

Trinity Evangelical Lutheran Church, Jackson, Wisconsin:

Their split with the Lutheran Church – Missouri Synod.

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The Problem.

The issues that cause the breaking of church fellowship are never easy to deal with. There are members in the Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod (WELS) who can remember the struggles that went on within the Wisconsin Synod when it decided to terminate its Synodical fellowship with the Lutheran Church – Missouri Synod in 1961. The Missouri and Wisconsin Synods had been working together in fellowship since 1868. Many close friendships, and more than a few family relationships, grew out of that fellowship. So, it is easy to see why, even after almost ten years of official confessional protests, it was still a very painful process to end that fellowship.

If it is difficult for one Synodical church body to separate from another, how much more so when the break in fellowship is between a church and its own church body? How much false doctrine should a church tolerate from its Synod before the faith of its own members is in jeopardy? How long does a congregation work to change false teaching and practices of the Synodical body it is a member of?

These are the questions that Trinity Evangelical Lutheran Church of West Bend (township of Jackson), Wisconsin, had to wrestle with. The false teachings and practices that Trinity was responding to in its protest against the Lutheran Church – Missouri Synod (LC-MS) were obvious enough, yet Trinity's actions against the LC-MS seem to happen very quickly. In only the matter of a few years Trinity broke with the Missouri Synod and joined a different Synodical group. Yet, this was not an emotional reaction to a few simple problems. The congregation's reaction was based on the culmination of many problems within the LC-MS over many years.

The Early Warning Signs.

As with any movement for change there has to be someone in the forefront leading the way. Often, when the change involves theological issues the leader will be a member of the clergy. In Trinity's case, it was a member of their school's staff. Mr. Charles Zitzmann was the Principal for

Trinity Lutheran School. He had grown up in the Missouri Synod. His father had been a pastor in the Missouri Synod for 43 years, and a grandfather who served as a pastor in the Missouri Synod for 48 years¹. Having grown up in the home of a Lutheran pastor Mr. Zitzmann would have been exposed to more of the doings of the Missouri Synod than the typical church member. His subscription to Christian News kept him abreast of what was taking place within the Synod, both at the national level and at the worker training schools.

While there were certainly others in the congregation who were following the changes within Missouri, Mr. Zitzmann appears to have been the one following these happenings the longest. On a tape recording made at the meeting to discuss the resolution to separate from the Missouri Synod Mr. Zitzmann says, "I think that I've been interested in this subject for over twenty years."¹ During those twenty years he certainly saw some things that disturbed him. Already in 1958 there were some disturbing views on the St. Louis campus. A poll printed in *The Seminarian*, the student publication of Concordia Seminary, asked the questions, "True for False: The "immortality of the soul" is a sound, Biblical doctrine." Twenty-five percent of the students polled said the statement was false.² In 1966, in an open letter to *The Lutheran News*, the student body of Concordia Teachers College (CTC), River Forest, Illinois, wrote the following:

Now friends (remember?), your [meaning Christian News] views sum up our confirmation views pretty well. No doubt a majority of Missouri Synod members still uphold the notions which you affirmed. [...] We admit that we have been learning some new things here at CTC, not all of which we tell our folks. Fewer of which we tell our pastor. Many of those secret essays were pretty well tried out in class before being presented to the faculty study group. It's a fact that we differ, and how. On creation, the infallibility of Scripture, the miracles – which never need defining – and heaven and hell (relationships, you know).³

At the meeting regarding the resolution to separate with Missouri Mr. Zitzmann also mentions an article from a 1968 volume of *The Seminarian* which said:

1 Audio tape: Trinity meeting regarding resolution to separate from the Missouri Synod, August 11, 1971.

2 "Student Poll", *The Seminarian*, March, 1958

3 "An Open Letter to Lutheran News", *Christian News*, April 22, 1966

Pastors and laymen still do not believe that anything unusual or unorthodox is being taught or held at Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, ought to get a copy of the Epiphany 1968 issue of *The Seminarian* published by the student body. An article entitled "Universalism. A look at some factors" destroys the very heart and core of Christianity by teaching and suggesting that salvation and entrance into glory is not dependent upon faith. Universalism is the belief that faith in Christ is not necessary for salvation and that there are other ways to heaven. Of course this belief runs absolutely contrary to the words of Jesus Christ, "I am the way the truth and the life, no man cometh to the Father but by me" (John 14:6), and the words of Peter in Acts, "There is no other name given under heaven whereby we must be saved." (Acts 4:12)¹

Yet it was more than just the worker training schools that were causing concern among the members of Trinity. The Missouri Synod as a whole was proposing and planning things that the conservative members of Trinity found disturbing. At its 1967 National Convention the LC-MS passed several resolutions which would draw the Synod into closer relationships with clearly heterodox church bodies. The first of these was Resolution 3-23 which declared that "the Scriptural and confessional basis for altar and pulpit fellowship exists between The Lutheran Church – Missouri Synod and The American Lutheran Church."⁴ This resolution opened the door for altar and pulpit fellowship with the ALC which would come with some grave consequences. That same year the LC-MS entered into the Lutheran Council in the United States of America (LCUSA). This council brought the Missouri Synod into joint planning sessions with both The American Lutheran Church (ALC), and The Lutheran Church in America (LCA), both of which held doctrinal positions contrary to Scripture. What upset most members of the congregation was the fact that the Synod spent \$750,000 as a part of joint mission work with this organization.

As the evidence against the Missouri Synod's orthodoxy continued to mount, the action of the Synod that tipped the scales for Trinity came at Missouri's 1969 National Convention in Denver, Colorado. There the Synod voted for full pulpit and altar fellowship with the ALC.⁴ It was at this point that the members of Trinity Lutheran Church knew they had to do something.

The Protest.

⁴ From: Resolution of Alter and Pulpit fellowship with the ALC, LC-MS Denver Convention, 1967.

During a number of church meetings in the fall of 1969 the members of Trinity constructed a resolution of protest which was officially presented to the Missouri Synod's Commission on Theology and Church Relations (CTCR) on February 15, 1970. The resolution reads as follows:

Tentative Resolution.

- Whereas, In recent years the teaching and acceptance of false doctrine has received virtually no disciplinary action within the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod, Namely:
- 1) The inerrancy of Holy Scripture;
 - 2) The denials of many miracles recoded in Scripture;
 - 3) The Creation;
 - 4) The Virgin birth of Christ;
 - 5) The Resurrection of the body;
 - 6) The full Deity of Christ.
- Whereas, In 1967 the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod entered into the Lutheran Council in the United States of America (LCUSA), an affiliation, in which joint religious planning and action are carried on, even though there is no unanimity of doctrine and practice, plus the expenditure of \$750,000 for this purpose;
- Whereas, In 1969 the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod declared itself in fellowship with the ALC despite the fact that there are wide areas of disagreement on doctrines of scripture; This decision was made by a majority vote contrary to the Constitution of Synod: Art. VIII, C, which states; "All matters of doctrine and of conscience shall be decided only by the Word of God.";
- Whereas, The Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod has failed to discipline the Walther League for the unchristian direction given our young people despite the many protests raised by congregations in Synod;
- Whereas, Contrary to doctrine and practice of our Synod, the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod decided to allow women suffrage, both in the congregations and in the Synodical structure;
- Resolved, That Trinity Lutheran Church, Route 1, West Bend, Wisconsin inform the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod that it can no longer consider Synod to be an orthodox Lutheran body;
- That Trinity Lutheran Church declare itself to be in a state of Confessional protest against the mentioned unscriptural actions and doctrinal stance of the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod;
- That Trinity Lutheran Church shall make every effort, together with other concerned congregations and pastors to bring about disciplinary action, and if necessary expulsion from Synod, upon those who are responsible for the teaching of false doctrine and practice within Synod;
- Resolved, That Trinity Lutheran Church shall as of December 1, 1969 use all monies, given to the Church at Large, to the glory of God by assigning it directly to a specific

Mission, to an LWML project, or to Missions outside the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod;
That Trinity Lutheran Church will reconsider its membership within Synod, if within a reasonable period of time there is no improvement or return to sound Scriptural doctrine and practice.

