Our union committee, the Resolution Committee No. 16, and our Synod believed that the assumption of such a possibility clearly is no reason why churches otherwise united should be kept apart. This also is the belief of your editors.<sup>9</sup>

A footnote to this is added:

It was pointed out on the floor of the 1938 convention that Lutheran theologians had recognized such a "special unfolding of the anti-christian power" in the pronouncement of a curse on the doctrine of justification by the Council of Trent (about 1550); in the rise of the Jesuit order, designed to destroy the Protestant faith; and in the Pope's declaration of infallibility in 1870. While the Scriptures do not teach specifically that any such "personal concentration of the antichristian power" will occur again at the end of time, neither is there anything to prevent such an assumption. This theological opinion is certainly not of the kind that should keep those apart who agree in what Scripture has revealed regarding the Anti-Christ.<sup>10</sup>

Again, why was the ALC compelled to tack on this unclear, unscriptural addition to the doctrine of the Anti-Christ in their "Declaration?" Their's was an ambiguous teaching. They left many questions for the reader. Because they stated this so unclearly Missouri should not have readily accepted it. Yet in the report given by floor Committee No. 16 they did so accept. Their report stated it thus:



With the Missouri Synod the "Declaration" of the American Lutheran Church, on the basis of the Scriptures and the Smalcald Articles, teaches that the Pope is the Antichrist; but the question as to whether the future will bring a specific unfolding and personal concentration of the present antichristian power is left to God.

While the Missouri Synod teaches, on the basis of II Thess. 2:3-12 and in accord with the Smalcald Articles (Part II, Article IV:10), that the Pope is the very Antichrist for the past and the future, your Committee finds that the synodical fathers have declared that a deviation in this doctrine need not be divisive of church-fellowship (Lehre und Wehre, Vol. 19, 1873, p. 290; Vol. 25, 1879, p. 25ff.).<sup>11</sup>

Thus the ALC's position that a further "special unfolding and personal concentration of the anti-christian power already present now....may occur" was agreed to by Missouri. Missouri, for the sake of unity, accepted this interpretation of Scripture which they did not teach themselves. They agreed to disagree. They accepted that which was not supported by Scripture.

The Conversion of Israel. The ALC declared that "with reference to the question concerning the conversion of Israel, which some find indicated especially in Rom. 11:25,26, we declare with Dr. Walther that to assume such a conversion must not be regarded as a cause for division."<sup>12</sup>

This again is unclear. What do they mean by "the conversion of Israel?" Is this the physical Jewish race? Or is this all the elect? Missouri's floor committee No. 16 clarified this:

A second non-fundamental doctrine which the "Declaration of the Representatives of the

American Lutheran Church" mentions is the doctrine concerning the conversion of the Jews. The American Lutheran Church representatives do not state that their church teaches in opposition to ours that there will be a universal conversion of all Jews. They do state however, that some find this doctrine indicated especially in Rom. 11:25,26, and that the acceptance of a conversion of the Jews must not be regarded as divisive of church-fellowship.

While the Missouri Synod teaches on the basis of the Scriptures that we are not to look forward to a universal conversion of all Jews before the end of the world, your committee finds that the synodical fathers have declared that such deviation in this doctrine need not be regarded as a cause of division.<sup>13</sup>

How can a church body, which opposed such a doctrine as the Universal conversion of the Jews (Missouri), still have accepted as non-divisive of fellowship those who did not oppose such a doctrine (ALC)? They state that the ALC officially did not hold to a general conversion of the Jews but "that some find this doctrine indicated especially in Rom. 11:25,26." Does this "some" refer to Pastors and teachers in the ALC? If so, were they allowed to teach such?

This again shows the ambiguity of the agreements between the two synods. Missouri definitely was opposed to the doctrine of the general conversion of the Jews. The ALC was officially opposed to it but added that "some" hold to it. Yet both agreed that adherence or non-adherence to such a doctrine, was not divisive of church fellowship. How can two differing opinions stand side by side in unity? This policy to agree to disagree is brought out even more sharply in the July 23, 1940 issue of The Lutheran Witness.

It reported:

Because Rom. 11:24,26 says that in the latter days "all Israel shall be saved," some people in the ALC hold to the view that there will be a general conversion of the Jews some time before the judgement. We believe that the "latter days" is the entire New Testament age. We believe that "all Israel" refers to the elect among the Jewish people. The idea of a general conversion of the Jews, widely held by Lutherans now and in the past is not taught in our Synod. We believe it to be a false interpretation of certain Old and New Testament texts but our Synod in 1938 accepted its committee's opinion that also here a deviation "need not be regarded as a cause for division."<sup>14</sup>

How can Missouri say that on the one hand, it is a false interpretation of Scripture to hold to the general conversion of the Jews and then turn right around and say that differing opinions on this need not be divisive of church fellowship? Clearly they placed themselves in an unscriptural stance to agree to disagree.