If the Missouri Synod was concerned about Trinity and their confessional stance, they certainly did not show it in their response. The first to respond was the Synod President J.A.O. Preus. While he was the first to respond, his response was not a rapid one. His letter to Trinity is Dated March 16, 1970, just over one month after they had submitted their protest to the Synod. The message in President Preus' letter is best described as terse. While he asks the members of Trinity to reconsider their decision he gives them no reasons for doing so. He states in his letter, "I realize that congregations ultimately have the right to make their own decisions," yet without giving any apparent reasons for rejecting their position he says, "but I believe that your present decision is a mistake."⁵ The next response to the protest would come one week later. A letter from Ralph Bohlmann, the secretary of the CTCR, acknowledged the receipt of Trinity's resolution, and that it would be called to the attention of the Executive Committee at its next regular meeting.⁶ That meeting would not take place until June.⁷ The next day, March 26th, the South Wisconsin District President wrote to Trinity regarding their protest. This was the first letter that attempted to address any of the congregation's concerns, yet it did so by pointing to generalities and feelings (with some subtle finger pointing). District President Herbert Baxmann wrote:

While I appreciate the concern which our resolution expresses, I regret that you are passing judgment upon our entire Synod by stating that you "can no longer consider it to be an orthodox Lutheran body." While in a large church body, as the Missouri Synod has come to be by God's grace, one may find individuals who are promoting liberal views and practices, I personally feel that at this point our Synod as such must still be considered "an orthodox Lutheran body," deserving of our wholehearted moral, financial, and, above all, prayerful support.⁸

5 Preus, J.A.O., Official letter to Trinity, March 16, 1970.

6 Bohlmann R.A., Official letter to Trinity, March 25, 1970.

7 Bohlmann R.A., Official letter to Trinity, June 18, 1970.

8 Baxmann, H.W., Official letter to Trinity, March 26, 1970.

Finally, in June, when the CTCR was to present Trinity's protest to their Executive Committee that was all they did, present it. In a second letter the CTCR secretary, Ralph Bohlmann dated June 18, 1970, he reminds them that he was going to present their resolution to the Executive Committee. He simply states, "This has been done."⁷ If there was any action taken on their resolution, Trinity was not made aware of it.

If anyone at Trinity was have second thought about their protest, those thoughts were most likely quelled when the ALC decided to add more fuel to the already growing protests within the conservative churches of the Missouri Synod. During 1970 the ALC approved the ordination of women into the pastoral ministry⁹. Being in alter and pulpit fellowship with the ALC, this approval posed a grave challenge to the Scriptural stance of the Missouri Synod.

At this point, all Trinity could do was wait for the LC-MS National Convention in Milwaukee to see if any of their concerns would be address. Yet this time was not unproductive. During this time it became know that there were other Missouri Synod churches in Wisconsin that were protesting against the Synod's actions.¹⁰ If nothing else, this would give Trinity a moral boost. It was also during this time between the presenting of the protest and the Synod Convention that there is evidence of Trinity's Pastor Falk corresponding with the President of the Evangelical Lutheran Synod (ELS), George Orvick. Pastor Falk had at least three written correspondences with Orvick between February of 1970 and January of 1971. It is hard to tell who contacted whom first, although the first letter from Falk to Orvick, dated February 1970, is rather telling. The letter reads:

Pastor G.M. Orvick,
Madison, Wis.

Dear Pastor,

⁹ "Lutheran synod delegates take up basic unity issues", *Minneapolis Tribune*, July 11, 1971, 10B.

¹⁰ "Wisconsin Church Protests LCUSA and Liberalism Within Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod", *Christian News*, Vol. 2, No. 12, March 23, 1970: 9.

Thank you for your inspirational letter I received last week. We pray that through God's eternal grace we remain solid in faith, and faithful to His command.

At our meeting last Sunday we adopted the letter of concern and protest, again a unanimous vote. I am enclosing a copy of the letter. When the time comes that we have to withdraw, I hope we can present to the ELS a congregation, together with the workers of the Kingdom, which, through the strength of its testimony will be a blessing to the ELS, as we know the ELS will be a blessing unto us.

We, too, hope and pray that Miss Sara Lee will be guided by the Lord to accept our call. I am sure that she would find willing hands and hearts to help her in her work. And I am also convinced that she would be inspired by the sincere and Christian attitude of her pupils.

Later in the year I may drive to Madison some time to discuss ELS with you. Again, my thanks for your letter!

Yours in Christ,
Erich Falk¹¹

It appears from the letter that this is not the first contact these two men have had since they discuss the call that Trinity has placed for an ELS teacher. While Pastor Falk is relatively quiet concerning the confessional protest with Missouri, it seem clear from his language with Pastor Orvick that he feels Trinity needs to separate from the LC-MS, and that a time will come when it will. It can be seen even more clearly in Falk's next letter to Orvick that Trinity is working with the ELS in regard to ministry as well as trained workers. It appears that at least Pastor Falk is leaning in the direction of the ELS as a possible new church home for Trinity. A portion of the letter, dated April, 1970, reads:

First of all, accept my thanks and that of the congregation for providing us with a teacher who stands on solid ground. We are humbly grateful. I believe Mr. Zitzmann informed you that Trinity allocated \$500.00 for your mission work in Peru. The check will be forwarded to Rev. Lee this week. We feel we can no longer give our gifts to a Synod, about whose orthodoxy we are greatly disturbed. More gifts will be forthcoming in the future.¹²

These overtones of Trinity's desire to join the ELS are even stronger in the last documented letter between Falk and Orvick that is available. This letter is dates January 30, 1971, a portion of which reads:

11 Rev. Erich Falk, official letter to Rev. G.M. Orvick, February 1970.

12 Rev. Erich Falk, official letter to Rev. G.M. Orvick, April 1970.

As soon as the weather permits, I should like to come to Madison to see you. I think we are just about ready to go independent, and then ask for a colloquy with your group. We praise our Gracious God that He has kept us strong in faith and doctrine. We shall send in a memorial to the Convention in Milwaukee. The path chosen by the Convention will influence our decision. We ask the Lord's guidance for this important step. May He give us strength and courage!

I might add that ½ of our Mission contribution for the first 6 months of 1971 will go to your mission in Peru. (Should be about \$1000.) We humbly pray that in a small way it will help to build His Kingdom in Peru.¹³

As we read from Pastor Falk's letter that building relationships with the ELS is not the only thing that Trinity was doing while waiting for Missouri's National Convention. They were also making preparations for the Convention itself. It is clear that they wanted to give the Missouri Synod every opportunity to correct the problems it was dealing with. So the congregation proposed a memorial to be presented at the Convention which would urge the Synod to withdraw from fellowship with the ALC for Scriptural and doctrinal reasons. The memorial reads:

- 3-237 TO WITHDRAW FROM FELLOWSHIP WITH ALC
- Whereas, From the founding of the Lutheran Church – Missouri Synod the policy of our church has been to undertake fellowship with other church bodies only on the sound and clear principles of doctrine based on the Holy Scriptures; and
- Whereas, The growth of our Synod can be traced to the blessings of God and our adherence to the divinely inspired Word of God; and
- Whereas, We are convinced that there is no agreement with the American Lutheran Church in such critical areas of doctrine and practice on inerrancy, inspiration, authorship of the Bible, the lodge, membership in the Lutheran World Federation, the World Council of Churches, and fellowship with the Lutheran Church in America; and
- Whereas, This fellowship with the ALC has caused our Synod's membership to have serious concern about doctrine and has created much tension thereby hindering the effective proclamation of the Gospel of Jesus Christ for the salvation of precious souls; and
- Whereas, The Constitution of our Synod (Art. VI, Point 2), and the Brief Statement of our Synod (p.13, No. 28) have made it obligatory that there be full agreement in doctrine and practice before declaring fellowship; and
- Whereas, This unconstitutional vote of the Synod at the Denver convention 1969, has caused serious differences and bickerings among ourselves, thereby giving offense to one

¹³ Rev. Erich Falk, official letter to Rev. G.M. Orvick, January 30, 1971.

another and causing us to disregard the admonishment of our Lord when He tells us: "A new commandment I give unto you, that ye love one another [...] By this shall all men know that ye are My disciples, if ye have love one to another (John 13:34,35); and

Whereas, the ALC has recently approved the ordination of women to the office of the holy ministry contrary to the clear and unmistakable passages of the New Testament epistles which prohibit this practice, and confers this office only upon men; (1 Cor. 14:34-37; 1 Tim. 2:11-14; 1 Tim. 3:2-7; Titus 1:5-9); therefore be it

Resolved, that the LC-MS at its convention in Milwaukee, 1971, withdraw from fellowship with the ALC until such time as that fellowship can exist on a solid and complete agreement in doctrine and practice.

Trinity Lutheran Church
West Bend, Wisconsin
Verlyn C. Krueger, President
Raymond Kleman, Secretary
Erich Falk, Pastor¹⁴

The congregation also chose Mr. Woelm to be its lay representative at the convention. Trinity now had everything in place for the LC-MS National Convention. All they had to do was wait.

What could have been a major setback for Trinity was the sudden death of Pastor Falk on June 6, 1971, just a little more than a month from the beginning of the convention. With the death of Pastor Falk the members of Trinity seemed to be in a bind. They did not want to call a new pastor from a church body that they were in a state of protest with, yet they were in need of a spiritual shepherd for the next few months until they could determine whether or not they would be remaining in the Missouri Synod. It was at this point that Reverend Blieke, a Missouri Synod vacancy pastor from Immanuel of Grafton, offered his services to Trinity. The congregation gratefully accepted.¹⁵ Trinity would wait until after the 1971 Missouri Convention to call a permanent pastor.

The Final Resolution.

The Missouri Synod's 49th National Convention took place July 9th to the 16th, 1971, in

¹⁴ Copy of Overture to 49th Convention LC-MS, Milwaukee, July 9-16, 1971. Convention Workbook, 182.

¹⁵ Biebert, Dean, "By God's Grace, Not a Typical Congregation.", May 5, 1984: 19.

Milwaukee, Wisconsin. The proceedings of the convention were monitored daily by several major newspapers, including the Milwaukee Journal and Sentinel. This would be advantageous to the members of Trinity since they would be able to monitor what was taking place each day without having to personally attend the convention. Unfortunately, the news coming out of the Convention was greatly disappointing. It became clear with each passing day that the problems which concerned Trinity most were either not being addressed, or worse, were being promoted as positives that should be pursued. David A. Runge, a writer for the Milwaukee Journal, chronicled the events of the Convention in a series of articles. What follows is a summarized time line of the Convention proceedings that were important to Trinity:

Friday, July 9, 1971 – Speaking of issues on the agenda for the 49th regular national convention of the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod Mr. Runge quotes President J.A.O. Preus as saying that he favors saying in the Lutheran Council in the USA. Runge also mentions that while Preus would not state his views publicly on the issues of fellowship with the ALC, a commission of which Preus was a member of, takes continuing fellowship with the ALC for granted.¹⁶

Sunday, July 11, 1971 – On this day Rev. J.A.O. Preus takes the stand that what is written in the Bible is true, and “that the synod's pastors, teachers and congregations were bound by synod-adopted statements [...]”¹⁷. This statement is somewhat disappointing because Preus takes his stand on what the Synod says, not on what the Bible says.

Monday, July 12, 1971 – Mr. Runge, in trying to account for great amount of discord between the Liberal and Conservative members of the Missouri Synod says, “Many of the older pastors simply do not speak the same language as younger ones trained in the historical-critical method, which tries to determine how the Scriptures were produced.” One theologian is even quoted as saying that Lutherans should be allowed to believe in Darwin's theory of evolution as long as they

¹⁶ Runge, David A., “Lutheran Head Softpedals Rifts”, *The Milwaukee Journal*, July 9, 1971.

¹⁷ Runge, David A., “Bible Stories True, Lutheran Chief Says”, *The Milwaukee Journal*, July 11, 1971.

recognize God in the process. The article goes on to report that the convention rejected the Minority Report of the Board of Missions which questioned the direction of mission work and the theology being used to carry it out.¹⁸

An example from the Minority Report of the Board of Missions (LC-MS) as reported in the above article: Missionary Herbert C. Swanson of Guatemala, another participant, wrote to the Board for Missions on December 19, 1969:

Besides the widespread belief in universalism among the missionaries, there was a denial on the part of some missionaries and professors of the doctrines of inspiration and creation. Others denied the existence of hell, the immortality of the soul (some men rejected the teaching that man has a soul) and believed that the Scriptures are full of errors and contradictions that cannot be trusted.¹⁹

This is just one example out of fourteen pages of problems found with world missionaries. After documenting twelve pages of atrocities against God's Word the Minority Report Board simply state that they, "pray fervently that our minority report will lead toward the solution of healing of growing problems that need correction in our mission venture." This is the report that the convention refused to respond to.

Tuesday, July 13, 1971 – Today Mr. Runge reports that Rev. C. Thomas Spitz, executive officer of the Lutheran Council in the U.S.A. (LCUSA), tried to dispel the fears of some at the convention LCUSA was trying to create some "superchurch" or merge the churches who are part of the council. Rev. Spitz said that it would be better for Missouri to remain a member of LCUSA and have some control over inter-denominational relations than to leave the council and have to deal with individual churches who continue to do inter-denominational work.²⁰

Wednesday, July 14, 1971 - In today's article it is reported that Rev. Kent S. Knutson, president of the American Lutheran Church, said that his church body would be "sorrowful" if the

18 Runge, David A., "Liberal Lutherans in a Bind", *The Milwaukee Journal*, July 12, 1971.

19 Minority Report of the Board of Missions (LC-MS), Milwaukee Convention, 1971: 5.

20 Runge, David A., "Lutheran at Odds on Probe", *The Milwaukee Journal*, July 13, 1971.

Missouri Synod broke fellowship over the ordination issue. He later said that his church would be sensitive to any actions of the Missouri Synod, “but that the question was settled as far as the American Lutheran Church was concerned.”²¹

Thursday, July, 15, 1971 – Today Trinity's hopes for serious change in the Missouri Synod came to an end when the Journal reported that the delegates at the Synod Convention rejected the request that Missouri rescind its fellowship agreement with the American Lutheran Church. While the resolution to continue fellowship did include language to “call attention to” certain “doctrinal concerns,” especially the ALC's ordination of women, it did nothing to reverse what has already been done.²²

By the end of the convention it was clear that the Synod had not adequately dealt with the growing problems of ecumenicism and unscriptural teachings and practices. At this point the members of Trinity knew what they had to do.

After the convention the congregation met to form a final resolution for terminating its affiliation with the Lutheran Church – Missouri Synod.

The next thing Mr. Zitzmann did was to contact other Synods about the possibility of getting a pastor who would be willing to serve an independent church. Since they were not completely sure of the outcome of their upcoming meetings they contacted the Federation for Authentic Lutheranism, a group based out of Vallejo, California. This group responded to Mr. Zitzmann on August 5, 1971, with a list of potential candidates for a call²³. None of the candidates would ever be pursued.

Next, Trinity set up an open meeting with the new South Wisconsin District President, Reverend Karl Barth to discuss their resolution, and give the Synod one last chance to respond to

21 Runge, David A., “Lutherans Get Plea for Amity”, *The Milwaukee Journal*, July 14, 1971.

22 Runge, David A., “Liberal Lutherans Fail in Challenge”, *The Milwaukee Journal*, July 15, 1971.

23 McMiller, R.J., Secretary, Official letter from the Federation for Authentic Lutheranism, to Charles Zitzmann, August 5, 1971

their concerns. This meeting took place on August 11, 1971. It was recorded on a reel-to-reel tape by a member of the congregation. What follows is a combination of summary and dictation taken from the tape. The majority of the three main presentations is dictation, with some summary comments. The meeting went as follows¹:

The meeting opened with the singing of *The Church's One Foundation*. After the hymn Pastor Blicke read Ephesians 4:1-15. Pastor Blicke then spoke the following prayer:

“Gracious Father we humbly beseech thee for thy church: Fill it with all truth, and in all truth with all people. Where it is corrupt, purify it. Where it is in error, direct it. Where it is superstitious, cleanse it. Where anything is amiss, reform it. Where it is right, strengthen and confirm it. Where it is in want, furnish it. Where it is divided and rent asunder, heal the breeches thereof. We ask it in the name of Jesus. Amen.”

Chairman Verlyn Krueger then introduced the church leaders who were present at the meeting: The South Wisconsin District, Reverend Barth, the Circuit Counselor Reverend Grieve, and Reverend Blicke the vacancy pastor.

Next Chairman Krueger explained what has taken place thus far in the protest:

“As early as late '69 we called a special council meeting on the Denver Convention. At that time our congregation already was concerned with ALC fellowship. It was actually concerned before the Denver Convention. After the convention a special council meeting was held and we were told that the ALC fellowship had been passed. At our yearly meeting discussion on the ALC fellowship was taken up and it was decided that we send synod our protest. At that time the protest, which you are being handed out, read as follows: [...]” (see pages 4 and 5 for a copy of the protest). “Submitted by your truly, president of our church. Also signed by our elder. Copies were sent to the president of Synod, president of District, Circuit Counselor, publications to Lutheran Witness, Lutheran Witness Reporter, Christian News, The Badger Lutheran, Milwaukee Lutheran and Lutheran Layman. I believe the only one that published it was the Christian News.”