The Physical Resurrection of the Martyrs. The ALC stated in its declaration:

With reference to the assumption of a physical resurrection of the martyrs, which some find indicated in Rev. 20:4, we declare that we are not ready to deny church-fellowship to any one who holds this view, merely on that account, since we cannot consider the argument that this assumption violates the analogy of Scripture as cogent (cf. Matt. 27:52,53) and since the representatives of this opinion do not assume a rule of the martyrs here on earth but hold that they go directly to heaven and rule there with Christ.<sup>15</sup>

Missouri's committee No. 16 gave this reaction:

A third non-fundamental doctrine on which the "Declaration of the Representatives of the American Lutheran Church" reports is the "assumption of a physical resurrection of the martyrs." The "Declaration" does not state

that this is the doctrine of the American Lutheran Church. It merely declares that if any one teaches this physical resurrection, the American Lutheran Church is not ready to deny church-fellowship merely on that account.

In regard to this assumption of a physical resurrection of the martyrs before Judgment Day the Missouri Synod teaches that this is a misinterpretation of Rev. 20:4, since according to the statements of the Scriptures and the confessional writings there will be only one resurrection, and that on Judgement Day. Your committee finds that the synodical fathers have declared that this erroneous assumption need not be divisive of church-fellowship.<sup>16</sup>

In 1932 Missouri rejected the doctrine of the resurrection of the martyrs prior to Judgment Day. (Brief Statement, pp 19-20). But in 1938 they ~~were~~ ready to at least say that difference of opinion on this would not be divisive of church fellowship (see above). And in 1940 they reported this view in their Lutheran Witness, July 23, 1940:

Does the verse Rev. 20:4 mean that the martyrs, those who died as witnesses to the faith in persecution, are to have a separate resurrection? If one answers in the affirmative, the ALC believes that this opinion should not be divisive of fellowship. The 1938 convention agreed that this "erroneous assumption" need not be divisive--"need not be," although this opinion, like that of the conversion of the Jews, if held as part of a millennialist system would indeed be a promotion of a doctrine (chiliasm) which is contrary to the Word of God.<sup>17</sup>

Then they add a footnote to this:

We do know that, although there is only one resurrection of the dead, yet we learn from Scripture that at the death of Christ many graves of the saints gave up their dead, that God, therefore actually did resurrect some of His saints before the general resurrection of the dead. We shall furthermore find no fault with any one who for instance, will claim that Moses had been resurrected from the dead, as

it would appear from his appearance on the mount of Transfiguration. No one will, therefore, deny that God has resurrected some saints, and no one will deny that He also has the power to do so in the future. And since God has already resurrected some saints, this goes to prove that the resurrection of some at an earlier time is not in conflict with the doctrine of the general resurrection of the dead. This declaration, then, simply states that, if some one should wish to believe on the basis of Rev. 20:4 that God may do again what He did once, and if such person from such viewpoint does not draw consequences in conflict with Bible doctrines, then such person may still be regarded as an orthodox Lutheran theologian. (From Prof. M. Graebner's essay, accepted by the South Nebraska District, 1939).<sup>18</sup>

There seems to be some double talk going on here. First of all the ALC declared that if some teach the Resurrection of the Martyrs prior to Judgment Day this would not be divisive of church fellowship. Secondly, Missouri stated that, although this doctrine is a misinterpretation of Rev. 20:4 and one which they publicly reject in their brief statement, they would still allow it to be taught within their sphere of fellowship. Missouri, it seems, was beginning to bow to pressure for fellowship rather than to the Word of God. To sacrifice doctrine only to extend fellowship is unionism. Is it not? Although we cannot accuse Missouri of unionism in 1938 we can see the seed for such being planted.

The Thousand Years of Rev. 20. In the last of the controversial non-fundamentals, the ALC reported in their Declaration:

With reference to the thousand years of Rev. 20, we declare with Dr. Walther that "it is not possible to say with absolute certainty either that the thousand years have already

been fulfilled or that they still be in the future." If they should still *lie* in the future, nothing must be taught concerning the then existing Church on earth that would contradict the limitations stated under VI, A. 19

Missouri's committee No. 16 reported:

The fourth point in the teachings concerning the Last Things on which the "Declaration of the Representatives of the American Lutheran Church" reports is the thousand years of Rev. 20. This "Declaration" is willing to leave the time of the fulfilment of these prophecies (whether in the past or in the future) undecided. It demands of those who place the thousand years in the future that they profess the truth that the church on earth until the return of Christ for Judgment will continue to be a kingdom of the cross and that all Christians should be prepared for the coming of Christ at any moment.

In regard to the fulfilment of these thousand years in Rev. 20 and the question as to whether they lie in the past or in the future, Synod has allowed the right of different interpretations of this passage, provided such interpretation is not out of harmony with the analogy of faith and no chiliastic associations are involved.<sup>20</sup>

Missouri's laymen's paper, The Lutheran Witness, reported on this:

When did the "Thousand Years" of Rev. 20 begin?--or are they still future? Very properly our Synod declared that difference of interpretation here is not divisive. As a matter of fact, sound Lutheran Theologians have held widely differing interpretations of this chapter with reference to the "Thousand Years."<sup>21</sup>

The Brief Statement declares: "We reject every type of Millennialism, or Chiliasm..."<sup>22</sup> Although the ALC position does not seem really to contradict Missouri's, it still, in a way, seems to leave a bit of a question. Why must they make this point? If the thousand years would lie in the

future, what would that exactly mean? ALC's declaration does put the limitation that the church would still be a kingdom of the cross. Yet one is still left up in the air. This is not the case in the Brief Statement.

The point in these so-called non-fundamental doctrines, is that there really is no such thing as non-fundamental doctrines of Scripture. The whole Bible, in all it's doctrines, is to be believed and taught correctly. If one church body publicly teaches one scriptural doctrine differently from another, how can it be said that this is not divisive of church fellowship? If two church bodies are in fellowship this must not only be one based on an agreement in most doctrines, but in all. Biblical fellowship is that which is based on the whole Word of God and all doctrines of said word.

Although Missouri stated that these non-fundamentals were not divisive, we must not think that Missouri did not care for true Biblical doctrine. They were wrong in conceding these points to the ALC, but they did hope eventually to win them for the truth. They resolved in 1938:

That in regard to the points of non-fundamental doctrines mentioned in the "Declaration of the American Lutheran Church Representatives" we endeavor to establish full agreement and that our Committee on Lutheran union be instructed to devise ways and means of reaching this end."<sup>23</sup>

We shall now discuss a third problem between Missouri's early relations with the ALC. This difficulty, more than

anything, should have kept Missouri from continuing to pursue a fellowship course with the ALC.

### III. A.L.C. Fellowship Practice

Missouri, at their convention in 1938, resolved:

The establishing of church-fellowship between the American Lutheran Church and the Missouri Synod will depend also on the establishing on the part of the American Lutheran Church of doctrinal agreement with those church-bodies with which the American Lutheran Church is in fellowship.<sup>24</sup>

The Lutheran Witness reported certain conditions that remained to be fulfilled before doctrinal unity could be met. One of the conditions pertained to the ALC's fellowship in the AL conference.

It will be necessary also that proof be supplied that the Lutheran bodies with which the ALC is in fellowship subscribe to the same doctrines and principles. The bodies here referred to are the Norwegian Lutheran Synod (Swedish), the Lutheran Free Church (Norwegian), and the United Danish Church. This implies that there are at present to a greater or lesser degree, prevalent in these bodies, doctrines and practices which we of the Missouri Synod cannot subscribe to and because of which we have no fellowship with any of these Lutheran bodies. There can be fellowship with the ALC on the part of our Synod only if these differences are removed; or, if that should prove impossible, this condition implies that fellowship relations be terminated between the ALC and its affiliated bodies.<sup>25</sup>

The Lutheran Witness reported this in 1940. It was still a very vital barrier to fellowship. The ALC had said that they were unwilling to give up their fellowship in the AL conference. Although they replied to this statement in another meeting with Missouri:



This is no absolute statement but one conditioned by the future development of the American Lutheran Conference. (Conc. Theol. Monthly Vol. X, Dec. 1939 No. 12)<sup>26</sup>

Our own Wisconsin Synod noted this as a distressing problem in their 1939 convention.

In an article entitled "Will There Be Union?" the Lutheran Witness delineated the problems Missouri had concerning the ALC's fellowship practices.

At the same convention the ALC said concerning its membership in the American Lutheran Conference (Swedish Synod, Norwegian Lutheran bodies, etc.): "We are not willing to give up this membership"; but the body voted to submit the 1938 agreement to the other synods of the American Lutheran Conference. It is understood that there can be no fellowship with our (Missouri) Synod unless also the affiliation with others in the American Lutheran Conference is based upon acceptance of the same unity in doctrine.