Next, the memorial that was sent to the LC-MS National Convention was read (see pages 8 and 9 for a copy of the memorial).

After the memorial Chairman Krueger reads the resolution to be discussed in the meeting. The resolution reads as follows:

Whereas, Trinity Lutheran Congregation, on February 15, 1970, entered into a state of confessional protest with the LC-MS, and

Whereas, this protest concerned itself with the lack of disciplinary action of members of the LC-MS who no longer hold to such doctrines as 1. the inerrancy of Scripture; 2. the factualness of miracles; 3. the Creation; 4. the Virgin Birth of Christ; 5. the Resurrection of the body; 6. the full Deity of Christ, and

- Whereas, this protest also concerned itself with fellowship with ALC with whom we have no agreement in doctrine and practice in such critical areas as inerrancy, inspiration, authorship of the Bible, the lodge, membership in the LWF, WCC, and fellowship with the LCA, and
- Whereas, this protest had many other concerns, such as LC-MS's affiliation with the Lutheran Council in the United States (LCUSA), the unchristian direction given our young people in the Walther League, and women suffrage, and
- Whereas, none of these concerns have been dealt with adequately either administratively or at a synodical convention, and
- Whereas, since our protest, other developments have occurred that further undermine the authority of Scripture, Synod's constitution, and even our congregation's constitution; namely: 1. in "A Call to Openness and Trust" the view expressed challenges the Lutheran doctrine of the real presence of Christ in the Lord's Supper; 2. the ordination of women in the ALC with whom we are now in fellowship; 3. the promotion of Mission-Life materials; 4. a Minority Mission Board report that the Milwaukee Convention did not handle in a positive manner; 5. the Early Communion – Late Confirmation option given at the Milwaukee Convention (Synod's Constitution – Article III, point five) and
- Whereas, this duplicity in doctrine and practice invites constant bickering, casts judgments on men instead of issues involved, and in general, leads to a climate that can be offensive to those within the church and also the world, be it therefore
- Resolved that Trinity Lutheran Church, R.R. 1, West Bend, Wisconsin (Town of Jackson) terminate its affiliation with the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod.

After the reading Reverend Barth was asked to speak on the proposed resolution. The initial part of Rev. Barth's speech is distorted and inaudible as the microphone used to make the recording was being moved.

Rev. Barth starts out by telling the group that he is not there to tell them everything in the LC-MS is fine. He admits there are problems, and he explains where he stands on those issues. When it comes to the resolution itself Rev. Barth speaks to the language in the resolution that states the LC-MS is no longer an orthodox church body.

"Now, maybe the best way to talk about my own position, and to say that I would hope that you do not sever your affiliation with the Lutheran Church – Missouri Synod, would be to look at it on the basis of this proposed resolution, because I think that some of it is perhaps misunderstanding, some of it is misinformation as to what really is the situation.

The second 'Whereas' speaks about the lack of disciplinary action of the members of the Lutheran Church – Missouri Synod and various things are referred to. The fifth 'Whereas' says that none of these concerns have been dealt with either administratively or at a synodical convention. I don't believe that this is accurate.

The whole investigation of the St. Louis Seminary would say that it is not correct to say that the President of the Synod is not involved in disciplinary action in regard to doctrinal position held by various people."

Rev. Barth goes on to say that the problem at the St. Louis Seminary has been dealt with and that the Milwaukee Convention upheld what was done in the investigation.

He then addresses the issue of fellowship with the American Lutheran Church. He reads the resolution that was passed at the Milwaukee Convention of the LC-MS regarding the ALC and their practice of ordaining women. Pastor Barth reads:

- “Whereas the Lutheran Church – Missouri Synod established fellowship with the American Lutheran Church in its Denver Resolution 315
- Whereas blessing from God have accrued from God during the past two years
- Whereas a number of overture however in the convention workbook indicate that despite the statements appearing in the doctrine of Theology and Fellowship there are differing interpretations between members of the Lutheran Church – Missouri Synod and the American Lutheran Church on what fellowship involves
- Whereas the number of overtures in the convention workbook indicate that serious differences in the doctrine of the authority of Scripture still exist between members of the Lutheran Church – Missouri Synod and the American Lutheran Church
- Whereas following the Denver Convention of the Lutheran Church – Missouri Synod the American Lutheran Church's action regarding the ordination of women poses serious problems to and causes deep concern among members of the Lutheran Church – Missouri Synod, particularly since the report of the Lutheran Church – Missouri Synod's representatives on the Inter-church Commission on Fellowship, contrary to the view of the American Lutheran Church, states that this is a matter that involves the authority of Scripture, and
- Whereas only four meetings of the Inter-Church Commission on Fellowship have been held since the Denver Convention, which limited number of meeting have not permitted adequate attention to the tasks agreed upon by the commission, and
- Whereas Denver Resolution 315 leaves the implementation of fellowship between Missouri Synod and ALC congregations to the discretion of the local congregation, and
- Whereas a number of overtures printed in the convention workbook urge the Synod to withdraw, suspend, rescind, reconsider fellowship with the ALC
- Whereas a number of overtures printed in the convention workbook urge the Synod to increase, further implement fellowship with the ALC, therefore be it
- Resolved that the Lutheran Church – Missouri Synod express its gratitude to the Lord of the Church for his blessing on this fellowship, and for every evidence of growth in the understanding and practice of fellowship in both the Missouri Synod and the ALC, and be it further
- Resolved that the Lutheran Church – Missouri Synod implore the blessings and guidance of the Holy Spirit upon present and future discussions dealing with differences between two church bodies that even greater blessing may accrue in the future, and be it further

- Resolved that the Missouri Synod register its strong regret over the ALC's action on the ordination of women in the pastoral ministry, that the Synod respectfully request the American Lutheran Church to give serious reconsideration to this action, and that the Synod respectfully request the ALC not to implement further its resolution to ordain women, and be it further
- Resolved the Lutheran Church – Missouri Synod request the Inter-Church Commission on Fellowship continue during the next biennium. That it strongly urge this commission to meet more frequently than here-to-fore, during the next biennium, to assist the church bodies in the proper understanding and practice of fellowship, and to deal with issues and problems which exist or may arise which may impair or inhibit fellowship, and be it further
- Resolved that the Lutheran Church – Missouri Synod request its appropriate officers, in consultation with the leadership of the ALC, to provide for multi-level study and discussion of such issues with the brethren of the ALC that the Inter-Church Commission on Fellowship, when feasible, receive reports of these studies and discussions, and be it further
- Resolved that the Missouri Synod representatives on the Inter-Church Commission on Fellowship share their findings and recommendations with the Commission on Theology and Church Relations and the Counsel of Presidents, that the CPCR and the Inter-Church Commission on Fellowship report to the next convention of the Lutheran Church – Missouri Synod, and that continuing fellowship with the ALC be evaluated and determined on the basis of their reports, and be it finally
- Resolved that the Lutheran Church – Missouri Synod advise its pastors, congregations, boards, and commissions because of doctrinal concerns still remaining between the two church bodies, to defer new implementation of fellowship with the ALC until the ALC has had opportunity to respond to our Synods concerns.

“Now what's the main part of this resolution. Number one, we express strong regret over their position with regard to the ordination of women. We ask them seriously to reconsider.

We indicate that we're not satisfied with the meetings that have been held of the Inter-Church Commission. They haven't met often enough to deal with the problems that they said they wanted to grapple with, and we encouraged them to do this.

We have said that we are going to, on the basis of what ALC says now about ordination of women and these other concerns, reevaluate our fellowship two years hence through a formal report given to our president [and the] CTCR.

And, finally then, in the meantime we stop where we are and do not begin any new implementation of fellowship with the American Lutheran Church, that is to say where congregations have not yet practiced it that they don't start it. That we don't in the city of Milwaukee, or in any other metropolitan level expand the bands of fellowship farther than where they are right at the present time.

Now I think that our church body acted responsibly when it said this. It is going on record to say we believe that the ordination of women is contrary to the Scripture and therefore the American Lutheran Church has done something contrary to the Scripture, and we're asking you to reconsider. And we're going to reexamine our fellowship on the basis of the way in which you respond. I don't think that is the language of a church body that is no longer orthodox. I think it's spoken in this respect as an orthodox church body. And this concern has been dealt with; whereas thee says that it has not; whereas five says that it has not. It has been dealt with and it will be dealt with in even more serious ways in the next two years.”

Pastor Barth then speaks briefly about LCUSA. He says, “serious concern” has been given to the Synods issues with this group.

Speaking to the “other developments” in the sixth whereas of Trinity's resolution Reverend Barth speaks of the document “A Call to Openness and Trust” which sheds doubt on the real presence of Christ in the Lord's Supper. He points out that the President of the Synod repudiated this document, and the Convention backed him on this rejection even though the document was not available to everyone at the convention.

Next, he speaks to the ordination of women. He says that Trinity's proposed resolution speaks of the ordination of women in the ALC, but it does not speak of the Synods stand against this practice, and that the Synod says it is an anti-Scriptural practice.

President Barth also speaks about the resolutions statement regarding the promotion of Mission Life materials [these are material for Christian religious education]. Speaks of a resolution made at the convention that states that there are things in Mission Life that need correction. States that the proper Synod boards and committees were instructed to review the material and substitute materials where necessary.

Next, he comments on the Minority Mission Board report that the Milwaukee Convention did not handle in a positive manner, Barth says he questions that statement because he served on the committee that reviewed these reports. He believed that there was confusion over this because of the article in the Milwaukee Journal which said the convention accepted the Majority report and rejected the Minority report. He goes on to say that his committee stated the next day that the article in the Journal was not correct. They had neither accepted or rejected either the Minority or Majority report, but in stead they passed a very general resolution which said “that we have to be careful not to be critical of one another which both sides had been on the Mission Board, and that we were going to deal with specific issues that were talked about in these two reports as they came up.”

Pastor Barth does mention that one item on the Minority report was address by the Convention. That was the request that Campus Ministry not be turned over to LCUSA.

He next touches on the Early Communion – Late Confirmation option given at the Milwaukee Convention. Reverend Barth points out that this is not dictated by Scripture and should be left up to the discretion of individual congregations.

President Barth's closing comments: “What makes an orthodox church body?” It publicly proclaims the pure truth of Scripture, and in life preaches this. He says casual error does not make

a heterodox church, only if nothing is ever done about the error. He summarizes the points he has just made, and then he asks that Trinity not separate from the Missouri Synod so it can continue to have a good influence on the Synod.

The Chairman asks Pastor Griebe if he wishes to say anything to the resolution. Pastor Griebe states that there is nothing he can add to what Rev. Barth has already said.

The Chairman then asks Pastor Blicke if he wishes to comment. He says he will wait.

Chairman Krueger then asks Mr. Woelm, Trinity's lay representative to the Synod Convention, if he wishes to say a few words about the convention. Mr. Woelm states that he has a report to make on the convention which is as follows:

“The convention was intended to unite the membership, but when it was closed it was evident that the two factions were further apart than ever. There was a definite drift toward unionism and a lack of Synodical authority to make binding convention resolutions on doctrine. The [ten(?)] mentioned rejected the tightening of controls on teaching and preaching, and has struck down two important resolutions: One on the doctrinal unity which would require all congregational pastors and teachers to teach in accordance with Scriptural resolutions. The other rejection was when the delegates defeated the original resolution on [?] Synodical doctrinal resolutions which called for strong disciplinary measures and provided full and concrete, dignified basic authority for them. This makes the Synod president's efforts to curb the Synod of anti-scriptural preaching and teaching practically inoperative.

With five positions on the eleven man board of control for St. Louis Seminary open four moderate candidates won the election. Many now maintain that the widely publicized investigation of the Seminary will accomplish very little.

By approving the united efforts of evangelism and co-operational use of personnel in mission work where there are Protestant Churches of various faiths, the convention showed itself insensitive to, or ignorant of, grave consideration by rejecting amendments submitted in the interest of combating unions.

This same readiness to cooperate and continue in LCUSA, with whom we are not in doctrinal agreement, reveals itself when in order to continue participation in LCUSA it can make a study of the mode in which it functions hopefully to remove criticism by many.

While it was readily admitted that there still exists serious differences in doctrine between ourselves and the American Lutheran Church the Convention nevertheless resolved to continue in fellowship until a doctrine of unity can be reached. The resolutions submitted by the floor committee to have church relations, and passed by the assembly, is clearly an invasive action of facing the fact and to avoid any possible stand in the matter. It is evident that the Missouri Synod would rather compromise than face possible divisions, and reveal the fear of polarization where congregations would be clearly identified as being for or against fellowship with the ALC. Not any of the memorials, pro or con to the fellowship reached the convention floor. Through committee and many efforts through amendments to withdraw from fellowship were always defeated.

The prevailing spirit of the convention was strongly against any measure that would cause divisions. The resolutions barely touched on the many serious problems, but made a great deal about, and expressed regret over the ordination of women and requests the ALC to give serious consideration to this action, and not to implement further such ordination.

Nothing was done to change the women's suffrage resolution passed at the previous convention.

We cannot find joy in the convention vote against ordination of women because it should have voted overwhelmingly against it. What is difficult to understand is what, on a subject like this, where it is so obviously anti-scripture, 194 delegates could vote for the ordination of women.

Another evidence of the Synod's preferring a middle of the road stand was the resolve to leave the matter of early communion up to the individual congregations to act on it as they wish. Although it has been pointed out to the Synod and the convention that the Mission Life [that] was submitted in the fall of 1971 series is filled with doctrinal contradictions and errors, and that publication should be submitted, uh, should be suspended until a full evaluation could be made. The Convention nevertheless resolved to go ahead with the existing material and instructed the board of parish education to make revisions at the earliest possible opportunity in response to valid criticism.

Now this is a quotation from the Northwestern Lutheran summarizing the convention as follows: 'Because of the action of the Convention the day of doctrinal loyalty in the Missouri Synod seems to be a thing of the past. This can only be a cause of deep regret and sorrow among us as we recognize that Missouri has actually become [a] heterodox church body. It remains to be seen whether the extremely modest safeguards proposed as a vote of the subject, uh, to the subject, Missouri fellowship with ALC and its membership in LCUSA to detailed scrutiny will apply a break to total involvement in the ecumenical scene. Such involvement will only lead to the least common denominator sort of doctrine.'

And in conclusion I say can we continue to idly bide our time hoping for corrective measures to be taken without our being disloyal to the saving God who loved Christ."

The Chairman thanks Mr. Woelm and state that they will dispense with any questions until after the last speaker, Mr. Zitzmann. Mr. Charles Zitzmann, the principal of Trinity Lutheran School, then takes the floor to speak.

"Well, we've had two speakers. One has said that we are heterodox, the other one has said that we are orthodox, and, uh, obviously there's a difference of opinion. I want to make this remark: I have said it to individuals, and I mean it sincerely from my heart that of all the people that could be here, and of all the people that I would have to take a different direction to as far as my final resolve it's Pastor Barth. I have gone to district conventions and he has spoken for the Word and for the Lord so clearly that I can only admire him. There are precious few conservatives left within Missouri, such as Pastor Barth, because I do have hangups with some – with some conservatives. Conservatives who I think operate more on a, can I say, political level rather than a theological level. And I don't feel that way at all about brother Barth. Well, so much for the preliminaries.

I can [give a little] background about myself. I think that I've been interested in this subject for over twenty years. I've been a Missouri Synod member all my life. My father was a Missouri Synod pastor. He's at my home right now. He was in the ministry for 43 years. I had a grandfather who was in the Missouri Synod for 48 years. The resolved is a hard one. I feel, though, that somebody has to talk. I don't like it to be me, but somebody has to. I think that the Synod's membership has generally been cheated because they really don't know what the score is, and what is going on. And so, I believe I must speak. The first part's going to be prepared, and the second part will be more or less comments.

On Easter Sunday morning Mary stood outside the sepulcher of Jesus crying. A voice spoke to her saying, "Why weepest thou?" And her answer was simple - "They have taken away my Lord." Anyone who is familiar with happening in Missouri Synod in the last few years can only

weep and utter, "They have taken away my Lord."

How can a synod that was the bastion of American Lutheranism with by far the most progressive elementary school system in protestant circles, the most aggressive mission program, one that used modern facilities like radio and TV, a synod that was respected within its circles and without, fall into such a state that the faith of its members is shaken?

While hours of talking would not settle all the questions, the issue can be simply summed up by saying that they left their only source of strength, the Bible, and started using human reason. Instead of saying "It is written" or "Thus saith the Lord" they have fallen for Satan's oldest trick which simply stated is "Yea, hath God said?" And if you happen to be one of those simple Christians that would answer, "Why sure, here God tells me in the Bible," their answer would then be "He didn't mean it that way."