Relationship of the ALC to the American Lutheran Conference.--It is here that we meet with an obstacle which has given concern to some also within our own Synod. The declaration "We are not willing to give up this membership" has seemed to some of us to signify that membership in the Conference will be upheld by the ALC at all costs. The ALC has been asked by our commissioners to clarify this statement at its next convention. The Lutheran Witness has not receded from its opinion, that it would be altogether desirable that instead of "giving up their membership" the ALC win over its affiliated synods to soundly Lutheran principles of faith and practice.

"Cooperation in External."--The ALC has relations with other Lutheran bodies, some of which we would call cooperation in externals only, while others we judge to be cooperation in the religious field. Until this matter is clarified, union of worship and work between ourselves and the ALC is still in the future. It may be said here that this was one of the obstacles which fifteen years ago stood in the way of establishing fellowship relations on the basis of the Chicago Theses. That there may

be contacts between ourselves and other Lutherans which touch in no sense the matter of confession and spiritual fellowship has never been denied. But where these end and where religious cooperation begins the line of demarcations and transition, is still a matter of dispute between ourselves and the American Lutheran Church.

Related to this subject is the matter of prayer-fellowship. Leaders of the ALC believe that prayer is under some circumstances permissible with those agreeing with us in the essentials of Christianity though not throughout in confessional harmony. From this view we dissent. It is clear that the concept of fellowship must be clarified before we can enter into fraternal relations with the ALC.<sup>27</sup>

It is to be noted that not too long after this report Missouri began to follow the ALC's practice of prayer fellowship. Professor ~~D.~~ Fredrich discusses this point:

In 1944 Missouri also committed itself to the ill-fated and impossible effort to draw a distinction on the basis of Scripture between prayer fellowship and joint prayer. After standing with the Synodical Conference on the premise of no prayer fellowship with errorists, even through its own long drawn-out "Brux Case" Missouri in 1944 resolved that "joint prayer at intersynodical conferences, asking God for His guidance and blessing upon the deliberations and discussions of His Word" did not militate against its previous prayer fellowship stand, "provided such prayer does not imply denial of truth or support of error."<sup>28</sup>

It is evident that there were divergencies from Lutheran doctrine in the AL Conference. There were probably still some questions spooking around about the doctrines of eternal election and conversion. But, even though Missouri realized there was a problem, and that the ALC would not give up its membership in their conference, they still pursued the goal of fellowship. Our Wisconsin Synod told Missouri in 1939 that pursuance of such a fellowship at that time would mean

a "denial of the truth."<sup>29</sup>

I might also add here a comment by Pastor Edmund Reim from his paper delivered at the Rhinelander Convention of the Northern Wisconsin District, Wisconsin Synod, June 17-21, 1940:

When the articles of agreement were approved in St. Louis it was felt by all that the ALC would now either have to convert or disavow its lax and liberal associates in the AL Conference. While considerately leaving the obvious stern second alternative unmentioned, the Report says church-fellowship will depend on the ALC's establishing this doctrinal agreement with those church-bodies with which it is in fellowship. To which the ALC replies that, while it is ready to submit the doctrinal agreement to the other members of the AL Conference for their official approval and acceptance, it is not willing to give up this membership. Note, that the conversion of these synods to a conservative stand is not called for as something essential, nor is the hope expressed that it is likely to result. (p. 31) <sup>30</sup>

Missouri continued a course in pursuing fellowship with the ALC. From this compromise in doctrine Missouri's other scriptural positions declined. In 1944 they allowed Boy Scouting and made an unscriptural difference between prayer fellowship and joint prayer. There was also the "Statement of the 44" which "openly challenged the Old Synodical Conference fellowship position."<sup>31</sup> Later, in 1949, the Common Confession between Missouri and ALC was made. This document did not state "true Lutheran doctrine" clearly. The WELS labeled it "inadequate."<sup>32</sup> Finally, as Missouri continued on its course of bad fellowship practice with ALC and others (unionism) they too adopted some of the teachings of the

other liberal bodies to the point at which Missouri's stand on Scripture was doubted.<sup>33</sup> This finally led to the WELS break with Missouri in 1961. As Professor Emeritus Lawrenz once said: "The doctrine of fellowship and the doctrine of Scripture are inseparably linked together. Unionism leads to liberalism."<sup>34</sup>

When Missouri compromised Scripture in 1938 (acceptance of ALC Declaration with non-fundamentals and pursuance of fellowship with ALC while it remained in AL Conference) it did not realize how a little leaven could leaven the whole lump. Thus the problem began in 1938. Then is when the sword was drawn. Then the split began. How subtly error can creep into a body under the guise of pursuing a unity among christians! May we as a synod realize once again how a little error can lead to terrible results. This parting with Missouri must fill us with sorrow because we know of the wonderful fellowship that existed between us but it must also teach us how important it is to stand upon the truth of God's Word. Lord, help us to remain in Your Word and truly be your disciples.

## End Notes

1. Brief Statement of the Doctrinal Position of the Missouri Synod (Adopted 1932) (Concordia Publishing House, St. Louis, Missouri). p. 13 #28
2. Edward C. Fredrich, "The Great Debate With Missouri" in the Wisconsin Lutheran Quaterly, Vol. 74, April 1977, Number 2. p. 158.
3. Proceedings of the Thirty-Seventh Regular Convention of the Ev. Lutheran Synod of Missouri, Ohio, and Other States, June 15-24, 1938 (Concordia Publishing House, St. Louis, : 1938) p. 231.
4. Proceedings of the Twenty-Fifth Convention of the Evangelical Lutheran Joint Synod of Wisconsin and Other States, August 2-9, 1939 (Northwestern Publishing House, Milwaukee, WI: 1939) p. 61.
5. Proceedings of the 37th Convention of Missouri, Ohio, and Other States, p. 231.
6. Proceedings of the 25th Convention of Wisconsin and Other States, p. 60.
7. "Report of Committee No. 16 of the Twenty-Second Delegate Synod (Thirty-Seventh Regular Convention) of the Synod of Missouri, Ohio, and Other States," in the Lutheran Witness, Vol. LVII, No 14, St. Louis MO: July 12, 1938, pp. 233-234.
8. "Declaration of the Representatives of the American Lutheran Church" in the Proceedings of the 37th Regular Convention of the Evangelical Lutheran Synod of Missouri, Ohio, and Other States, June 15-24, 1938 (Concordia Publishing House, St. Louis: 1938), p. 225, B1.
9. "Lutheran Union: A Discussion V " by the Editors in The Lutheran Witness, Vol. LIX, No. 15, St. Louis, MO: July 23, 1940, p. 261.
10. "The Lutheran Witness," July 23, 1940, p. 261.
11. "The Lutheran Witness," July 12, 1938, p. 233.
12. "Declaration of the Representatives of the American Lutheran Church" in the Proceedings of the 37th Convention of Missouri, Ohio, and Other States, p. 225, B2.

13. The Lutheran Witness, July 12, 1938, p. 233.
14. The Lutheran Witness, July 23, 1940. p. 261.
15. "Declaration of the Representatives of the American Lutheran Church" in the Proceedings of the 37th Convention of Missouri, Ohio, and Other States, p. 225, B3.
16. The Lutheran Witness, July 12, 1938, p. 233, b3.
17. The Lutheran Witness, July 23, 1940, p. 261.
18. The Lutheran Witness, July 23, 1940, p. 261.
19. "Declaration of the Representatives of the American Lutheran Church" in the Proceedings of the 37th Convention of Missouri, Ohio, and Other States, p. 225, B4.
20. The Lutheran Witness, July 12, 1938, pp. 233-234.
21. The Lutheran Witness, July 23, 1940, p. 261.
22. Brief Statement of the Doctrinal Position of the Missouri Synod, p. 19.
23. Proceedings of the 37th Convention of Missouri, Ohio, and Other States, pp. 231-232.
24. Proceedings of the 37th Convention of Missouri, Ohio, and Other States, p. 232.
25. "Lutheran Union: A Discussion VII, "By the Editors," in The Lutheran Witness, Vol. LIX, No. 17, (St. Louis, MO: August 20, 1940) p. 292.
26. F. H. Brunn, "Theological Observer: The Present Status of the Discussions of the Missouri Synod with the American Lutheran Church," in the Concordia Theological Monthly, Vol. X, Dec. 1939, No. 12 (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House) p. 935.
27. "Lutheran Union: A Discussion, VIII, by the Editors," in The Lutheran Witness, Vol. LIX, No. 18, (St. Louis: Sept. 3, 1940), pp 306-307.
28. Fredrich, p. 161.
29. Proceedings of the 25th Convention of Wisconsin and Other States, p. 61.
30. Edmund Reim, "The Strength of Christian Unity," in Theologische Quartalschrift, Jahrgang 37, Nummer 4, Oktober 1940, p. 271.

31. Fredrich, p. 161.
32. Fredrich, p. 162.
33. Fredrich, p. 173.
34. Interview with Professor Lawrenz, April 1, 1985.

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