Those who really understand the problem know that the battle within Missouri is not a matter of a few teachings but a matter of two entirely different theologies that lead to entirely different conclusions. One is centered on the "now" the other on the "hereafter", one is centered on "works" the other on "grace", the one on "feeling" the other on reality. Let's just take a quick look at four areas in which the [Missouri] Synod no longer speaks with one voice.

Number one, the inerrancy of Scripture. Many in Missouri now teach that the Bible is a collection of myths and fables, filled with errors and contradictions. Next, many accept the theory of evolution as fact, namely that man has evolved from some primary source. Some in Missouri do not believe that man has an immortal soul. And some do not believe that Christ was resurrected from the dead.

As Bible loving Christians, I know that you will all recognize that the logical end of holding any one of these five beliefs will cause a person's faith to deteriorate to the point where it will eventually be completely destroyed. Let's take up these propositions one by one to see how they can be used to destroy our faith because all of these are presently being taught or being tolerated as open questions within Missouri Synod.

The first proposition, namely that the Bible is a collection of myths and errored fables full of errors and contradictions, is of course the most fundamental of all. By destroying the authority of God's Word in his Bible, liberals can then justify all the other faith destroying teaching of theirs. When we call the Bible a collection of myths and fables we are saying in effect that God is a liar. Missouri Synod's official position as stated in the Brief Statement which up to the present time has not been officially denied, modified or changed simply states:

Since the Holy Scriptures are the Word of God, it goes without saying that they contain no errors or contradictions, but that they are in all their parts and words the infallible truth, also in those parts which treat of historical, geographical, and other secular matters.

I'm going to suspense with using names. I think if anybody wants the documentation of these after while I'll get them. I had mentioned names in here that I think at this time I'm going to refrain from using them.

To show how devilish these teachings can be, namely the attacking of the inerrancy of Scripture, you have to be able to distinguish between truth and factual truth. Now, to these men Scripture would be true in the same sense Aesop's fables are "true", or Greek and Roman mythology are "true" since they demonstrate certain moral lessons for us to learn. Genesis was not inerrant because a serpent had no vocal cords and therefore could not speak to Eve. The story of the fall of man into sin to them would simply be pure myth or fable. What the average layman is not aware of is that these liberals have been going through a process of redefining many of the Scriptural terms and giving them a meaning that is entirely different than the way you and I learned them. Thus saying the Bible is "true" would mean something altogether different to them

than it would be to you and me.

You know this matter of language is tricky because I for one, uh, just take this phrase, and this isn't really a significant one at all: "Good News for a bad situation," and uh, I loved that one. I really did. I thought: Good News, the Gospel; the bad situation was my individual sin. And yet these fellows that use that particular phrase, later on I found out that the bad situation was not an individual's sin, but pointed more to poverty, prejudice, war, and things of that nature.

Well, if the Bible is a collection of myths and fables, full of errors and contradictions, why should you and I believe any of it? And this is the problem. What purpose is there in going to church on Sunday to hear myths and fables? And more pointed yet, why should you be asked to support with your monies men who deliberately go out of their way to undermine the faith you have been taught? Furthermore I would question the morals of a man that would accept monies from an institution and then turn around and try to destroy its very doctrinal position.

Just one quick example, like if you take the story of Jonah. And this is one that certainly has been attacked within Missouri. They don't want to take it as a factual truth. Alright, then you get to the New Testament and you get to Matthew 12:40 and Jesus says, "For as Jonah was three days and three nights in the whale's belly, so shall the Son of Man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth." What happened? Do we call Jesus a liar now? [?] He took it as fact. And the next part, do we also deny the resurrection, or is the resurrection a myth now too? And so it goes on. I could give many other examples too.

Well, the next: Man originated from some primary organism, is just plain evolution. Any one who accepts the theory of evolution as fact would of course have to deny the creation story. With that denial goes the unique creation of man. Man becomes just another creature here on earth, no better than a vegetable or animal. The sacredness of life is gone. It is now easy to talk about abortion, euthanasia, situation ethics, and then this leads right into the natural conclusion, namely, that man does not possess an immortal soul.

What this says in just plain language is that when man dies he is dead, permanently, never to rise again. If man does not possess an immortal soul, and if we die we are dead, then who needs God? Why bother with the Ten Commandments? Why not lie, cheat, murder, steal, commit adultery, if we are not accountable for our actions before God in eternity. It is the same philosophy and the Epicureans – Eat, drink, and be merry, for tomorrow we die.

This of course leads right into the last statement that Christ was not raised from the dead. And Paul of course said in 1 Corinthians 15:17, "If Christ be not raised your faith is vain and ye are yet in your sins." If Christ was not resurrected from the dead He was not God and certainly not the Savior you and I believe in.

Now since I didn't mention names I'm going to just read phrases that these men wrote. Number one: "In no instance does it – truth in the Bible – signify factual precision, that is, truth as usually understood today." That man's still listed in the Lutheran Annual. Or this one: "For this reason Bultmann can quite rightly say that the only historical statement in the Apostle's Creed is the sentence 'He suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, dead, and buried.'" That's the only historic thing. Which means now that the virgin birth is not a historical fact. And since he left out the resurrection that must not be a historical fact either.

Why this stuff gets to be so tricky is that these guys like to, like to really, I don't know if you'd say redefine, but they probably talk about something like this: If you want to talk about the virgin birth you'll talk about it as a theological fact. A theological fact, not a *biological* fact. And so the realness of it is gone.

In regard to the immortal soul somebody, [this man] still listed in the Lutheran Annual, said, "We think it is consequently fair to say, to put it very bluntly, that when a man dies he is dead." And, later on he says, "You have an immortal soul which Christ died to save, and when you die

your soul goes to God in heaven.” And then he says, “Death and whatever follows it should be differently appraised by Christians.”

In another statement (a man still listed in the Lutheran Annual), “It is possible to conceive that the corpse of Jesus decayed in the grave and that the bones are still there.” Or, another one: “This resurrection, the Bible underscores, was not a resuscitation or reassembly of a corpse.” We probably wouldn't use the word resuscitation; reviving or something like that.

Well, anyway I've got to say this, this has got to be false doctrine. It's not a matter of communication. I understand these guys perfectly well. But in either case, really, when you get right down to it they should no longer be members of Synod, at least in teaching positions, because they're either guilty of false doctrine in which case they should be disciplined, or they aren't apt to teach in which case they should be thrown out for that reason.

Well, continuing: Before us we have a simple resolution that states that we “terminate our affiliation with the Lutheran Church – Missouri Synod. To me it is a God-pleasing resolution for Paul wrote in Timothy 6:3-5 “If any man teach otherwise and consent not to wholesome words, even the words of our Lord Jesus Christ and to the doctrine which is according to godliness; he is proud, knowing nothing, but doting in strifes of words whereof cometh envy, strife, railings, evil surmising, perverse disputings of men of corrupts minds,” (and I thought of the Milwaukee Convention; I sat up in the balcony and you heard people say, “My God, is this my Synod?”) “and destitute of the truth supposing that gain is godliness;” and then the simple statement, “from such withdraw thyself.” And in Romans 16:17, “Now I beseech you brethren, mark them which cause divisions and offenses contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned; and avoid them. While the objects of synod may be many, congregations are basically interested probably in four areas: Number One: The retention of sound doctrine. If the Milwaukee Convention didn't indicate any else it certainly indicated that we weren't united. Number two: Training schools from which to obtain workers. Three: An agency that can effectively carry out Christ's command of “Go ye into all the world and preach the gospel,” and four: The publishing of educational materials that are doctrinally sound. Since Missouri Synod has forsaken the Word and not practiced doctrinal discipline she is shortchanging her Bible loving membership on all four counts.

I feel that right here the words of C.F.W. Walther, the first president of the Missouri Synod are most appropriate and fitting. These words are taken from an essay delivered by Dr. Walther already in 1879, where he states: “We have always said: our dear congregations should not include in their constitution: We shall belong always to the Missouri Synod. We do not want that. The name of the Missouri Synod should not appear in the constitution of the congregation. It is indeed not sin. But it is not a sin only when there is added: So long as the Missouri Synod holds to the pure doctrine which it now has. Without this addition it is false. No one should chain himself to men but should retain the liberty at any moment to step out of it @[the synod] ... so that one cannot thereupon say: You are traitors if you step out. The congregation has the liberty at every moment, if it joins synod today, to step out tomorrow, and no man may raise a charge against its conscience.”

A little further on in this essay, Dr. Walther adds: “As soon as we look more to our Synod than to the invisible Kingdom of God, the kingdom of grace and salvation, we begin to be a sect. That preacher is no true preacher who merely seeks to fanaticize his congregation for the Lutheran Church, or the Missouri Synod. Such men are bad preachers. They must rather direct people to Christ and say, “See, we preach the pure Word of God, in which the everlasting Gospel of Christ is continued.” That is why you should adhere to us and therefore we say, “Leave us as soon as we no longer do this!” For salvation by no means depends on us, nor also on the Missouri Synod. So, if it no longer preachers the pure Word of God, then it is worthy of nothing but that one forsake it.

Talking about what's heterodox and what's orthodox. Well, there are so many things that have happened in Missouri's past, recognized too by Pastor Barth. Well let's just take a look at some of these things.

[Here Mr. Zitzmann refers to the Christian News articles mentioned at the beginning of this paper. Refer to pages 2 and 3.]

One, two, three, four, fifth, the fifth whereas – President Barth kind of raked me over the coals for that one. I should have, I should have added 'adequately' in there. “None of these concerns have been dealt with either”, “dealt with adequately either administratively or [? ...]” He would have said the same thing anyway, but [...] [chuckles from the audience]

Ah, I got some other hangups. One of them is this: I'd like to know why bother to even investigate a seminary when you are still in fellowship with the ALC? The ALC has the very, very same problems that we have.

Furthermore, the investigation into the seminar, in all reality, if one really wanted to dig into it you could find enough evidence of false doctrine without an investigation. Not probably on everybody down there, but enough of them anyway. We probably shouldn't talk about this anymore, the investigation, because this man was on the board, or on the, was on the, what did you call yourself, the committee? [President Barth says] 'Fact finding.' [Mr. Zitzmann says] The Fact Finding Committee. There are some other disturbing things about it. I think the information wasn't released to the Synod, why not? Who paid the bill? [Alright (?)] the information was turned over to the board of control. I talked to one fellow who's been involved in this things a whole lot more than I have, and for ten minutes he paced up and down the floor and he said, “We've got to get control”, meaning the conservatives, “of the board of control.” And I just felt at that time if somebody, if my whole church body is hanging, hanging on the election of a board, we are in sad shape. Well, anyway, it's going to be turned over to the board Synod said. Preus is to report back in a year. The liberals have said, Teitchen said, “I don't know of any man on the faculty that would be in jeopardy.” This is all conjecture and it doesn't really make much difference, but you know time has a way of healing everything, and I think one year from now, this is opinion, that very little actually will be said or done about this particular investigation. I hope it doesn't turn out that way, but that's my own humble opinion.

Well, so we got the St. Louis Seminary all taken care of, let's go to River Forest. A little background about that: There was a professor down there, and again if you want the name we'll supply it, but other than that then I'll forget about names, he was a Missouri Synod member all his life, was in the ministry out in Iowa for I think eight years, was called to River Forest – don't quote dates here, maybe 1948 – and he was there probably until about 1963. He, himself, got involved in a doctrinal case with another member of Synod.

Well, in a letter that he is writing, and this is talking about conditions at River Forest now before 1963: “When I was at River Forest the doctrinal situation was intolerable. Men openly said in the religion department meetings that it is no longer a question of whether the Bible makes mistakes, but what we should do with the mistakes that the Bible does make. The inerrancy of the Bible is openly denied in class. The students are told, for example, that no Lutheran should say, “Jesus loves me this I know for the Bible tells me so” because if anyone believes that Jesus loves him he must have far better reason for believing this than that the Bible tells us this, for the Bible might be wrong. He goes on in the same letter, “This denial of Biblical truth is joined with a showy, outward piety which is most deceiving. The faculty members are no nincompoops; they are well able to mislead the youth. They are fine men from the standpoint of personality and very likable. They are very competent, and well able to make the students believe that this new

theology is a perfectly acceptable view of the Lutheran Church. Many times in my last years there students came into my office crying and wondering what they could still believe in the Bible. I think that River Forest is a good place for young man or a young woman to loose their faith."

Everybody in Synod must have heard this story already where one fellow down in River Forest, he was a roommate of mine, gets up in front of class and holds a Bible up and he says, "What is this?" and he knows the answer is, the kids are going to respond "God's Word." Then he throws the Bible on the floor and stamps on it and says "It's nothing more than paper and ink." Another one of the faculty members in the religion department of River Forest, in religion department meetings, said that the function of religion teachers at River Forest was to correct all the misconceptions that the students had picked up in their confirmation classes. Well that was about 1964. In 1966 the students caught on. In an open letter to Lutheran News you can read this (one student writing): "Now friends remember: your views sum up our confirmation views pretty well." (meaning Christian News), "No doubt a majority of Missouri Synod members still uphold the notions which you affirmed. We admit that we have been learning some new things here at CTC, not all of which we tell our folks. Fewer of which we tell our pastor. Many of those secret essays were pretty well tried out in class before being presented to the faculty study group. It's a fact that we differ, and how. On creation, the infallibility of Scripture, the miracles – which never need defining – and heaven and hell (relationships, you know)."

Well, there are always those who say stay in and fight. Men have tried to fight this. We'll give you just a few examples, we can't go into 'em, but we had a student against a Prof. This, of course, goes back to Otten, 1958. And if you want to read the appeal case there you'll read such things there as one Prof saying that the Brief Statement is not the doctrinal position, nor should it be in the Missouri Synod. You can read there where the inerrancy of the scripture is denied, 1958. This student [didn't (?)] succeed by the way; he's still a called minister of the Missouri Synod. But the thing that's really bothersome about that is that they never, never get down to the issue. In every one of these cases that I've check, every one of them, it all ends up in, I want to say, personality clashes; they all yell "slander", "Eighth Commandment", and this type of things. Every one of them.

Well, another case was prof against prof. This goes back to Becker vs. Sharleman, we'll mention those names, that was public enough, it came out in the Cleveland Convention. And when these two men were confronted with each other, with the whole board of control sitting around there, the academic dean of the Seminary said, asked Becker, "Do you believe that a snake talked to Eve?" And he said yes. And the academic deans answer was, "This is the kind of theology that we need to get rid of." And my own humble opinion is, they've done a real good job.

Well, we can give you the case of preacher vs. district president, and this went all the way up to an appeals case too. And this is what the appeals court said about it: "With respect to the cause at issue," this by the way is 1963, "With respect to the cause at issue, we believe the defendant supplied, and has presented a preponderance of evidence to accentuate a situation in Synod that amounts to liberality, and treason." Those are hard words. The appeals case also went on to say, "We believe there is a situation in Synod similar to that which prevailed to, and even during the Roman period. When the Roman Catholic church excommunicated men, such as Luther, for being too Catholic, while it retained in its fellowship the skeptics and scoffers since they did not attack or defy authority."

Give you another example. A layman vs. a Prof. Charge of false doctrine. A layman vs. a Prof, I mean this poor guy goes in there with his hands tied behind his back. And you read the correspondence that goes on between it is ridiculous. Pathetic! See, so they finally arrange for a meeting. And the agreement was you could have two witnesses, and the Synod names the

witnesses, it says you take your circuit counselor along and your own pastor. Well, their O.K. but I'd like to call my own witnesses too. Synod officials say, "No, can't be." Now the [?] his witnesses. You never get to the point, there's always the runaround. O.K., so the guy says, Well I'll come down there by myself', and he does. He flies down to St. Louis, or however he got down there, and they get, and they have their meeting, and he walks in there with a tape recorder. And they wouldn't meet, they wouldn't tape. And he offered them, "You can have [them]. I'll supply you with the tapes. You can have them, I can have them." Never get together.

Well, we can take congregation vs. Synod too. I think it really is significant. We sent in a protest, we sent in a protest to the church, we aren't trying to create problems or anything but, their here, and you know not, not one publication, not one publication even mentioned it; Lutheran News, nor Christian News printed it up. Not even acknowledged it like in the Circuit Writer. It was sent there. He wrote about some second grader down in Grafton, but they did an arithmetic or whatever it was, but not even, not even acknowledged it.

My own feeling is that the only way that Trinity can fight is to pray. And they can pray whether their in Synod or whether their out of Synod. And men like Barth truly need our prayers."

Mr. Zitzmann goes on to give a few more examples and then the tapes shuts off. By this time Mr. Zitzmann's point is more than understood. The weight of his evidence is overwhelming. All that is left to be done is to put the final resolution before the members of the congregation and let them vote.

After the open meeting a voters meeting is called for Wednesday, August 25, at 8:00 P.M. to vote on the proposed resolution. According to The Christian News "this meeting attracted more of the voting membership than any previous meeting, perhaps in the church's history."²⁴ Fifty-four ballots were cast, and the final outcome was 42 'yes' votes and 12 'no' votes. Thus, the resolution to terminates its affiliation with the Lutheran Church – Missouri Synod officially passed.

The outcome.

Not surprisingly, the two other churches which had filed confessional protests also seceded from the Missouri Synod at this time also. Synod President Preus did respond more quickly this time around; he replied to their resolution within two weeks. Again, his letter does nothing to address the issues, and by his working it seems he may not be very aware what has been happening at Trinity. An excerpt from his letter reads:

²⁴ "Second Wisconsin Church Leaves LCMS", *Christian News*, Vol. 4, No. 32, September 6, 1971: 12.

I wish you would give this matter very serious reconsideration and invite President Barth to come and speak to you about your action. The act of leaving a church body is a very serious one, and I hope that you have had an opportunity to hear all sides of the question.²⁵

While the tone of President Preus' letter was fairly level headed, the President was not so even-tempered when speaking to a newspaper reporter a few days later. In an article in the Milwaukee Sentinel, speaking of three Wisconsin churches that left the Missouri Synod, Preus says,

These congregations and their pastors are really contributing nothing to the cause of the Lutheran church and its problems. I seriously doubt that they'll find themselves any better off anywhere else than they are now.²⁶

The only other response from the Missouri Synod was from St. John's Lutheran Church, Milwaukee, dated October 20, 1971. Responding to Trinity's break with Missouri, the President and Pastor of the congregation send a letter urging Trinity to reconsider its decision:

We realize full well that there are problems of church doctrine and practice within our synod which have not as yet been officially resolved. In fact we share a number of your valid concerns.

On the other hand, we are also convinced that our role at present is to strengthen the hands of our president and his administrative assistants in their efforts to keep our synodical doctrine and practice in line with Holy Scripture and the Lutheran Confessions. We feel that constituent congregations owe much to the synod which for so many years and in so many ways has acted on their behalf and for their mutual good, and that at a time of stress such as the synod is experiencing now we need to stand together to help each other in finding evangelical and God-pleasing solutions to the problems facing our church. [...]

In the meantime, be assured that the concerns expressed here are voiced in a spirit of Christian brotherly love.²⁷

This letter was, by far, the most positive response to come out of the Missouri Synod for Trinity.

Surprisingly, it was not just people from within the Missouri Synod who responded to Trinity leaving. There were individuals who wrote to Mr. Zitzmann and the church to express their feelings and views of the situation. A Mr. Edwin Keyes of Fond du Lac, who was sympathetic to their situation, wrote the following:

²⁵ Preus J.A.O., Official letter to Trinity, September 9, 1971.

²⁶ "Church Secessions Deplored by Preus", *The Milwaukee Sentinel*, September 11, 1971.

²⁷ Vangness, Arthur, Official letter from St. John's Milwaukee to Trinity, October 20, 1971.

I am a member of a Lutheran Church, Luther Memorial of Fond du Lac. I saw your article in the Fond du Lac paper. Ten years ago we were looking for a pure Christian doctrine, and left the Wisconsin Synod. I realize the confusion and problems your congregation is faced with. I am sending some literature for your consideration. My prayers are with you.²⁸

Mr. Keyes sent information regarding the Church of the Lutheran Confession, of which he was a member. Yet not all of the letters received were positive. This was from a letter that was simply signed, "From a former Trinity member and now a Christian member":

I was a member of Trinity Church, Jackson, 35 years ago and knew Missouri Synod teachings at that time well. After I was married I became an A.L.C member. [...] It takes a personal encounter with Jesus Christ as lord and Savior which I was led to only a few years ago. Only the Holy Spirit can bring us to Christ – not a certain denomination. [...]

We have fundamental Christian beliefs, even though we know there are liberal pastors and theologians in our Synod. Our pastor, who is also fundamental is trying his uttermost best to witness his early Christian beliefs to his fellow servants.²⁹

If nothing else this letter probably only helped to solidify Trinity in its stand against fellowship with the ALC.

Other communication came from Synods showing their support for Trinity and their doctrinal stand. The question Trinity now had to answer is: Who do we join? The Wisconsin Synod was certainly the next largest church body with a solid confessional stand. There was the Federation for Authentic Lutheranism who had sent them a list of prospective pastors. They also had the documentation that they had received concerning the Church of the Lutheran Confession. Finally, there was the Evangelical Lutheran Synod (ELS) with whom they had some communication with already.

It would ultimately be the ELS. What Pastor Falk had begun, the congregation now carried through on. The close fellowship that their beloved Pastor had been looking forward to would now become a reality. Not only for theological reasons, such as the strong doctrinal and confessional stand of the ELS, but also for practical reasons. First, Trinity had already been

²⁸ Keyes, Edwin, Personal letter to Charles Zitzmann, September 1, 1971.

²⁹ From a former Trinity member, Personal letter to Charles Zitzmann, ??.

working with the ELS to call teacher for its school. It had also been sending monies to the ELS for its foreign mission work. Yet there was one more piece to the puzzle – busing. Had Trinity affiliated itself with the WELS they would have had a difficult time receiving busing for their children, many of whom lived near other WELS churches. The busing companies would often not bus a child to a different school if there was already a religious school of that denomination in their area. By joining the ELS they would still be considered part of a distinct church denomination separate from the WELS, so then busing would not be a problem.³⁰ So on June 18, 1972 officially applied for membership in the Evangelical Lutheran Synod.

This switch to the ELS did not come without a few concerns. Already in September of 1971 some members of Trinity were concerned that if they were to join the ELS that the church would have to change its liturgy, its hymnal, and some may even jeopardize their positions in the church cemetery. To quell these fears President Orvick sent a letter to the church to reassure the members that these things would not be changed. He writes:

It has come to our attention that it seems necessary for us to assure the members of Trinity that membership in the Evangelical Lutheran Synod will not bring about any changes as regards to Hymnal, Order of Service, or any other congregational arrangements that have been made at Trinity. Things will remain the same, and, of course, the doctrine remains the same as that to which Trinity has been committed through the many years of its existence. Also, the officers of the congregation inform us that cemetery rights remain as they are. No one will lose his rights in the cemetery.³¹

So with their new found home the members of Trinity were finally able to get back to the work of the church.

Conclusion.

As one looks back at Trinity's decision to leave the Missouri Synod the question arises: Did they make the right decision? Did they truly leave a heterodox church body which was unable or unwilling to change? Or did they simply leave an orthodox church body that could have used their

³⁰ Biebert, Dean, "By God's Grace, Not a Typical Congregation.", May 5, 1984: 22.

³¹ Orvick, George M., Official letter to Trinity, October 5, 1971.

help to complete the changes it was trying to make?

History leans rather heavily to the former. It was quite clear already at the time that the ALC was not going to change its position on the ordination of women, yet the LC-MS refused to see that. What started out as undertones by Kent Knutson, President of the ALC, became clear statements after the Missouri Synod Convention of 1971. Knutson said in an interview,

The American Lutheran Church acted properly when it voted in 1970 to ordain women as ministers [...]. He said disagreement over the issue would be no reason to discontinue altar and pulpit fellowship between the church bodies [...]³²

For a short time it looked like the problem with the liberals in the Missouri Synod may have been cleaned up with the Seminex walkout from the St. Louis Seminary in 1973. Unfortunately, the Synod leadership did not go far enough in cleaning out those liberal pastors, who had been trained in that environment, from the rest of the Synod. Because of this there continues to be problems with liberal pastors and theologians within Missouri to this very day.

So it appears that Trinity made a correct choice. So does this mean that they lived “Happily ever after?” While we know that the church here on earth is the church militant, and that it will struggle and strive until the time of Christ's final return, yet God has most certainly blessed Trinity in its home within the Evangelical Lutheran Synod. After thirty-five years it is still a member of the ELS. It has grown to almost 200 family units and over 400 members. While many Christian day schools are closing because of money problems, Trinity Lutheran School is still going. And as a testament to God's richest blessing upon this church, on October 22, 2006 Trinity Evangelical Lutheran Church celebrated its 150th Anniversary – 150 years of proclaiming the truth of sin and Grace; the truth of God's love, and his promises of a Savior from sin. Trinity has most certainly made a correct choice. A choice to stay firmly grounded in the truth of Jesus Christ our Savior and Redeemer. A truth that sets people free. To God be the glory!

³² “Area Church Quits Missouri Synod”, *The Milwaukee Journal*, September 5, 1971.

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